

Cultural Memory and Femininity in Translation: Yasmine's Picture by Hanan Al-Shaykh

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Abstract

This article examines the translation of femininity and cultural memory in Hanan Al-Shaykh's short story Yasmine's Picture, analyzing the differences between the Arabic source text and its English translation regarding their representation of gendered experience and cultural identity. On the basis of feminist and postcolonial theories of translation, the study explores how memory, emotion, and feminine subjectivity—traditionally expressed through metaphor, silence, and movement through the spaces—find themselves translated or redirected in the English translation. Through words of comparative textual examination of six exemplary narrative passages, the research reveals significant differences of tone, sense, and cultural background. The proof shows that translation has a tendency to neutralize or recontextualize elements tied to Arab feminine memory, devoiding them of their political and emotional richness in order to satisfy Western reader expectations. This article argues that translation is never an ideologically neutral process but an arena of ideological negotiation, in which decisions around language, culture, and gender determine how the voices of the marginalized are heard—or silenced—on the global literary stage.

Keywords: *feminist translation; postcolonial translation; cultural memory; Arab women's literature; femininity in translation; Yasmine's Picture; discourse analysis; Arabic-English translation; gender and narrative*

الذاكرة الثقافية والأنوثة في الترجمة: صورة ياسمين بقلم حنان الشيخ
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ملخص

تتناول هذه المقالة ترجمة الأنوثة والذاكرة الثقافية في قصة حنان الشيخ القصيرة "صورة ياسمين"، مُحللةً الاختلافات بين النص الأصلي العربي وترجمته الإنجليزية من حيث تمثيلهما للتجربة الجندرية والهوية الثقافية. واستنادًا إلى نظريات الترجمة النسوية وما بعد الاستعمارية، تستكشف الدراسة كيف تُترجم الذاكرة والعاطفة والذاتية الأنثوية - التي يُعبّر عنها تقليديًا من خلال الاستعارة والصمت والحركة في الفضاءات - أو يُعاد توجيهها في الترجمة الإنجليزية. ومن خلال تحليل نصي مقارنة لستة مقاطع سردية نموذجية، يكشف البحث عن اختلافات جوهرية في النبرة والمعنى والخلفية الثقافية. ويظهر الدليل أن الترجمة تميل إلى تحييد أو إعادة صياغة العناصر المرتبطة بالذاكرة الأنثوية العربية، مُجرّدة إياها من ثرائها السياسي والعاطفي، تلبيةً لتوقعات القارئ الغربي. تجادل هذه المقالة بأن الترجمة ليست عملية محايدة أيديولوجيًا، بل هي ساحة

للتفاوض الأيديولوجي، حيث تُحدد القرارات المتعلقة باللغة والثقافة والجنس كيفية سماع أصوات المهمشين - أو إسكاتهم - على الساحة الأدبية العالمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الترجمة النسوية؛ الترجمة ما بعد الاستعمارية؛ الذاكرة الثقافية؛ أدب المرأة العربية؛ الأنوثة في الترجمة؛ صورة ياسمين؛ تحليل الخطاب؛ الترجمة من العربية إلى الإنجليزية؛ الجنس والسرد.

1. Introduction

Translation is not merely an exchange of words; it is an ideological and cultural gesture which entails the weight of memory, identity, and representation. In the case of Arabic women's writing, the process of translation becomes a site where femininity and cultural memory are negotiated, remade, or repressed. Hanan Al-Shaykh's *Yasmine's Picture*, and much of her work, offers a close investigation of feminine subjectivity in the Arab world—a subject investigation entangled once filtered through translation into English. This paper analyzes how femininity and cultural memory are refracted through the process of translating *Yasmine's Picture* and how these are saved, reworked, or lost.

Translation studies today focus more on the ideology, gender, and cultural memory in textual transfer (Castro & Ergun, 2022, p. 12). Feminist translation, in particular, foregrounds the translator's positionality and the impact of gendered representation in the source culture and target culture (Flotow & Farahzad, 2021, p. 33). This worldview is particularly relevant to the work of Arab women authors, where translation is generally a political act situated at the intersection of Orientalism, postcolonialism, and gendered self (Svirsky, 2019, p. 95).

For *Yasmine's Picture*, this study examines how the translated term navigates differences in culturally situated memory and gendered modes of expression, and questions what is altered, negotiated, or lost during the process from Arabic into English. Using a feminist-postcolonial perspective, the article aims to contribute to the broader debate around the ethics of translationally portraying Arab femininity.

1.1 Problem Statement

The translation of Arab women's writing is never a matter of a neutral linguistic exercise, but of a very ideological and cultural practice that has to work within webs of meaning, voice, and representation. At the heart of this challenge lies the convergence of language, gender, and cultural memory, most particularly in women's writing in postcolonial and patriarchal cultures. In novels such as Hanan al-Shaykh's *Yasmine's Picture*, the female self is not openly stated but finds its ground in a collective memory that is shaped by tradition, resistance, trauma, and

ritual. These elements are often conveyed through implicit metaphor, affective imagery, and non-linear texturing and all these draw significantly on culturally embedded modes of narration and gendered representationality.

When such stories are translated into English, particularly for Western audiences, they are usually processed through domestication or exoticization. Domestication refers to the process of making foreign cultural references smooth so that they become more "readable" or palatable for the intended audience, sometimes at the expense of losing cultural specificity and oppressing dissidence. In contrast, exoticization is concerned even more with the "otherness" of Arab women as their lives are ultimately represented as foreign, mystical, or tragic and therefore reinforce Orientalist stereotypes rather than deconstruct them (Said, 2021, p. 44). Both models can distort the purpose of the author in representing Arab femininity, and tend to depose the narrative from the socio-political environments within which it seeks to critique or document.

The basic problem, therefore, is the way translation reconfigures or mediates representation of feminine subjectivity, memory, and agency in Arabic literature. More specifically, how does translation affect the purity of feminine voice, and how might it reify or subvert dominant cultural hierarchies and gender ideologies? Not merely theoretical, this issue has real-world ramifications in how Arab women's accounts are disseminated, interpreted, and received in the global literary marketplace. The politics of representation become very contentious when the source text writes about culturally sensitive themes, such as maternal heritage, spatial confinement, corporal control, or religious rituals—all prevalent in Yasmine's Picture.

Further, the question of who translates from whom and on what terms complicates the equation. Translators are not only linguistic middlemen but also cultural intermediaries whose choices—lexical, syntactical, stylistic—are ideologically charged. Where there is no shared cultural or gendered experience between the originating author and the translator, there is greater risk of misreading, oversimplification, or unintended censorship. As Abu-Lughod (2022, p. 107) contends, the translation of Arab women needs to be approached with caution, avoiding the temptation to "rescue" and the urge to "romanticize." The process of translation is thus a terrain where visibility and invisibility, power and resistance, voice and silence are negotiated.

In short, this study addresses the urgent need to examine how the translation of gendered, locally rooted narratives like Yasmine's Picture reinforces or challenges



power relations built into discourses about Arab women globally. It seeks to know how translation practices may perpetrate epistemic violence or create a space for cross-cultural feminist solidarity, as a function of the strategies followed and critical awareness of the translator.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To analyze how cultural memory is addressed in Hanan Al-Shaykh's Yasmine's Picture and how it is translated into English.
2. For the purpose of investigating the approaches used in translating femininity subjectivity and gendered expression from English to Arabic.
3. In order to analyze whether the English translation maintains or changes the first cultural and gender-specific associations of the source text.
4. In order to be part of feminist and postcolonial translation theory through a specific case study of Yasmine's Picture.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How is cultural memory written into the Arabic version of Yasmine's Picture and how does that get affected in the English translation?
2. What are the major strategies of translation used in the depiction of femininity in the English translation?
3. How much does the translation reinforce or undermine orientalist and patriarchal discourses?
4. How can feminist and postcolonial translation theories contribute to the unpacking of the transformation in gender and memory across translation?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Translation, Gender, and Cultural Memory in Arab Women's Literature

The intersection of gender, cultural memory, and translation has garnered increasing attention over the past several years, particularly in the context of Arab women's writing. Scholars argue that translation is not merely a linguistic act, but also a cultural and ideological negotiation with the power to either challenge or reinforce dominant narratives (Castro & Ergun, 2022, p. 12). In feminist translation studies, the translator is highlighted as an agent who interprets gendered voices, especially if the source text is from a historically marginalized environment (Flotow & Farahzad, 2021, p. 46).

Lebanese author Hanan Al-Shaykh has been extensively translated and discussed in postcolonial feminist circles due to the ways in which her work brings women's

lives in Arab societies to the forefront. Scholars like Mejdoubi (2023) argue that her fiction conveys "layers of emotional and political memory encoded in the feminine voice" (p. 77). However, such multi-layered complications are often rearranged or diluted in translation to accommodate Western cultural expectations (Svirsky, 2019, p. 98). This observation echoes Said's (2021) objection to cultural translation as a practice that is too often governed by orientalist presuppositions, in which the Arab woman is represented as a trope rather than as a subject.

Al-Shaykh's *Yasmine's Picture*, less famous than her novels like *Women of Sand* and *Myrrh*, is a concise and intense depiction of feminine memory, trauma, and agency. Its English translation offers a fertile case for exploring how memory and gendered expression translate—or fail to translate—between languages and cultural contexts.

2.2 Gaps in Feminist Translation Studies on Arab Women's Short Fiction

While feminist translation theory has grown exponentially in recent years, there exists a significant gap in the application of these theories to short fiction by Arab women writers. Much of the existing scholarship will focus on complete novels or on high-profile political works (Almutawa, 2022, p. 66). Short stories—despite their concise, often lyrical grappling with gender and memory—have received little of the same level of scholarly attention.

Moreover, there are scant works that explicitly address the micropolitics of memory in translation—how small lexical decisions, tonal modulations, or narrative tempo can inflect the representation of feminine subjectivity (Bandia, 2018, p. 44). The translation of *Yasmine's Picture* is largely uncharted in academic literature, and there is a clear gap for close-reading studies with feminist and postcolonial foundations.

2.3 Theoretical and Methodological Innovations

This article adopts a feminist-postcolonial integrated translation approach. Feminist translation theory—particularly the writings of Flotow (1991, revitalized in Flotow & Farahzad, 2021)—foregrounds the ethical responsibility of the translator to deliver gendered meaning, in opposition to patriarchal and colonial manipulations. Postcolonial translation theory, as developed in the work of scholars such as Spivak (2018), calls for responsiveness to the epistemic violence of translation and the imperative of preserving respect for cultural specificity of the voices of women.

Methodologically, the research combines critical discourse analysis (CDA) and close textual comparison of both the English and Arabic editions of Yasmine's Picture. The combined methodology facilitates the identification of semantic shifts, cultural omissions, and narrative restructuring (Munday, 2021, p. 193). Special attention is given to metaphor, deixis, and memory cues—linguistic signals that are likely to be culturally embedded and susceptible to distortion in translation.

2.4 Bridging the Gap

This article attempts to address several lacunae: the lack of short fiction in feminist translation studies, the minimal focus on micro-level textual strategies in cultural memory translation, and the limited focus on Arab women's translated voices beyond main canonical works. By close reading Yasmine's Picture, this research contributes not only towards a better informed understanding of Al-Shaykh's writing but also towards a more subtle practice of feminist-postcolonial translation criticism.

Lastly, this study seeks to validate the value of treating translated short fiction as a site of ideological struggle and cultural memory preservation. In so doing, it argues for a practice of translation that is not domesticating but stays true to the complexity of Arab female subjectivity (Abu-Lughod, 2022, p. 110; Mejdoubi, 2023, p. 80).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This research adopts a qualitative interpretive framework, informed by feminist and postcolonial translation studies. It relies on close comparative reading of the Arabic original text and English translation of Hanan Al-Shaykh's Yasmine's Picture. The research is grounded in critical discourse analysis (CDA) and textual analysis and aims to explore how linguistic and cultural attributes of femininity and cultural memory are transformed in translation (Munday, 2021, p. 142).

The goal is to uncover subtle ideological transformations and translation choices that shape gendered subjectivities' and memory's description. This practice allows for a rich, interwoven interpretation of linguistic patterns and socio-cultural meanings (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2020, p. 198).

3.2 Data Collection



The data used in this study comprises sample texts—specifically, the original Arabic text and the English translation of Yasmine's Picture. The two texts were selected because of the abundance of their feminine experience, identity, and cultural memory. Specific narrative passages were selected that have culturally embedded metaphors, expressions of memory, and representations of womanhood.

The English translation, published in anthologies of translated Arabic novels, was verified for consistency and accuracy. Textual excerpts were drawn from key passages touching on memory, body, trauma, and socio-cultural contexts—elements central to both postcolonial and feminist interpretations (Mejdoubi, 2023, p. 79).

3.3 Data Analysis

Analysis is comparative textual in nature, with line-by-line comparison between English and Arabic. The study focuses on:

Lexical changes and deletions

Grammatical patterns involving agency and voice

Metaphorical identification of memory and the female body

Neutralizable and exoticizable cultural references that may be neutralized or exoticized in translation

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), especially with respect to gendered and ideological discourse (Fairclough, 2018, p. 118), informs the process. Translation is examined to identify how it reproduces or reconfigures cultural memory and feminine subjectivity.

3.4 Analytical Framework

Analytical framework integrates feminist translation theory and postcolonial theory, namely the work of Luise von Flotow (2021) and Gayatri Spivak (2018). Feminist translation theory underlines the portrayal of gender, the translator's agency, and the ethics of voice communication. It asks questions about how femininity is portrayed in the translated text: is it preserved, silenced, or reformed based on Western standards (Castro & Ergun, 2022, p. 39)?

Postcolonial theory more specifically Spivak's (2018) critique of the "epistemic violence" of translation enables examination of how the translated work appropriates or recontextualizes culturally specific voice. Double vision enables close analysis of the processes by which Yasmine's Picture becomes a negotiation site between source culture and target readership.

3.5 Samples

Sample 1: Naming and Identity

Arabic:

«قالت جدتي إن اسمي ياسمين اختارته أمي لأن رائحته لا تُنسى، مثل الذكرى الجميلة» (Al-Shaykh, 2005, p. 11)

English:

“My grandmother said my name, Yasmine, was chosen by my mother because its scent is unforgettable—like a beautiful memory.”

Analysis:

Names in Arab cultures are extremely symbolic and often denote familial relationships, nature, or religious connotations. "Yasmine" (the flower jasmine) is full of scent and cultural identification, usually feminine, pure, and commemorative in Arabic literature and folkloric records. The Arabic phrase "رائحته لا تُنسى" evokes emotional resilience—smell, in cognitive science, is one of the strongest elicitors of involuntary memory. The Arabic metaphor superimposes sensory and affective planes to express the idea that femininity and memory are inseparable—a recurring theme in the story.

In translation, while the metaphor of "scent" is preserved, English downplays the sensorial-spiritual superimposition characteristic of Arabic. The English "like a beautiful memory" lacks the same rhythm and affective flow as the Arabic simile, which equates scent and memory with an almost sacramental gentleness. The translation, as technologically correct as it is, dilutes the cultural weight of naming as legacy, femininity, and commemoration (Mejdoubi, 2023, p. 77). This is an instance of how even seemingly gentle lexical translation option thins out dense feminine meaning layering.

Sample 2: Female Body and Modesty

Arabic:

(Al-Shaykh, 2005, p. 12). لبستُ ثوب أمي الحريري الذي كانت ترتديه في ليالي العرس، شعرتُ أنني امرأة أخرى»

English:

“I wore my mother’s silk dress that she used to wear at weddings, and I felt like a different woman.”

Analysis:

The sentence is a moment of peak bodily transition. The Arabic word "ثوب" (thawb) is more than a "dress"—it calls to mind a classic gown, perhaps regionally or generationally specific, hinting at a cultural artifact burdened with memory and social significance. It refers to women's descent, the transmission of gendered self, and sensual silk feel as part of Arab women's initiation rites. Furthermore, "wedding nights" "ليالي العرس" is not just an occurrence but a cultural performance of femininity, which the heroine now inhabits, becoming metaphorically introduced to a culturally designated role.

The English translation facilitates the event in plain terms—"silk dress" and "weddings"—but leaves out the cultural specificity of the garment and emotional shift entailed in the Arabic rhythm and form. The phrase "I felt like a different woman" is abrupt compared to the affective transition of Arabic. As Flotow & Farahzad (2021, p. 63) argue, these kinds of translations can erase the sensory and symbolic textures of femininity, most notably in the way clothing codes gender and social expectations in Arab societies.

Sample 3: Trauma and Silence

Arabic:

(Al-Shaykh, 2005, p. 13). فقط نظرت إليّ بصمت طويل. لم تسألني عما حدث في الطريق»

English:

“She didn’t ask me what happened on the way. She just looked at me in a long silence.”

Analysis:

Silence in this case is also speech and memory. Indirect speech and emotional in women, are repressive and protective strategies in the control, especially long silence) is) "صمت طويل" majority of Arab homes. The Arabic expression

loaded: it is not absence of conversation, but a sign of recognition and collective ion of the unnameable, perhaps some suffering. The silence is the recognit an action often seen in —traumatic or shameful experience, without verbal allusion .feminine or maternal solidarity in patriarchal cultures

English translation copies form but not psychosocial density of silence in Arab nvironments. It can be passively read as a gesture, whereas in the Arabic e language, silence is neither passive, but rather witnessing and custodial. Feminist translation critique, for Spivak (2018, p. 275), must reflect on how gendered ty spaces but coded meanings of agency or oppression, silences are not emp .especially in postcolonial female testaments

Sample 4: Religious Memory and Gender

Arabic:

كنتُ أسمع أمي تبكي بعد الصلاة، تدعو أن لا أصبح مثلها» (Al-Shaykh, 2005, p. 14)

English:

“I used to hear my mother cry after prayer, praying I wouldn’t become like her.”

Analysis:

This sentence entwines religious ritual, maternal fear, and feminine resignation. I used to) "كنتُ أسمع": The Arabic structure creates intensified emotional rhythm weeping after prayer) intensifies the quality of) "تبكي بعد الصلاة" hear) followed by repetition and internalization of anguish. The mother's prayer, ironically, is not for not to share her fate. This evokes a cycle of —the mother but for the daughter quietist defiance, symbolizing the ways women's agency is inherited mourning and .asserted through sacred ritual and maternal longing

The English rendition is semantically accurate but elides the recursive emotion and at prayer is both cultural weight of the Arabic. It does not capture the way th a stifled appeal in religious form. Svirsky (2019, p. 100) —performance and protest suggests that translation of the religious speech of Arab women loses their doubled o script, is a status as submission and resistance. The mother's tears, ritualized int .gendered theology of desperation that English transmutes into understatement

Sample 5: Exoticism in Translation

Arabic:

(Al-Shaykh, 2005, p. 16). على جدار غرفتي صورة لي، بشعري المجدول وثوب المطرّز الذي خاطته لي جدتي بيدها»

English:

“On my bedroom wall, a picture of me with braided hair and an embroidered dress my grandmother made by hand.”

Analysis:

This sentence vibrates with maternal lineage and work done by women (for a braided hair) are signified by the embroidered dress) and the cultural beauty of girlhood that is seasoned with tradition, identity, and love. The grandmother's sewing is not just domestic work; it is an act of intergenerational bonding. The picture on the wall becomes a mnemonic device, keeping female memory and embodied cultural expression alive.

English, however, is vulnerable to Orientalist interpretation: "embroidered dress" and "braided hair" are tropes usually associated with the othering of femininity in the West. Such images, interpreted outside their original context, make themselves available to Western readers for aesthetic consumption rather than cultural understanding, notes Said (2021, p. 144). Affective proximity of the Arabic yields to the visible that can be objectified, and memory turns into an ornament.

Sample 6: Gendered Space and Resistance

Arabic:

(Al-Shaykh, 2005, p. 17). قالت لي عمّتي إن المطبخ هو عالم المرأة، فمزّقْتُ وصفة الطبخة وخرجتُ إلى الشارع»

English:

“My aunt told me the kitchen is a woman’s world, so I tore up the recipe and went into the street.”

Analysis:

This is a theatrical performance of gendered resistance. In the majority of Arab contexts, "the kitchen" is female domestic confinement, and "the street" is coded masculine as a public sphere, often conceived of as threatening or forbidden to women. The shattering of the recipe signifies the narrator's rejection of inherited gender roles. The maternal skill

se, a is more than about physical action; it's a social offen "خرجت إلى الشارع" phrase .bold crossing from privacy to publicity, from silent duty to public display

English captures the physical action but loses the symbolic power of spatial rebellion. "Going into the street" in Western societies does not carry the same uences. As Castro & Ergun (2022, p. 28) argue, feminist danger or conseq translation must recognize in which ways space is gendered in other cultures and how acts of refusal or mobility to translate can appear neutral but carry meaning in transgresses both the family and social norms in a the source culture. The hero's act .more culturally subversive sense than the translation implies

4. Results

4.1 Shifting Representations of Cultural Memory

The findings show that the majority of culturally grounded features within the Arabic rendition of Yasmine's Picture are unobtrusively flattened or generalized in translation into English. For instance, in Sample 1, the metaphor of jasmine's contains robust (رائحته لا تُنسى، مثل الذكرى الجميلة) perfume as unforgettably feminine textual linkages in Arabic literature between fragrance, memory, and the inter feminine. However, the English translation decreases the power of this metaphor and reduces its evocativeness by employing a less emotive description (Mejdoubi, y, Sample 5, which is discussing ancestral embroidery and p. 77). Similarl '2023 familial memory, becomes susceptible to exoticization in translation by the choice of "embroidered dress" over a culturally specific one like thawb or footnoteed .(definition (Said, 2021, p. 144

when linked to gendered materiality like —se shifts mean that cultural memoryThe translated or aestheticized to -is typically under—smell, texture, or handmade items .(accommodate Western readability or expectations (Svirsky, 2019, p. 100

4.2 Feminine Subjectivity and the Loss of Subtext

The other significant consequence is the partial diminishment or loss of feminine I " شعرت أنني امرأة أخرى interiority in the translation. In Sample 2, the application of emotional awakening linked felt like a different woman") carries multiple levels of to symbolic action of dressing up in the mother's dress. The building in Arabic emphasizes emotional transformation through word and sentence pace, and and tonality. English has the identical surface meaning but lacks the emotional cultural layering communicated in Arabic vocabulary and sentence structures .(Flotow & Farahzad, 2021, p. 63)

(نظرت إليّ بصمت طويل) In Sample 3, the gesture of silence following trauma structurally exemplifies how gendered displays of suffering through silence are sustained but contracted in interpretive space. The Arabic leaves room for cultural readings of silence as repression, shame, or inherited trauma, while the English 'depends on descriptive realism with diminished symbolic resonance (Spivak, 2018, p. 275).

4.3 Acts of Resistance and Spatial Shifts

Sample 6 presents a particularly vivid illustration of the softening of female resistance in translation. When the protagonist refuses the kitchen as a feminized space is not just rebelling but committing a cultural in Arabic, she (خرجت إلى الشارع) a woman entering a man's public sphere. The English translation ("came —taboo into the street") loses the political and cultural significance of the Arabic, losing feminist statement (Castro & Ergun, 2022, p. 28).

These examples demonstrate how spatial dynamics between the private and public spheres are often nullified in translation, as well as the political symbolism of reflects broader ideological processes female resistance. The textual redeployment whereby women's agency in Arab contexts is made less legible or more palatable (Lughod, 2022, p. 110-to Western audiences (Abu

5. Discussion

5.1 Cultural Memory and the Limits of Translatability

e partial translatability of cultural memory, particularly The findings emphasize when such memory is embodied and gendered. In Yasmine's Picture, images such as jasmine perfume, embroidered garments, and shared religious practice mirror through senses and symbols. They are deep cultural symbols which write memory .not shallow design features; they carry collective identity and feminine inheritance

But translation tends to neutralize or aestheticize these elements, often at the cost ginal Arabic (Mejdoubi, 2023, p. of the emotion and political urgency of the ori For Svirsky (2019, p. 98), translation tends to commodify cultural memory as .(79 consumable cultural difference for the Western reader. This is particularly glaring ent and handmade in Samples 1 and 5, where the affective connotation of sc clothing is lost, suggesting a bigger issue of sustaining affective cultural specificity .within translation

This supports Spivak's (2018, p. 276) assertion that translation can perform source are not understood or epistemic violence" when the cultural signs of the s".respected

5.2 Feminine Subjectivity: From Voice to Silence

especially when—The study also demonstrates how feminine subjectivity can get flattened or depoliticized—expressed by metaphor, silence, and memory Yasmine's Picture in its original Arabic foregrounds a woman's .during translation internal dialogue with her past, body, and inherited roles, generally through indirect or metaphoric ways of expression. English translation, while literal on the biguity and multivalence characteristic of feminine surface, often discards the am .expression in the source culture

For example, the weeping during prayer (Sample 4) expresses religious resignation, suffering motherhood, and cultural repression. The English version is fact report than a symbolic act of despair and intergenerational -of-more of a matter anxiety (Flotow & Farahzad, 2021, p. 70). The same goes for Sample 3, where is translated—a normally culturally coded indication of trauma—silence c story purpose (Castro & Ergun, 2022, p. descriptively but stripped of its symboli .(41

it risks erasing—The activity of translation, thus, not only risks erasing meaning voice, especially where that voice is in culturally specific modes of address like .(p. 278 ‘silence, metaphor, or gesture (Spivak, 2018

5.3 Translation as a Site of Ideological Negotiation

The final theme to emerge from the analysis is that translation is an ideologically negotiated space in which multiple pressures converge: fidelity to the source text, t culture, market pull, and the translator's positionality. For readability in the target Arab women's writing, translation becomes additionally freighted with .Orientalism, patriarchy, and resistance questions

خرجت) aceIn Sample 6, the act of rejecting the kitchen and moving into public sp is a conscious act of resistance. In Arabic, the sentence hums with (إلى الشارع) cultural tension, but in English it is almost casual. The translation deadens the feminist power of the act and recreates a dynamic of purifying female resistance .(Lughod, 2022, p. 112-r global consumption (Abufo

This supports Said's (2021, p. 147) contention that translation may impose cultural hierarchies where it represents the gendered or colonized subject in a softened or

s that feminist translation theory must decontextualized form. This also support word equivalence and attend to the ethics of -for-break away from word representation, especially in the translation of women's lives from marginalized .(environments (Flotow & Farahzad, 2021, p. 72

6. Limitations

spite of the fact that this study offers valuable insights into the intertwinement of In cultural memory, femininity, and translation, it is important to note several Yasmine's —limitations. Firstly, the study focuses exclusively on one short story ch limits the level of generalization. Although this close reading whi—Picture depth examination, it does not capture the full range of -approach allows for in .techniques used in translating Arab women's literature

ranslation without direct Second, the study is based on the published English t access to the translator's commentary, background, or paratextual data. The translator's intentions, editorial pressures, and publication context could provide a cularly parti—more precise understanding of why certain decisions were taken regarding omissions, toning down, and the treatment of cultural and gendered .metaphors

analytic approach that -Third, the article adopts primarily a textual and discourse ators. As does not interact with reception studies or interviews with readers or transl it is, it does not examine how translated femininity and memory are received by Anglophone readers, or how these representations might differ across audiences or .reading contexts

and particularly ‘Finally, the study is limited by language availability and access for the Arabic version, which may vary in phrasing between editions or regional -publications. These limitations mean the findings, while informative, are a case .specific analysis rather than an exhaustive survey

7. Future Research

Future studies could expand on this research in several meaningful directions:



1. Comparative Studies Between Authors: Future studies could compare a number of short stories or novels by different Arab women writers, comparing how femininity are handled across different translators, publishers, cultural memory and .or periods
2. Reception Studies: Investigating how readers respond to translated representations of Arab women would give useful data on how memory and ed in the target culture. Surveys, femininity are constructed or reconstruct .response theory may turn out to be useful tools-interviews, and reader
3. Translator's Perspective: Interviews with translators of Arab women's writing can also uncover the ethical and ideological dilemmas they face in .tiating censorship, readability, and cultural adaptationnego
4. Multilingual and Multimedia Directions: Future directions include exploring how cultural memory and femininity are translated across not only writing but also m adaptations), offering a multimodal audiovisual texts (e.g., subtitles, fil .perspective on translation ethics
5. Expanded Theoretical Frameworks: Future studies could more overtly draw on intersectional feminist theory, decolonial studies, or trauma theory in order to complexity of memory and gender representation in continue investigating the .translation

8. Conclusion

This study set out to explore the representation and refiguration of cultural memory and femininity in the translation of Yasmine's Picture by Hanan Al-Shaykh. textual analysis of the Arabic original and English Through comparative translation, the study revealed that translation tends to be an ideologically negotiated process whereby gendered voices and memory-invested imagery are .tlyeither preserved, simplified, or reinterpreted sub

Three prevailing themes emerged: (1) cultural memory is typically minimized or especially if—exoticized for Western audiences; (2) feminine subjectivity is tendentially depoliticized or—expressed in silence, metaphor, or resistance ble in translation; and (3) translation constitutes a site of tension rendered less reada .between fidelity to the source culture and the target culture's expectations

Turning to feminist and postcolonial translation theory, this article emphasizes the about translation as a political and ethical act. Translators importance of thinking and by—are not inert mediators; they are cultural agents that shape how texts .are received, read, and remembered—extension, cultures

sdeen ,s'hkyahS-Lastly, the translation of Arab women's writings, such as Al careful attention not only to language but also to voice, silence, context, and agency. Only by acknowledging and negotiating these dimensions can translation .asurebe an act of solidarity and a safeguarding of cultures, rather than a tool of er

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