

# **Translation and Empathy: A Habitus-Based Study of Lina Mounzer's English Translation of Syrian Women's Trauma Narratives**

**Dr. Sherihan Medhat Abo Ali**

Lecturer, Department of English Language and Literature,  
Faculty of Arts, Alexandria University

## **Abstract:**

The present paper aims to provide a habitus-oriented analysis of Lebanese writer and translator Lina Mounzer's English translation of Syrian women's trauma narratives of the Syrian civil war. These narratives are published by the *Syria Stories* platform. It is a project launched by The Institute for War and Peace Reporting to provide a space for Syrian women to narrate their stories of struggle in the thick of the war. The paper is based on the argument that the Bourdieusian concept of habitus can be employed as an analytical tool to reveal how Mounzer's translation strategies are imbued with her empathy which originates from a homology of painful war experiences. Mounzer's voice as a translator and the narrators' voices are argued to have coalesced due to the confluence of Mounzer's traumatic Lebanese civil war memories and the Syrian women's narratives that depict their oppression in their war-ravaged country. The analysis is divided into two parts: macro-paratextual analysis and micro-textual analysis. The macro-paratextual analysis outlines Mounzer's life trajectory to scrutinize the conditions that structured her habitus and informed her perception of translation. The micro-textual analysis comprises an examination of extracts from the narratives Mounzer translated in order to highlight the strategies that mark her habitus-driven emotional engagement in and empathetic approach to the translation of Syrian women's trauma narratives.

**Keywords:** Translation, Empathy, Habitus, Trauma, Narratives

**الترجمة والتشاعر: دراسة من منظور الهابيتوس حول ترجمة لنا منذر  
الإنجليزية لسرديات الصدمة الخاصة بنساء سوريات**

**د. شريهان مدحت أبو علي**

**مدرس بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية وآدابها، كلية الآداب، جامعة الإسكندرية**

**ملخص البحث باللغة العربية:**

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى تقديم تحليل من منظور الهابيتوس للترجمة الإنجليزية التي قامت بها الكاتبة والمترجمة اللبنانية لنا منذر لسرديات الصدمة الخاصة بنساء سوريات عن الحرب الأهلية السورية. وقد نُشرت هذه السرديات على منصة حكايات سوريا، وهو مشروع دشّنه معهد صحافة الحرب والسلام لتوفير مجال للنساء السوريات لرواية قصص معاناتهنّ في خضمّ الحرب المستعرة. يقوم البحث على حجة أن مصطلح الهابيتوس، الذي قدّمه بيير بورديو، يمكن توظيفه كأداة تحليلية لبيان كيفية اصطباغ إستراتيجيات لنا منذر في الترجمة بتشاعرها النابع من تشابه تجارب الحرب الأليمة. فصوت لنا منذر المترجمة وأصوات الراويات قد تلاحمت نظرًا إلى تلاقي ذكرياتها المؤلمة عن الحرب الأهلية اللبنانية وروايات النساء السوريات التي يصفن فيها اضطهادهنّ في بلادهنّ التي مرّقتها الحرب. ينقسم التحليل إلى جزئين: تحليل عتبات النصّ على المستوى الكلي وتحليل نصّي على المستوى الجزئي. يعرض تحليل عتبات النصّ على المستوى الكلي مسار حياة لنا منذر لمعرفة الظروف التي شكّلت الهابيتوس الخاصّ بها وأثّرت على منظورها للترجمة. يضم التحليل النصّي على المستوى الجزئي فحص مقتطفات من السرديات التي ترجمتها لنا منذر لتسليط الضوء على الإستراتيجيات التي تدل على ارتباطها العاطفيّ ونهجها التشاعريّ الناتجين عن الهابيتوس الخاصّ بها إزاء ترجمة سرديات الصدمة الخاصة بنساء سوريات.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الترجمة، التشاعر، الهابيتوس، الصدمة، السرديات

## 1. Introduction

The prevalence of conflicts worldwide in the twenty-first century accentuated the mediatory roles of translators and interpreters. In 2011, the Arab world became a hotbed of a series of uprisings called the Arab Spring. As this tumultuous Arab Spring unfolded, the world witnessed dismantling of political regimes and fierce vying for power, with ordinary citizens bearing the brunt. The Syrian civil war, which erupted in March 2011, is a case in point; it started out as an uprising against President Bashar Al-Assad's regime but then took an ominous turn, metamorphosing into a sanguinary civil war and a seedbed of trauma. The latter generally refers to "the impact of war, famine, and disasters on humans. It appears as part of a cycle of violence and struggle for survival (Pillen, 2016, p. 97). In the vicissitudes of the Syrian civil war, which took a heavy toll on women, narratives depicting the horrors of tyranny and woes of war emerged, carrying traumatized voices yearning to be heard. Translation has become indispensable for these narratives to cross language barriers and reach wider audiences. Being "a 'carrying across', a 'leading across' or a 'setting across'" is a deep-rooted conceptualization of translation (Tymoczko, 2009, p. 174). The notion of voice is of paramount significance in translation. It can refer to the voice of the translator, author, or characters depicted in the source text (Alvstad, 2013). Translation is a vehicle for making a vast array of voices heard (Tymoczko, 2009). In the context of conflict, translation can be viewed as a process of carrying stories of trials and tribulations across, providing a space for the voicing of subdued voices. The translator is a "'medium' or mediator who channels the 'spirit' or voice or meaning or intention of the source author across linguistic and cultural and temporal barriers to a new audience that could not have understood that source author without such mediation" (Robinson, 2001, p. 21). Being the pivotal factor in the materialization of this mediation, the translator has become a locus of research interest in recent years. Systematic scholarly attempts to zero in on translators hark back to Gengshen's (2004) proposal

of a translator-oriented approach in his article “Translator-centredness” in which he argues that such an approach can “serve as a theoretical prop to justify the translator's subjectivity, creativity, and authority in the translation process” (p. 106), hence the burgeoning of the so-called Translator Studies. The latter is divided into three principal branches: cultural, cognitive, and sociological. The cultural branch conceives of translators “as agents of cultural exchange and evolution”; the cognitive branch tackles issues germane to “translators’ mental processes,” such as the study of translators’ attitudes, personal habitus, and the impact of emotions on their decision-making process; and the sociological branch lays focus on the study of the “sociology of translators themselves” (Chesterman, 2021, pp. 242-243). The borders between these three branches are not clear-cut. For example, the translator’s habitus can be studied from a cognitive as well as a sociological lens (Chesterman, 2021). The sociological concept of habitus has galvanized the attention of the translation research community on account of its amenability to be studied from a translational perspective, providing insights into the motives behind translation decisions and strategies.

Given this background, the present study attempts to examine the impact of Lebanese writer and translator Lina Mounzer’s habitus on her English translation of Syrian women’s trauma narratives of the Syrian civil war. The study attempts to address the following two research questions:

1. How does Lina Mounzer’s war experience bear on her perception of translation?
2. How can Lina Mounzer’s habitus account for her emotional engagement in and empathetic approach to the translation of Syrian women’s trauma narratives?

The following section charts out the literature on the issue of emotion and empathy in translation. It is followed by outlining the genealogy of the Bourdieusian concept of habitus and its situatedness in the realm of Translation Studies.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. *Emotional Engagement and Empathy in Translation*

Translation is conventionally perceived as a form of art. Such a perception implies that the translator experiences emotions inherent in the original text and attempts to render them (Malmkjær, 2020). Emotions “drive cognition, make it meaningful and steer our attention and motivations” (Risku & Meinx, 2021, p. 175). Process-oriented translation research has recently advanced towards studying the role played by emotions in the translation process (Hubscher-Davidson, 2021). Due to the mushrooming interest in studying the role of affect, the psychological term for emotions, it could be argued that Translation Studies has undergone “an affective turn” (Hubscher-Davidson, 2021, p. 53). Emotion as an object of study in translation covers three perspectives: emotions inherent in source texts, translators' own emotions, and emotions as received by target audiences (Hubscher-Davidson, 2021). Before translating, the translator engages in intense readings of the source text. A bond is created between the translator and the source text author, and the former can experience a gamut of feelings when translating an emotionally charged text (Hubscher-Davidson, 2018). When transferring emotions contained in the source text, translators “will need to tap into their own resources of emotional experiences and emotional language in order to understand and transfer the information to the best of their abilities” (Hubscher-Davidson, 2018, p. 4). Translated texts can bespeak the translator's dispositions and emotions besides those of the author of the original text (Hubscher-Davidson, 2021). That is why it could be argued that translators' engagement with the texts they translate put them on a par with writers (Nelson & Maher, 2013). Translators can unintentionally express their emotions when undertaking the translation of emotionally charged texts via the integration of “cognitive and linguistic shifts in the translations” (Hubscher-Davidson, 2021, p. 56). This idea is demonstrated in Xiao's (2020) study of the impact of emotions on the strategies used by Lin Shu in his translation of Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*

into Chinese (*Zei shi*). Xiao (2020) found four emotion-related deviations from the source text, which stem from the translator's emotional style. The latter reflects the prevalent culture of the time and location in which the translator is situated. Shu's emotion-related shifts arise from his staunch adherence to the Confucian ethics of the Chinese society.

An important aspect in the translator's emotional engagement with texts is the notion of empathy. Keen (2006) defines empathy as "a vicarious, spontaneous sharing of affect" that can be stimulated by "witnessing another's emotional state, by hearing about another's condition, or even by reading" (p. 208). She explains that "our personal histories and cultural contexts affect the way we understand automatically shared feelings" (p. 209). Both translation and interpreting are perfused with empathy given the interpersonal nature of these two practices (Apfelthaler, 2021). Empathetic relations in translation can exist between the translator/interpreter and any of the following: the source text ideas and characters, the source text author, and the target audience (Apfelthaler, 2021). Hills (2012) likens undertaking translation to "entering into a relationship" where equilibrium must be maintained between "one's own language and the other's; cultures and nuance; meaning and subtext; rhyme and rhythm; and the time when the text was written and when the translation is read" (p. 77). Accordingly, translation can be viewed as a performance (Nelson & Maher, 2013). What is relayed through this performance is the mental picture the translator formulates based on his or her understanding of the source text (Stolze, 2002).

When translators engage empathetically with the texts they translate, it is quite likely that they translate more ethically (Alvstad, 2021). Concerning the issue of ethics and responsibility in translation, Baker (2006) maintains that translators and interpreters are not acquiescent individuals whose task "begins and ends with the delivery of a linguistic product"; rather, they hold responsibility for the texts and utterances they mediate, and these translated texts and utterances "participate in creating, negotiating and contesting social reality" (p. 105). Translators and interpreters

have a panoply of strategies to use “to strengthen or undermine particular aspects of the narratives they mediate, explicitly or implicitly. These strategies allow them to dissociate themselves from the narrative position of the author or speaker or, alternatively, to signal their empathy with it” (Baker, 2006, p. 105). It thus stands to reason to argue that translation “is not a mediating linguistic exercise, but rather a key and integral part of the larger mosaic of the political realities of today” (Footitt & Kelly, 2018, p. 168). In a similar vein, Tymoczko (2009) argues that translation does not take place in “a neutral space” as translators “are positioned ethically, politically and ideologically” (p. 184). This idea finds expression in Walsh’s (2019) study of the impact of empathy on translation. Walsh (2019) examined Langston Hughes’s translation of Federico García Lorca’s book of poems *Romancero gitano (Gypsy ballads)* with an eye to Hughes’s empathy and political engagement with the messages of the original texts. Both the translator and the author were united in their “concern for social justice and an innate empathy with the outsider” (p. 54). Walsh (2019) pointed out five empathy-mediated strategies employed by Hughes in his translation of Lorca’s texts. These are dynamic equivalence, intensification, alliteration, creative addition, and close rhythmic equivalence.

## 2.2. *Sociological Turn in Translation Studies*

The notion of interdisciplinarity has always been championed in the field of Translation Studies (Wolf, 2007). It is reflected, for example, in the cross-fertilization between translation and sociology, which catalyzed the rise of the sociological turn in Translation Studies. With the inception of the sociological turn, the issue of translators’ agency has come to the fore, and the question of the impact of the social context on translation has been brought into sharp focus (Angelelli, 2014). A sociology of translation contributes to raising awareness of “the central role of the translators as socially constructed and constructive agents, simultaneously producing texts and making meaning” (Berneking, 2016, p. 265). Sociological approaches to translation have shed

light on the centrality of the translators’ “professional trajectories and social positionings” (Inghilleri, 2009, p. 282). The sociological turn has given rise to novel research prospects where sociological analytical tools can be instrumentalized in translation research, such as the Bourdieusian concept of habitus.

### 2.2.1. Habitus.

The field of Translation studies has witnessed a growing scholarly attention invested in the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in an endeavor to get a grip on the translator’s “*persona*” (Voinova & Shlesinger, 2013, p. 30). In this respect, Bourdieu’s work is a rich seam to mine; it can be harnessed to provide insights into the translator’s individuality and the different relations between agents of translation. Moreover, by integrating Bourdieu’s theories into translation, the social aspect is foregrounded, helping researchers reach “the root of the translation activity wholly in an attempt to unearth what is behind the whole process in relation to not only the author and the translated work but also translators who deserve to be cherished” (Eriş, 2019, p. 135). Bourdieu’s sociological theories are among the primary bedrocks of the sociological turn in Translation Studies. Chief among his sociological terminology is the concept of habitus. The latter has gained ground in translation research and has come to be employed as an “analytical tool” (Vorderobermeier, 2014, p. 15). Habitus is:

systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively “regulated” and “regular” without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor. (Bourdieu, 1980/1990, p. 53)



The habitus is structured by the conditions of existence, past events as well as educational and family experiences. The structuring aspect refers to the fact that habitus shapes one's practices, feelings, and decisions (Maton, 2008). This definition of habitus highlights "how social agents can be socially and historically determined and yet also have some choice in how they act" (Inghilleri, 2020, p. 195). Habitus is neither static nor deterministic; rather, it is a transformative, guiding mechanism for the individual's actions and perceptions.

An integral aspect in the conceptualization of habitus is the notion of dispositions. They constitute "*master patterns* of behavioral style ... They find expression in language, nonverbal communication, tastes, values, perceptions, and modes of reasoning" (Swartz, 1997, p. 108). Accordingly, habitus can be perceived as "the basic psychological-emotional disposition of agents (in a field), including notions of role model, self-image and group identity" (Chesterman, 2006, p. 13). Another important dimension in the conceptualization of dispositions is that they are "unconscious schemata" that are ingrained "through lasting exposure to particular social conditions and conditionings, via the internalization of external constraints and possibilities" (Wacquant, 1998, pp. 220-221). They serve as "a present past that tends to perpetuate itself into the future by reactivation in similarly structured practices" (Bourdieu, 1980/1990, p. 54). Along this line of thought, habitus constitutes the individual's "embodied history, internalized as a second nature," functioning as "the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product" (Bourdieu, 1980/1990, p. 56). It refers to how an individual is "in sympathy with a particular context; it is a tacit quality whereby an actor understands and is wholly comfortable with a given context" (Carter & Clegg, 2008, p. 866); ergo, habitus is equivalent to "a feel for the game" (Johnson, 1993, p. 5). This feel for the game is acquired through the process of socialization, predisposing individuals to act in certain ways in accordance with their internalized dispositions.

The study of the translator's habitus lies at the root of agent-grounded translation research (Buzelin, 2011). The significance of studying habitus in translation lies in the fact that "the conditions underlying certain translation decisions can be correlated with the *habitus* of the translator(s) involved in specific historical moments, or *habitus* can explain why certain translation strategies were adopted and others not" (Wolf, 2012, p. 135). The incorporation of the concept of habitus in translation research calls attention to the figure of the translator, the producing agent of translation, vis-à-vis his or her dispositions as these dispositions come into play in the translation process in the form of certain choices and strategies. Wolf (2007) argues that "the act of translating is incorporated through, and at the same time influenced by, the translator's *habitus*, which can be identified by reconstructing the translator's social trajectory" (p. 19). Among the advocates of focusing attention on the study of the social biography of the translator is Meylaerts (2010). She contends that "the transposability of dispositions acquired through experiences related both to other fields and to translators' larger life conditions and social trajectory may play a fundamental role in a translator's habitus" (p. 1). The translator's habitus is the outcome of "a personalized social and cultural history" (Simeoni, 1998, p. 32). Translators affect and are affected by the social world they grow up in, and this social world encompasses family, education, and traditions. This multifaceted social world is internalized in the translator's habitus, with family history constituting the substratum (Eriş, 2019). Family history has a far-reaching impact on the composition of the translator's dispositions and perspectives (Eriş, 2019). That is why it is important to focus not only the translator's professional habitus but also on their personal habitus because translators, as Meylaerts (2008) argues, "are always more than mere translators" (p. 94). In essence, detecting the translator's habitus, which motivates the translator to opt for certain translation strategies, hinges on reconstructing the translator's life trajectory, a cardinal constituent of which is the translator's social and cultural milieu.

The literature on the Bourdieusian concept of habitus comprises a number of case studies that reflect its significance from a translational perspective. For example, Gouanvic (2005) studied the habitus of three literary translators (Maurice-Edgar Coindreau, Marcel Duhamel and Boris Vian) who translated American literary texts into French in the period between 1920 and 1960. The literary taste of these three translators, who come from different backgrounds, was informed by their social trajectories (Gouanvic, 2005). The translator's addition of elements not found in the source text is the outcome of the translator's habitus:

If a translator imposes a rhythm upon the text, a lexicon or a syntax that does not originate in the source text and thus substitutes his or her voice for that of the author, this is essentially not a conscious strategic choice but an effect of his or her specific *habitus*, as acquired in the target literary field. (Gouanvic, 2005, p. 158)

Xu (2012) conducted a habitus-based study of the translation of Shen Congwen's novella *Biancheng (Border town)* by Jeffrey C. Kinkley, a history and sinology scholar. He showed how Kinkley's professional background significantly shaped his personal habitus which impacted his translation strategies. He holds that translation strategies are the product of the translator's habitus; the translator's use of strategies like in-text explication and endnotes for the translation of culture-bound terms is motivated by his profession as a historian and sinologist, which structured his habitus.

Yannakopoulou (2014) employed the concept of habitus in his study of Yorgos Himonas' Greek translation of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to account for the translator's stylistic choices and the way in which he interpreted the source text. In the light of Bourdieu's (1984) notion of tastes and its relatedness to habitus, Yannakopoulou (2014) argues that "the translators' whole life trajectory partakes in the shaping of their aesthetic, linguistic, and evaluative criteria" (p. 167). He further explains that "recurrent translation behavioural *patterns* are strong indicators that a

phenomenon is not random or idiosyncratic, but is a conscious (or unconscious) choice resulting from the habitus” (p. 172). He opines that studying the translator’s personal habitus provides thorough insights into the incentive behind the translator’s linguistic and stylistic choices in translation.

Alkhawaja (2019) investigated Trevor Le Gassick’s habitus, including his experiences and intellectual trajectory, in an attempt to highlight its influence on his translation strategies. Her data comprised an interview with Le Gassick and extracts from his English translations of Naguib Mahfouz’s novels. Alkhawaja (2019) argues that Le Gassick’s strategies for the translation of culture-specific items in Mahfouz’ novels are weighted towards domestication rather than foreignization to reduce dissimilarities and accentuate similarities. This stems from his abhorrence of racism, one of the residual effects of the various calamitous events he witnessed, such as World War II.

Eriş (2019) argues that it is possible that translators “fall prey to their habituses in various manners” (Eriş, 2019, p. 143). They can be overridden by a sense of obligation to undertake a translation work that is congruous with their own history (Eriş, 2019). For example, Erdağ Gökner undertook the English translation of Orhan Pamuk’s *My name is red* to satisfy his personal imperative to depict his country differently from the way it is commonly represented; he wanted to open the target audience’s eyes to an untold, interesting side of his country, which reflects the deep impact his country’s history had on his choices in translation (Eriş, 2019). Translation is a social activity, and translators are in the first place social actors whose habituses bear the imprint of the social reality they grew up and live in. That is why Eriş (2019) argues that the translator “draws upon the past in all aspects when carrying out the translation process” (p. 148).

Wang (2020) investigated three English translations of the Chinese novel *Shuihu zhuan (The water margin)*. He highlighted how the translators’ social trajectories are reflected in their different translation styles. For example, Wang (2020) explains

how the upbringing of Pearl S. Buck, one of the translators of *Shuihu zhuan*, in the countryside of China shaped her professional habitus as a writer and translator and engendered her sympathetic disposition towards the indigenous people in her homeland. Such a sympathetic tendency was the driving force behind her choice to translate the 70-chapter edition of *Shuihu zhuan* into English, attempting to introduce the target audience to the genuine Chinese culture.

### 3. Methodology

The present study adopts the concept of habitus as an analytical tool to account for Lina Mounzer's empathetic strategies in the translation of Syrian women's trauma narratives. The habitus-based study is divided into two parts: macro-paratextual analysis and micro-textual analysis. The macro-paratextual analysis is conducted by expounding Mounzer's life trajectory. It is conducive to highlighting her life experiences that significantly shaped her habitus. An article written by Mounzer regarding her translation of the Syrian women's narratives is used as a paratext to highlight her habitus-influenced perception of the translation process. The micro-textual analysis is carried out by examining extracts from Mounzer's English translation of Syrian women's narratives in order to substantiate the argument that her habitus is the driving force behind her emotional engagement in and empathetic approach to the translation of such emotionally charged texts.

### 4. Data Analysis

#### 4.1. *Macro-Paratextual Analysis: Lina Mounzer's Life Trajectory*

Mounzer was born in Beirut in 1978. Before the Lebanese civil war, which broke out in 1975, drew to a close, she had migrated with her family to Canada, but then she returned to her homeland. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in English literature from the American University of Beirut in 2004. Mounzer's career encompasses teaching, writing, and translating. Her teaching

vocation involves teaching creative writing at the American University of Beirut and the Lebanese American University. Her writing career abounds in articles published on numerous platforms, such as *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *Gulf News*, *The Paris Review*, *Middle East Eye*, *Literary Hub*, *L'Orient Today*, *The Baffler*, *Aramco World*, *New Lines Magazine*, *Warscapes*, *The Berlin Quarterly*, and *Bidoun*. Her first short story entitled "The one-eyed man" was published in the short story collection *Hikayat: Short stories by Lebanese women*. The plot revolves around a Lebanese immigrant living in Canada named Ali whose father dies, and so he has to return to his homeland to attend his father's funeral. The story delineates the protagonist's painful memories of Beirut during the war. In fact, many of Mounzer's writings limn her frustration with the situation in Lebanon. For example, in her article "When we mistook our hope for a heartbeat," which was published a year after Beirut's port blast, Mounzer commemorates this cataclysmic event that sent shockwaves around the world. She describes the aftermath of the blast and the pain that was inflicted on the Lebanese people, calling for holding Lebanese leaders accountable. Articles similar to the aforementioned one are "Lebanon as we once knew is gone" and "The day the world broke open in Beirut." Witnessing Beirut's civil war as a child has a deep impact on Mounzer's habitus; it has been ensconced in her habitus as a durable disposition that clearly and profoundly infuses her writing.

Aside from the political and economic crises bedeviling her country, Mounzer is interested in women-related issues, such as the notion of sexual politics, as evident in her article "Going beyond the veil: Against the regime of 'aib.'" In this article, she discusses social hypocrisy with respect to the issue of gender shame that plagues many Arab women. She reinforces her argument by discussing Leila Slimani's book *Sex and lies: True stories of women's intimate lives in the Arab world*.

Mounzer translated literary works by a variety of authors, amongst whom are Salah Badis, Hassan Daoud, Mazen Maarouf, and Chaza Charafeddine. She reflects on her translation work for

the *Women's Blog* section in the *Syria Stories* project (formerly known as *Damascus Bureau*) in her article "War in translation: Giving voice to the women of Syria." She cites in her article excerpts from the narratives she translated from Arabic into English, blurring the line between her voice and those of the source text narrators. She discusses the challenges she encountered when translating these narratives:

Their writing is filled with crossings; they are constantly traversing borders both visible and invisible, and it makes me think about the one between these two languages, Arabic and English, each a landscape unto itself. I am also hoping that what I am allowed to smuggle through will survive the journey. (Mounzer, 2016, para. 8)

Mounzer's (2016) concern echoes the long-standing issue of fidelity in Translation Studies. The ample differences between Arabic and English exacerbate her qualms about relaying the messages and emotions contained in the source texts as faithfully as possible. Her use of war-related terminology, such as "smuggle" and "survive," betokens how her own war experience bears on her view of translation; she likens her translation to an act of smuggling, which evokes the perilous and eerie war conditions when those who are caught in the middle desperately try to smuggle their belongings and clamber out of the mire of war.

Mounzer (2016) adopts Spivak's (1993) view of translation as being "the most intimate act of reading. Unless the translator has earned the right to become the intimate reader, she cannot surrender to the text, cannot respond to the special call of the text (p. 205). Mounzer (2016) believes that "to translate a text is to enter into the most intimate relationship with it possible. It is the translator's body, almost more so than the translator's mind, that is the vessel of transfer" (para. 14). She touches upon Spivak's (1993) argument that translation has an "erotic" aspect (p. 205). Besides raising the sense of surrendering to the text, there is

another facet of the word “erotic” as explained in the following extract:

There is a violence in undoing someone’s words and reconstituting them in a vocabulary foreign to them, a vocabulary of your own choosing. There is a violence, too, in the way you are-for long moments-annihilated by the other; undone in return. Neither the translator nor the text emerges from the act unscathed. (Mounzer, 2016, para. 14)

Mounzer (2016) explains how she was profoundly affected by the atrocities described in the narratives she translated. She mentions the notion of “voice” quite extensively. Translation is a site where many voices can interlock. The translator’s voice, as in Mounzer’s (2016) case, coalesced with those of the narrators of the source texts “*because of the fact that I am attempting to reproduce her voice as faithfully as I can, it must now re-emerge in a voice unavoidably my own*” (para. 16). Mounzer’s (2016) concern about communicating the emotions inherent in the narratives is captured in her view of translation as an act of “transplanting a feeling, a way of seeing the world, from one vocabulary of experience to another,” and this process of transplanting has to be “as delicate, as cognizant of the original conditions of creation in order to nurture and ensure a continuation of life” (para. 18). This calls to mind Benjamin’s (1923/2000) view of translation as the afterlife of the original text. Mounzer’s translation of these narratives arguably plays a crucial role in memorializing them and consolidating a different perspective to the ripple effect of the Syrian civil war. Her espousal of the view of translation as an attempt to make texts survive is engendered by her war experience; it has largely imbued her habitus which, in turn, affects the way she perceives and relates to others’ similar experiences in her translation practice.

Mounzer (2016) recollects the time she and her family had to move to Canada to flee the civil war in Lebanon. She depicts the large-scale turmoil wrought by bombing. She explains how expressing Arabic war-related terms in English detracts from their meanings and emotional associations. For example, when



translating the Arabic word *qazeefeh* into shell, the latter does not carry the same undertones of demolition and trauma. A *qazeefeh* caused the loss of hearing in one of her grandmother's ears. Her father survived many of them while crossing the Syrian border en route to the Canadian consulate to follow up on their visa status (Mounzer, 2016). Mounzer (2016) holds that collective trauma "lives on in all the stories you will ever tell from now on, in all the stories that will be passed down along the line of culture, even when they are about something else" (para. 31). Accordingly, collective trauma is resistant to dissolution; it suffuses one's language so much so that many words, such as a barrel or catastrophe, carry emotional baggage that echoes collective trauma (Mounzer, 2016). Mounzer (2016) justifies her use of English as a "war wound" (para. 33). This metaphor further attests to how her war experience is indelibly etched in her cognitive make-up and matrix of perception. She is aware that English is "a tool, as available to raw beauty as it is to hegemonic violence" and that "the only way to redeem it for all of us who it marginalizes is to fight our way out of those margins and insist on being part of the text" (para. 33). The Syrian women who have suffered the throes of war "are bearing their witness" by narrating their stories, bringing all what they have lost to life, and "we who listen to their stories are also bearing witness. Carrying something whose significance cannot be described in language, but must nevertheless be contained within it" (Mounzer, 2016, para. 47-48). Her translation contributes to the notion of bearing witness by re-narrating the narrators' original narratives in another language to help them traverse linguistic boundaries and survive, hence narrativizing trauma to memorialize it.

Viewing translation from the prism of being an act of crossing over with symbiosis existing between the translator and the author, Mounzer (2016) believes that acts of translation "require an active form of engagement that is at once, paradoxically, an active form of surrender" (para. 49). She draws an analogy between refugees'

crossing borders and translation as an act of traversing. By translating these stories, borders are obliterated. She believes that:

to cross over from that which is felt, experienced, to that which is voiced—for the purpose of witness and being witnessed—is each and every time the declaration of a singular understanding of what it means to be alive in the world. (Mounzer, 2016, para. 50)

That is why she considers translation in this sense “the best form of resistance” (para. 51). By crossing borders, translators prove that these borders are penetrable.

In the light of the macro-paratextual analysis, it is evident how the Lebanese civil war is a milestone in Mounzer’s life trajectory. Her war experience has been entrenched as a durable, overarching disposition in her habitus. Her traumatic war experience and her migration at a young age contributed to shaping her perception of translation as a process of crossing over and carrying messages as faithfully as possible to help them survive as well as disposing her as a translator to actualize this perception in her translation praxis.

#### **4.2. *Micro-Textual Analysis: Lina Mounzer’s Empathetic Translation Strategies***

##### **4.2.1. Foreignization.**

Schleiermacher (1813/2012) lists two different approaches to translation: “Either the translator leaves the writer in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him; or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer toward him” (p. 49). The first approach corresponds to foreignization and the second to domestication. Venuti (1995) qualifies domestication as “an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home” as opposed to foreignization which he describes as “an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad” (p. 20). Considering Mounzer’s (2016) article, it is evident how she attempts to make the reader come closer to the traumas of Syrian

women as portrayed in their personal narratives. To achieve this end, she prioritizes retaining the cultural and emotional nuances of many culture-specific items through transliteration. In other words, her choice of transliteration stems from her desire to relay the emotional timbres of the Arabic words so that the target readers can savor the otherness of the source texts and vicariously experience the narrators' traumas.

In the story entitled "عندما تحوّلنا إلى جثة بكفن أسود" ("When we turned into black-clad corpses"), the narrator recounts the terror that plagues Syrian women under the rule of mujahedin fighters. They police women's dress code; women have to be dressed in black from head to toe. They are not allowed to go on the streets on their own without a محرم as shown in the following extract:

عدا خوفي من الإشاعات التي تقول بأنهم سوف يعيدوننا إلى حلب لأننا بلا محرم، كانت رحلتنا مغامرة كبيرة لكننا أردنا العودة إلى منزلنا في الرقة بغض النظر عن العواقب.

#### **Mounzer's translation:**

This only added to my fears stemming from rumours we had heard that we would be sent back to Aleppo for travelling without a "mahram", a male chaperone. Our trip was a dangerous adventure, but we were desperate to return to our home in Raqqa, regardless of the consequences.

Here Mounzer resorts to transliteration and in-text explanation for the translation of this religious word. This reflects her attempt to strike a balance between preserving the foreignness of the culture-specific item while at the same time providing words familiar to the target readers to facilitate their understanding of this word. She adopts the same strategies when translating the word الحسبة as shown in the following extract:

كيف تسافرون بلا محرم؟ أين تقيمون في حلب؟ لماذا تدرسون والمجاهدين يموتون؟  
... وفجأة هبطت علينا الصاعقة عندما خيرنا بين مصادرة بطاقتنا الجامعية أو طلب  
الحسبة كي تجلدنا.

#### Mounzer's translation:

“How can you travel without a mahram? Where are you staying in Aleppo? How can you study while **mujahedin** die? ... Disaster struck when he hit us with an impossible choice – either we hand over our university IDs or he would call the “**hisbah**”, the “**morality police**” to come and flog us.

Mounzer vents her ire over the depravity and phony religiosity of *hisbah* members in her 2016 article:

Does the word strike the same fear in your heart as it does mine, reader; does it elicit the same disgust that such flesh-hungry men might dare invoke the name of God and his morals, the God I have spent my whole life serving in my heart and dressing modestly for? (Mounzer, 2016, para. 41)

Concerning the translation of *مجاهدين*, Mounzer uses transliteration throughout. The first time it is mentioned in this story it is accompanied by the additional word “fighter.” She similarly adds the word “cloak” after the transliteration of the culture-bound garment *العباءة* as shown in the following extract:

حاولت أن أعطي يدي بطرف العباءة بعد تنبيه أمي لي خشية أن ينهر أحد المجاهدين  
بيدي (الجزء الوحيد الظاهر من جسدي)

#### Mounzer's translation:

I tried to cover my hands with the ends of my **abaya (cloak)**, mindful of my mother's warnings that some **mujahidin fighter** might be smitten with my hand – the only part of my body that was showing.

An important culture-specific item that is recurringly and remarkably associated with wars in general and the Syrian civil war in particular is *الشهادة*. In the narrative entitled *ماما ليش عم*

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

"يضرّبونا؟" ("Mama, why are they shelling us?"), the narrator describes the painful time when she and her family were on the brink of death because of the heavy shelling that surrounded them. Mounzer resorts to transliteration and addition of the word "prayer":

وبدأت أصواتنا تتعالى بنطق الشهادة لأننا أدركنا بأننا لن ننجو إلا بقدرة الخالق

#### **Mounzer's translation:**

Our voices rose in the **shahada** prayer. We felt that only God could preserve us.

In her article, Mounzer explains the senses of the Arabic root شهد (witness). Among the words derived from this root are شهيد (martyr) and استشهاد (martyrdom). She expresses the relation between witnessing and martyrdom in the following: "As if to die for a cause in Arabic is to bear witness to something until it annihilates the self" (para. 11). The transliteration of this word contributes to preserving its cultural and religious peculiarity as well as its pain-filled overtones. Another foreignization example is the transliteration of the word "ماما" into "Mama" in the title instead of using its common equivalent "Mum." This can be justified by Mounzer's disposition to keep parts from the narratives as intact as possible so as not to take away from their emotional weight, especially that terms like "بابا" and "ماما" are used in distressing situations such as the one described in the narrative entitled "أنا عايشة عايشة لا تيكوا" ("Don't cry, I'm alive"). The narrator and her family were stuck in the middle of a barrage of shelling:

سبقني أخي عابد وما إن اجتاز الدرجات حتى انهمر عليه الرصاص كالمطر. أكمل عابد نزوله إلى القبو وبدأت أنا بالصراخ "بابا بابا بابا". وأحسست بالرصاص يخترق قدمي.

#### **Mounzer's translation:**

My brother went ahead, but as soon as he was on the stairs, bullets began flying.

He continued down to the cellar, and I screamed, “**Baba! Baba! Baba!**”

Then I felt a bullet pierce my foot.

A culture-specific item that features prominently in the narratives is *الشبيحة*. It refers to the Syrian state-sponsored militants who engage in acts of terrorizing local citizens during the Syrian civil war. An explanation of the meaning of *الشبيحة* is included in the source text. Mounzer opts for transliteration as shown in the following example from the narrative entitled “هجرة الظلام الأسود إلى قورقنيا” (“The bitterness of exile”):

أخذنا أخي إلى قورقنيا، لكنني لم أكن مطمئنة حيال الذهاب إلى هناك، عندما وصلنا كان في انتظارنا أنس الزير، قائد كتيبة من لواء يوسف العظمة، أعطانا منزلاً من بيوت “الشبيحة” (تسمية تُطلق على أنصار النظام والمتعاونين معه) في القرية

#### **Mounzer’s translation:**

My brother accompanied us to Qurqunya, but I felt uneasy the whole way there. When we arrived, Anas al-Zayr, battalion commander of the Youssef al-Athma Brigade, was waiting for us. He assigned us a house that used to belong to a “**shabiha**” – a **regime thug or collaborator**

Mounzer’s choice to transliterate *الشبيحة* has to do with her attempt to retain the harsh associations of this word. The same applies to her choice of the word “thug” as a translation for “أنصار” instead of using its literal equivalent “supporters.” She unequivocally condemns Al-Assad’s supported militants for the horror they unleash upon Syria:

Have I described them well enough that you understand, reader, how they are a monstrous thing that haunts and shadows, even though I cannot explain the aural recall of the word *shabah*, ghost? How they are the hell-hounds of Bashar al-Assad, willing to rip your life apart for whatever scraps their master throws their way? How they are one of the reasons we revolted, and that shucking our fear of them to march in the streets with heads held high and sure was the first revolution we enacted upon ourselves? (Mounzer, 2016, para. 42)

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

Mounzer's habitus predisposes her to resort to foreignization in an attempt to preserve the cultural connotations and emotional baggage of certain culture-specific items. To use Mounzer's words, the transliteration of the words discussed in this section reflects her endeavor to "smuggle" as much as possible in the hope that what she smuggles through the process of translation will survive.

#### 4.2.2. Inclusive "we" and "our."

What is noteworthy in Mounzer's denouncement of the regime's *shabiha*, which is discussed in the previous section, is that she explicitly aligns herself with the Syrian revolutionaries as indicated in her use of the first-person plural pronoun "we." This arguably arises from her reliving the trauma of war via translation; she has first-hand experience of war that left her country in a shambles and uprooted her. Another remarkable instance of using the pronoun "we" is found in the narrative entitled "تجربة دفعت ثمنها" "Yarmouk killing hunger with sleep" ("Yarmouk killing hunger with sleep"). The narrator gives account of the dire conditions of Yarmouk camp and how hunger reaped the souls of many people:

الآن وأنا أكتب هذه المادة يكون قد مضى على حصار مخيم اليرموك ٦٠٤ أيام. لم نر الكهرباء منذ ٧٠٠ يوم. وعدد شهداء الجوع قد بلغ ١٧١ شهيدا. جوع؟؟؟ نعم جوع..

#### Mounzer's translation:

As I write these words, it has been 604 days since the siege of the Yarmouk camp began. We haven't had electricity for 700 days. The number of those who died of hunger has reached 171. **We are hungry.**

The use of inclusive "we" adds a sense of commonality and a personal dimension to the bleak picture portrayed in the narrative, rendering the translator's voice and that of the narrator inextricable. This notion of inclusion is also manifested in Mounzer's use of the first-person plural possessive adjective "our" when translating the title of the narrative "أخيراً سأسرح شعري وأرى" into "Even **our** smiles are taken away." The narrator

depicts the harrowing circumstances she and her family found themselves inadvertently trapped in after fleeing their home. Mounzer chooses to foreground the grief that struck the narrator instead of literally rendering the Arabic title. This evinces her freedom as a translator to heighten aspects of the narrative in order to voice her siding with the plight of the women narrators, her fellow sufferers and war survivors. This strategy of heightening is discussed in more detail in the following section.

#### 4.2.3. Intensification.

Mounzer's emotional and empathetic engagement with the narratives is further indicated through the strategy of intensification. In the narrative entitled "على جانبي الحياة في إِدلب" ("Living on the edge"), the narrator describes her unfortunate encounters with rebels who used to intercept her on her way to the school she worked in because of her not observing the Sharia-compliant dress code and for wearing makeup. She frustratingly says:

لخصت وجهت نظرهما فكراً سائداً وثورة انحرفت بوصلتها

#### Mounzer's translation:

Their attitude summed up the whole sorry story – a dominant mode of thought, **a revolution buried in its infancy**

The personification of the revolution in this image of a newborn who died is more emotionally arousing than the image depicted in the Arabic extract where the revolution is likened to a ship whose compass broke.

Other similar emotion-arousing translation choices are found in the narrative entitled "لأجله حيث هو في زنانات الظلام" ("Searching for my lost father") in which the narrator recalls the humiliation her mother had to endure in the search for the narrator's father. She says:

وفي اليوم التالي كان على أمي الذهاب إلى أحد الشيوخ لتعيد السمفونية التي اعتادت تكرارها أمام الجميع. طلبت مرافقتها إلى منزله لأنه لا ثقة لنا بهؤلاء الشيوخ، إلا أنه لم



يكن على لسانها سوى هذا الجواب "لا وحياء الله لن أسمح لهم برؤيتكم، لن أزع بكم في مثل تلك الدوامة، هم أشخاص قذرين لن أسمح بذلك".

#### **Mounzer's translation:**

The next day, my mother had an appointment to see one of the tribal sheikhs to repeat the same **supplications** she had made to many others before. I asked whether I could accompany her to his home because I didn't trust any of those sheikhs, but she adamantly refused. "No, by God no," she said. "I won't let them so much as lay eyes on you. I won't throw you into that **zoo**. These are base, foul people. I won't allow it."

Mounzer's choice of the word "supplications" as a translation for "السمفونية", which literally means "symphony," heightens the tenor of humiliation; the narrator's mother had to jump through hoops in the hope that she would find the father. The rendering of the Arabic word "الدوامة", which literally means "whirlpool," into "zoo" intensifies the bestiality of those wielding power and the ghastliness of the conditions women in Syria have to live in.

The strategy of intensification is also well demonstrated in the narrative entitled "هجرة الظلام الأسود إلى قورقنيا" ("The bitterness of exile"). It is about the narrator and her family's forced migration to Qurqunya amidst fears that confrontations with the regime would erupt. Her mother says:

سنرحل ليس من أجل الحفاظ على حياتنا، ولكن من أجل صغارنا لن يتحملوا ما سيحدث  
لهم هنا

#### **Mounzer's translation:**

"We aren't leaving to save ourselves, but to spare the children **unbearable trauma**"

The use of "unbearable trauma" reinforces Mounzer's empathetic engagement with the narrator's plight; her exposure to war has palpably left an imprint on her habitus. She does not

merely sympathize with the emotionally charged narratives but rather identifies with the narrators' grievances. Although the narrator's mother does not specify what exactly would happen to the children, Mounzer relies on her own traumatic war experience to fill the gaps and state that trauma awaited the children. This buttresses the argument that habitus is the guiding mechanism of Mounzer's translation strategies; the systematicity in her intensification of the appalling conditions of the narrators stems from her empathetic disposition.

#### 4.2.4. Addition.

Mounzer's empathy-driven translation is marked by numerous instances of addition. For example, in the narrative entitled "عندما" "تحوّلنا إلى جثة بكفن أسود" ("When we turned into black-clad corpses"), the narrator says how the only advantage of the black clothes covering her whole body was to conceal her chagrin:

ربما كانت الفائدة الوحيدة لهذه القماشة أن تخفي جروحنا واختناقاتنا.

#### Mounzer's translation:

Perhaps that was its only useful quality, the way it hid our pain and agony **from prying eyes**.

The addition of the prepositional phrase "from prying eyes" relays the daunting conditions in which the narrator found herself when one of the mujahedin fighters scolded her because of her attire and her going out without a mahram, which put the narrator and her mother at risk of getting flogged by the *hisbah*. It reflects the depravity of the mujahedin who are notorious for unspeakable violations committed against many Syrian women.

Another example of addition that evinces Mounzer's emotional engagement is found in the narrative entitled "أنتى وحيدة ... وباكستاني" "يهدد" ("Stopped by the morality police at Raqqa"). The narrator faced the danger of being caught by the *hisbah* because one of its members, who was Pakistani, found her sitting alone in a clothes shop during prayer time. He wanted her to get into the *hisbah* police van to receive her punishment:

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

كان المهاجر يريد أن تصعد في سيارة "الحسبة" ليأخذها إلى المقر حيث ستلقى العقاب الملائم

### Mounzer's translation:

The foreigner wanted her to get into the *hisbah* van to be taken to headquarters so that she could be punished appropriately **for her crime**.

The addition of "for her crime" relays the point of view of *hisbah* members; in the eyes of extremists, women commit a crime by being alone without a mahram, which epitomizes women's deprivation of the bare minimum of their human rights.

There is another addition in the narrative as shown in the following:

يسحب المهاجر عصا من السيارة مهددا "ميم" بالضرب إن لم تصعد ... يصرخ بها "إصعدي أنتم لا تأتون إلا بهذه الطريقة"

### Mounzer's translation:

The foreigner pulled a long stick out of the van, threatening M. with a beating if she didn't comply and get in ... "Get in!" he bellowed. "You **animals** don't understand unless you're beaten."

Mounzer's addition of "animals" heightens the inhumane treatment of the narrator at the hand of the Pakistani extremist.

Mounzer's revolutionary streak takes hold of her translation of the narrative entitled "طيفك في المدينة المهجورة" ("A ghost city full of painful memories"). The narrator recounts the heart-wrenching memory of her brother who was martyred in Moadamiya. Because this city was under siege, she could not go there to mourn her brother. She says:

البيع لم يمت بعد، وابتلينا ببيع آخر يقتلنا بنكهة أخرى.  
ولكن لأجلك ولأجل الآلاف من رفاقك أقسمنا أن نبقى ...  
وسنبقى

**Mounzer's translation:**

The monster is still alive, and we now have other monsters devouring us in new and terrible ways.

And yet for your sake, and for the sake of thousands like you, I swear we will remain here, **steadfast**.

We will remain.

The addition of the adjective “steadfast” amplifies the unwavering resolve of the narrator to never flee her war-torn country. Mounzer identifies with the narrator’s determination to stay in her homeland despite the diabolical conditions that have turned the country into a breeding ground for terrorism. The addition of “full of painful memories” in the translation of the narrative title derives from Mounzer’s emotional rapport with the narrator by virtue of their homologous traumatic war experiences.

In the narrative entitled "صديقي الشهيد تسمرت أصابعي وأنا أكتبها" ("Syria: My friend the martyr"), the narrator commemorates her friend who was martyred. He disappeared into thin air while accompanying her on a work trip to serve as her *mahram*. She says:

اختفيت أنت ومن معك كغموض ظاهرة كونية.

**Mounzer's translation:**

You and those who were with you disappeared as if into a **black hole**, like a **mysterious** cosmic phenomenon.

Mounzer’s addition of the noun phrase “a black hole” and the adjective “mysterious” amplifies feelings of despair and grief as the whereabouts of the narrator’s friend remained unknown. Mounzer’s additions bolster the argument adopted in the present study, namely that her translation strategies are motivated by her empathetic habitus in which her traumatic experience of the Lebanese civil war is firmly anchored. The recurrent pattern of additions is not arbitrary but rather an outcome of her habitus.

## Conclusion

The Syrian civil war has ushered in a new era of political turmoil and social unrest. Translation has become a vital ground for re-narrating narratives of those who have and still bear the brunt of this new chapter of the war-wracked country. The translator is a key figure in this process of re-narration and mediation, and thus his or her role needs to be scrutinized in order to rationalize translation decisions and strategies. Adopting habitus as an analytical tool is argued to achieve this end. The macro-paratextual analysis of Mounzer's life trajectory provides insights into the conditions that shaped her habitus. It is evident how Mounzer's war experience is ingrained in her habitus; it informed her perception of translation as a process of carrying stories across linguistic barriers to help them survive. It disposed her to empathize with the various traumatic experiences narrated by Syrian women. Her empathetic approach to the English translation of these trauma narratives is manifested in the different strategies discussed in the micro-textual analysis. Mounzer's choice of foreignization is motivated by her attempt to smuggle as many Arabic lexical items as possible so as to retain their emotional intensity. Mounzer's immersion in the narratives and her identification with the narrators' traumatic experiences are demonstrated in her use of inclusive pronouns, such as "we" and "our." Intensifying the narrators' accounts of oppression is not random but rather inspired by Mounzer's emotional engagement with these accounts that strike a chord with her. Mounzer's strong emotional bond with the women narrators spurred her on adding words not there in the original narratives. All these strategies are the outcome of her habitus.

## References

- Alkhawaja, L. A. (2019). Habitus and intellectual trajectory in the translational process: A case study. *Al-Balqa Journal for Research and Studies* البلقاء للبحوث والدراسات, 22(1), 9-24. <https://digitalcommons.aaru.edu.jo/albalqa/vol22/iss1/1>
- Alvstad, C. (2013). Voices in translation. In Y. Gambier & L. van Doorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of translation studies* (Vol. 4, pp. 207-210). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Alvstad, C. (2021). Literary translator ethics. In K. Koskinen & N. K. Pokorn (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of translation and ethics* (pp. 180-194). Routledge.
- Angelelli, C. V. (2014). Introduction: The sociological turn in translation and interpreting studies. In C. V. Angelelli (Ed.), *The sociological turn in translation and interpreting studies* (pp. 1-5). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Apfelthaler, M. (2021). Empathy. In Y. Gambier & L. van Doorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of translation studies* (Vol. 5, pp. 59-65). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Baker, M. (2006). *Translation and conflict: A narrative account*. Routledge.
- Benjamin, W. (2000). The task of the translator (H. Zohn, Trans.). In L. Venuti (Ed.), *The translation studies reader* (pp. 15-22). Routledge. (Original work published 1923)
- Berneking, S. (2016). A sociology of translation and the central role of the translator. *The Bible Translator*, 67(3), 265-281. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2051677016670232>
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste* (R. Nice, Trans.). Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). Polity Press. (Original work published 1980)

- Buzelin, H. (2011). Agents of translation. In Y. Gambier & L. van Doorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of translation studies* (Vol. 2, pp. 6-12). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Carter, C., & Clegg, S. R. (2008). Managerial cultural capital. In S. R. Clegg & J. R. Bailey (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of organization studies* (Vol. 1, pp. 864-867). Sage Publications.
- Chesterman, A. (2006). Questions in the sociology of translation. In J. F. Duarte, A. A. Rosa, & T. Seruya (Eds.), *Translation studies at the interface of disciplines* (pp. 9-27). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Chesterman, A. (2021). Translator studies. In Y. Gambier & L. van Doorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of translation studies* (Vol. 5, pp. 241-246). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Eriş, E. (2019). Habitus and translators: Orhan Pamuk's *My name is red*. *Journal of Translation Studies*, (27), 132-151. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/913566>
- Footitt, H., & Kelly, M. (2018). Translation and war. In F. Fernández & J. Evans (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of translation and politics* (pp. 162-176). Routledge.
- Gengshen, H. (2004). 'Translator-centredness.' *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, 12(2), 106-117. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2004.9961494>
- Gouanvic, J.-M. (2005). A Bourdieusian theory of translation, or the coincidence of practical instances (J. Moore, Trans.). *The Translator*, 11(2), 147-166. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2005.10799196>
- Hills, L. (2012). Effective self-translation: How not to completely lose yourself in another's language. In R. Wilson & L. Gerber (Eds.), *Creative constraints: Translation and authorship* (pp. 77-84). Monash University Publishing.

- Hubscher-Davidson, S. (2018). *Translation and emotion: A psychological perspective*. Routledge.
- Hubscher-Davidson, S. (2021). Emotions and translation. In Y. Gambier & L. van Doorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of translation studies* (Vol. 5, pp. 53-58). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Inghilleri, M. (2009). Sociological approaches. In M. Baker & G. Saldanha (Eds.), *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies* (2nd ed., pp. 279-282). Routledge.
- Inghilleri, M. (2020). Field theory. In M. Baker & G. Saldanha (Eds.), *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies* (3rd ed., pp. 194-199). Routledge.
- Johnson, R. (1993). Editor's introduction: Pierre Bourdieu on art, literature and culture. In R. Johnson (Ed.), *The field of cultural production: Essays on art and literature* (pp. 1-25). Columbia University Press.
- Keen, S. (2006). A theory of narrative empathy. *Narrative*, 14(3), 207-236. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20107388>
- Malmkjær, K. (2020). Centres of attention in (literary) translation. *Journal of Languages and Translation (JLT)*, 7(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.21608/jltmin.2020.143452>
- Maton, K. (2008). Habitus. In M. Grenfell (Ed.), *Pierre Bourdieu: Key concepts* (pp. 49-65). Acumen.
- Meylaerts, R. (2008). Translators and (their) norms: Towards a sociological construction of the individual. In A. Pym, M. Shlesinger, & D. Simeoni (Eds.), *Beyond descriptive translation studies: Investigations in homage to Gideon Toury* (pp. 91-102). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Meylaerts, R. (2010). Habitus and self-image of native literary author-translators in diglossic societies. *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 5(1), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1075/tis.5.1.01mey>



مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

- Mounzer, L. (2006). The one-eyed man. In R. S. Khalaf (Ed.), *Hikayat: Short stories by Lebanese women* (pp. 202-214). Telegram.
- Mounzer, L. (2016, October 6). War in translation: Giving voice to the women of Syria. *Literary Hub*. <https://lithub.com/war-in-translation-giving-voice-to-the-women-of-syria/>
- Mounzer, L. (2020, August 6). The day the world broke open in Beirut. *Gulf News*. <https://gulfnews.com/opinion/op-eds/the-day-the-world-broke-open-in-beirut-1.73018165>
- Mounzer, L. (2021, March). Going beyond the veil: Against the regime of 'aib. *The Baffler*. <https://thebaffler.com/salvos/going-beyond-the-veil-mounzer>
- Mounzer, L. (2021, August 4). When we mistook our hope for a heartbeat. *L'Orient Today*. <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1270537/when-we-mistook-our-hope-for-a-heartbeat.html>
- Mounzer, L. (2021, September 5). Lebanon as we once knew is gone. *Gulf News*. <https://gulfnews.com/opinion/op-eds/lebanon-as-we-once-knew-is-gone-1.82026722>
- Nelson, B., & Maher, B. (2013). Introduction. In B. Nelson & B. Maher (Eds.), *Perspectives on literature and translation: Creation, circulation, reception* (pp. 1-10). Routledge.
- Pillen, A. (2016). Language, translation, trauma. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 45, 95-111. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-102215-100232>
- Risku, H., & Meinx, B. (2021). Emotion and the social embeddedness of translation in the workplace. In Tra&Co Group (Ed.), *Translation, interpreting, cognition: The way out of the box* (pp. 173-188). Language Science Press.
- Robinson, D. (2001). *Who translates? Translator subjectivities beyond reason*. State University of New York Press.

- Schleiermacher, F. (2012). On the different methods of translating (S. Bernofsky, Trans.). In L. Venuti (Ed.), *The translation studies reader* (3rd ed., pp. 43-63). Routledge. (Original work published 1813)
- Simeoni, D. (1998). The pivotal status of the translator's habitus. *Target*, 10(1), 1-39. <https://doi.org/10.1075/target.10.1.02sim>
- Spivak, G. C. (1993). *Outside in the teaching machine*. Routledge.
- Stolze, R. (2002). Empathy with the message in translation. *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa*, 14(2), 19-31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1013929X.2002.9678122>
- Swartz, D. (1997). *Culture and power: The sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Tymoczko, M. (2009). Translation, ethics and ideology in a violent globalizing world. In E. Bielsa & C. W. Hughes (Eds.), *Globalization, political violence and translation* (pp. 171-194). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Venuti, L. (1995). *The translator's invisibility: A history of translation*. Routledge.
- Voinova, T., & Shlesinger, M. (2013). Translators talk about themselves, their work and their profession: The habitus of translators of Russian literature into Hebrew. *TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, 26(2), 29-57. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1037131ar>
- Vorderobermeier, G. M. (2014). Introduction: (Translatorial) *habitus*—a concept that upsets (in translation studies)? In G. M. Vorderobermeier (Ed.), *Remapping habitus in translation studies* (pp. 1-26). Rodopi.
- Wacquant, L. (1998). Pierre Bourdieu. In R. Stones (Ed.), *Key sociological thinkers* (pp. 215-229). Macmillan Press.

- Walsh, A. S. (2019). Empathy and engagement in translation: Langston Hughes's versions of Lorca's *Gypsy ballads*. In L. P. Gutiérrez & A. C. Villanueva (Eds.), *New approaches to translation, conflict and memory: Narratives of the Spanish civil war and the dictatorship* (pp. 45-63). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wang, W. (2020). *English translations of Shuihu zhuan: A narratological perspective*. Springer.
- Wolf, M. (2007). Introduction: The emergence of a sociology of translation. In M. Wolf & A. Fukari (Eds.), *Constructing a sociology of translation* (pp. 1-36). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Wolf, M. (2012). The sociology of translation and its "activist turn." *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 7(2), 129-143. <https://doi.org/10.1075/tis.7.2.02wol>
- Xiao, X. (2020). A study on the impact of emotions on Lin Shu's translation strategies in *Zei shi*. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 497, 533-537. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.201215.492>
- Xu, M. (2012). On scholar translators in literary translation—a case study of Kinkley's translation of 'Biancheng.' *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, 20(2), 151-163. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2011.554610>
- Yannakopoulou, V. (2014). The influence of the *habitus* on translatorial style: Some methodological considerations based on the case of Yorgos Himonas' rendering of *Hamlet* into Greek. In G. M. Vorderobermeier (Ed.), *Remapping habitus in translation studies* (pp. 163-182). Rodopi.

**The titles of and links to the Arabic narratives used in the analysis and their corresponding English translations by Lina Mounzer:**

Lina Mounzer's English Translations	Arabic Narratives
When we turned into black-clad corpses <a href="https://syriastories.net/en/when-we-turned-into-black-clad-corpses/">https://syriastories.net/en/when-we-turned-into-black-clad-corpses/</a>	عندما تحوّلنا إلى جثة بكفن أسود <a href="https://syriastories.net/-عندما-تحوّلنا-إلى-جثة-بكفن-أسود/">https://syriastories.net/-عندما-تحوّلنا-إلى-جثة-بكفن-أسود/</a>
Mama, why are they shelling us? <a href="https://syriastories.net/en/mama-why-are-they-shelling-us/">https://syriastories.net/en/mama-why-are-they-shelling-us/</a>	ماما ليش عم يضربونا؟؟ <a href="https://syriastories.net/-ماما-ليش-عم-يضر-بونا-؟؟/">https://syriastories.net/-ماما-ليش-عم-يضر-بونا-؟؟/</a>
Don't cry, I'm alive <a href="https://syriastories.net/en/dont-cry-im-alive/">https://syriastories.net/en/dont-cry-im-alive/</a>	أنا عايشة عايشة لا تبكوا <a href="https://syriastories.net/-أنا-عايشة-عايشة-لا-تبكوا/">https://syriastories.net/-أنا-عايشة-عايشة-لا-تبكوا/</a>
The bitterness of exile <a href="https://syriastories.net/en/the-bitterness-of-exile-2/">https://syriastories.net/en/the-bitterness-of-exile-2/</a>	هجرة الظلام الأسود إلى قورقنيا <a href="https://syriastories.net/-هجرة-الظلام-الأسود-إلى-قورقنيا/">https://syriastories.net/-هجرة-الظلام-الأسود-إلى-قورقنيا/</a>
Yarmouk killing hunger with sleep <a href="https://syriastories.net/en/yarmouk-killing-hunger-with-sleep/">https://syriastories.net/en/yarmouk-killing-hunger-with-sleep/</a>	تجربة دفعت ثمنها عمري ولكنها تستحق <a href="https://syriastories.net/-تجربة-دفعت-ثمنها-عمري-ولكنها-تستحق/">https://syriastories.net/-تجربة-دفعت-ثمنها-عمري-ولكنها-تستحق/</a>
Even our smiles are taken away <a href="https://syriastories.net/en/even-our-smiles-are-taken-away/">https://syriastories.net/en/even-our-smiles-are-taken-away/</a>	أخيراً سأسرح شعري وأرى نفسي في المرأة <a href="https://syriastories.net/-أخيراً-سأسرح-شعري-وأرى-نفسي-في-المرأة/">https://syriastories.net/-أخيراً-سأسرح-شعري-وأرى-نفسي-في-المرأة/</a>
Living on the edge <a href="https://syriastories.net/en/living-on-the-edge/">https://syriastories.net/en/living-on-the-edge/</a>	على جانبي الحياة في إدلب <a href="https://syriastories.net/-على-جانبي-في-إدلب/">https://syriastories.net/-على-جانبي-في-إدلب/</a>
Searching for my lost father <a href="https://syriastories.net/en/searching-for-my-lost-father/">https://syriastories.net/en/searching-for-my-lost-father/</a>	لأجله حيث هو في زنانات الظلام <a href="https://syriastories.net/-لأجله-حيث-هو-في-زنانات-الظلام/">https://syriastories.net/-لأجله-حيث-هو-في-زنانات-الظلام/</a>
Stopped by the morality police at Raqqa <a href="https://syriastories.net/en/stopped-by-the-morality-police-in-raqqa/">https://syriastories.net/en/stopped-by-the-morality-police-in-raqqa/</a>	أنتى وحيدة ... وباكستاني يهدد <a href="https://syriastories.net/-أنتى-وحيدة-وباكستاني-يهدد/">https://syriastories.net/-أنتى-وحيدة-وباكستاني-يهدد/</a>
A ghost city full of painful memories <a href="https://syriastories.net/en/a-ghost-city-full-of-painful-memories/">https://syriastories.net/en/a-ghost-city-full-of-painful-memories/</a>	طيفك في المدينة المهجورة <a href="https://syriastories.net/-طيفك-في-المدينة-المهجورة/">https://syriastories.net/-طيفك-في-المدينة-المهجورة/</a>
Syria: My friend the martyr <a href="https://syriastories.net/en/syria-my-friend-the-martyr/">https://syriastories.net/en/syria-my-friend-the-martyr/</a>	صديقي الشهيد تسمرت أصابعي وأنا أكتبه <a href="https://syriastories.net/-صديقي-الشهيد-تسمرت-أصابعي-وأنا-أكتبه/">https://syriastories.net/-صديقي-الشهيد-تسمرت-أصابعي-وأنا-أكتبه/</a>