The Self-Translated Text as a Creative Paratextual Liminal Space in Dunya Mikhail's *The Beekeeper of Sinjar: Rescuing the Stolen Women of Iraq*

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Abstract:

The present research explores how the traditional concepts of *loyalty* and *fidelity* in translation become less applicable to self-translation. This is because such practice serves as a creative, paratextual, and liminal space in which the source text (ST) is rearticulated for a different audience. As a result, the translator assumes a dual identity as both author and translator, shaping the status of the target text (TT). The readers of the TT approach the self-translated text with the expectation of authenticity, insider knowledge, and an immediate authorial engagement. The translator is no longer viewed as a betrayer of the ST, but rather as an expert agent, communicator, and a reliable witness, as exemplified in Dunya Mikhail's في سوق السبايا (In the Sabaya's Market). Mikhail translated the book into English as *The Beekeeper of Sinjar: Rescuing the Stolen Women of Iraq*, with the help of Max Weiss. Together, they created a liminal, paratextual space in English that forms a threshold, giving Iraqi Yazidis, particularly women, a new voice in a different cultural context to bear witness to their stories of captivity and survival. Accordingly, the paper extends Genette's (1987/1997) literal definition of "paratext" to encompass the target text as an entirely new entity with a specific "Skopos" to use Vermeer's (1978/2000) term. It is demonstrated that although the translators have endowed the TT with a new cover, title, identity, and modes of narration, it constructs and presents a recognized humanitarian case to the international community.

Keywords: Self-translation, Paratexts, Creativity, Fidelity, and Liminality

النص المترجم ذاتياً بوصفه فضاءً إبداعياً وعتبياً في مؤلّف دنيا ميخائيل *نحّال سنجار: انقاذ النساء العراقيات المسلوبات*

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الملخص:

تتحرى الدراسة الكيفية التي تصبح فيها المفاهيم التقليدية مثل "الاخلاص" و"الأمانة" في الترجمة اقل اهمية تطبيقياً في مجال الترجمة الذاتية، حيث يمثل هذا المجال فضاءً ابداعيا وعتبيا موازياً للنص الأصلي من حيث إعادة تشكيل النص بما ينسجم مع جمهور مختلف. وبناءاً على ذلك، يتقمص المترجم هوية مزدوجة تجمع بين المؤلف والمترجم، الامر الذي يؤثر في طبيعة النص الهدف ومكانته. اذ يتلقى قارئ العمل المترجم ذاتيا بطريقة يعتبره/ تعتبرها نصاً يتمتع بقدر عالٍ من الشرعية والمصداقية والمعرفة الحقيقية والحضور والانتماء العميق للمؤلف. وبذلك لم يعد ينظر للمترجم على أنه "خائناً" للنص الاصلي، بل على انه فاعل ترجمي متمكن وشاهداً شرعيا ووسيطا ومحاوراً بارعاً قادراً على نقل التجربة كما هي، كما يتجلى ذلك في كتاب دنيا ميخائيل *في سوق السبايا* الذي ترجمته بالتعاون مع ماكس ويس الى اللغة الانكليزية تحت عنوان *The Beekeeper of Sinjar: Rescuing the Stolen Women of Iraq* لقد اسهم كلا منهما في خلق فضاءً عتبياً موازياً للنص الاصلي باللغة الإنكليزية بطريقة يشكل حيز انتقالي منح الايزيديين العراقيين، وخاصةً النساء، صوتاً خطابيا جديداً داخل سياق ثقافي مختلف، ليكنّ شاهدات على تجاربهن في الاسر والبقاء على قيد الحياة. وانطلاقاً من ذلك، تعيد الدراسة التعريف الحرفي لمفهوم " النص الموازي" للكاتب الفرنسي جيرالد جينيه (١٩٩٧/١٩٨٧) ليشمل النص المترجم بوصفه كياناً جديداً يمتلك "غايةً" او "سكوبوساً" معين، وفق مصطلح الكاتب الألماني هانز فيرمير (٢٠٠٠/١٩٧٨). وتستنتج الدراسة انه على الرغم من منح المترجمين النص الهدف غلافاً جديداً، وعنواناً وهوية وأساليب سرد مختلفة، قد نجحا في بناء قضية إنسانية معترف بها عالمياً وتقديمها للمجتمع الدولي.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الترجمة الذاتية، العتبات، الابداع، الأمانة والموازاة.

1. Introduction

The notions of equivalence, fidelity, and loyalty have lost their grip to govern and shape translation studies. Traditionally, these concepts presume an obvious hierarchy between a fixed ST and its TT. They grant translation a minor and subordinate status. In comparison, the mode of self-translation in which the identity of the author and the translator merge together tend to shake this positioning. During the process of self-translation where the author translates his/her own work, the boundary is blurred between the original text and the translation which in turn stimulates a rethinking and amendments of textual authority, authorship, and creativity across different languages. Self-translation contends the traditional classification of primary and secondary texts. Its process generates bilingual texts that neither of which "typically defeat standard modes of description" (Hokenson and Munson, 2007: 165). Instead of the linear movement from ST to TT, self-translation establishes a conversational relationship between versions. It extends the creative process beyond the initial act of writing. The extension reshapes perception to overlook issues of loss and betrayal to focal points like creative authority and textual diversity. Hence, the discussion of authorship becomes a key factor for exploring self-translation (Hokenson and Munson, 2007: 11-12). Similarly, Grutman (2001: 67) explains that the author-translator in self-translated works has a privileged access to authorial intentions. This statement grants an intensified measure of genuineness on the translated version. This apparent authority permits self-translators to deviate from their STs and escape accusations of infidelity and betrayal. They reframe translation as a space of authorized creativity. However, debates involve self-translation remain hinged upon "contradictory tension" of situating it as "translation" and its often conceptualization as "original writing" (Anselmi, 2018:1). Thus, creativity becomes a defining feature of self- translation not just a by-product of it. Recently, translation studies scholars stress the idea that self-translation is shaped by wider cultural and sociolinguistic circumstances rather than individual creativity only. Grutman (2001: 73-74) notes that there appears to be a "double bind" predicament which writers face when they are working with peripheral and prevailing languages. Therefore, the ideology of the monolingual creativity crashes with the pragmatic obligation of rewriting for a wider audience. In the same vein, Dagnino (2019: 108-110) considers self-translation as a tactical and creative reaction to linguistic downgrading. He (2019: 122) further expounds that authors usually employ self-translation to reclaim their position within global literary systems through careful rewriting rather than faithful replication. So, it is significant to investigate self-translation as a purposeful and context sensitive activity.

Despite the fact that authorship and creativity form a fundamental pillar of self-translation studies, less attention has been given to the paratextual status of the

self-translated text. Genette (1987/1997: 1-2) defines the paratext as a "threshold… a zone not only of transition but also of transaction: a privileged place of pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that … is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it". It consists of peritextual elements such as titles, prefaces, and covers as well as epitextual elements such as interviews, and author's statements, etc. (Genette, 1987/1997: 76). Nevertheless, there is a recent tendency in translation studies to consider translation, self-translation in particular, as an extended paratext to reframe narratives for a different cultural context and brand-new audience (Batchelor, 2018: 16). This conception becomes more convincing when it is linked with the approach of Skopos theory. Skopos theory foregrounds the purpose of the TT as a central factor for translatorial choices. Vermeer (1978/2000: 221) states that "the prime principle determining any translation process is the purpose (Skopos) of the overall translational action".

Considerably, deviations from the ST are not failures of fidelity but rather strategic adaptations proposed to achieve a particular communicative purpose. In self-translation, where the author actively participates in shaping the TT, Skopos motivated shifts become overt and theoretically substantial. Accordingly, the current paper examines Dunya Mikhail's *في سوق السبايا* and its English self-translation *The Beekeeper of Sinjar: Rescuing the Stolen Women of Iraq* as a case of self-translation operating as a creative, paratextual, and liminal space. It argues that the TT should not be viewed as a derivative product but as a Skopos driven rewording that constructs a new textual identity. By extending Genette's (1987) concept of paratext to encompass the TT itself, the study demonstrates how self-translation functions as an intentional and strategic act of cultural and global mediation.

2. Loyalty, Fidelity and Self-Translation

The thrust here is to elaborate upon a reinterpretation of those terms (loyalty and fidelity) to immunize self-translators from the age-old stigma informing a question-begging accusation telescoped in the verdict that the translator is a traitor. The Italian proverb "traduttore, traditore" (Wilson, 2012) which is usually translated as "the translator is a traitor", has long shaped stereotypical and critical perceptions of translation. Despite the linguistic and grammatical accuracy of the translation of this proverb, its theoretical legitimacy has been significantly challenged by prominent translation studies scholars such as Steiner (1998) and Venuti (2008). The proverb assumes a model of translation based on equivalence, losses more than gains, and the translator's interference is judged as deviation from a rock-solid ground represented by the ST. From Steiner's (1998: 312-316) perspective, the translation process is seen as a "hermeneutic motion" where the processes of interpreting and transformation are intertwined. Accordingly,

what is being alleged as betrayal by the proverb could be better looked upon as a by-product of cross cultural and cross linguistic mediation. Similarly, Venuti (2008: 1) argues that the established Anglo-American urgency for fluency creates an illusion of transparency that obscures the translator's interpretive effort. The proverb then has a descriptive rather than a prescriptive power. The proverb loosens its grip when it comes to self-translation where the binary opposition between author and translator merges. Self-translation dominates a hybrid zone in which writing and translating collide which in turn shakes the traditional scale of textual authority (Grutman, 2009: 258-260). Oustinoff (2001: 57) rightly notes that self-translation is "eminently at once translation and writing". This emphasizes its ingrained dual and creative aspects. It highlights the fragile nature of betrayal rhetoric associated with the writings of the proponents of the above mentioned proverb. What actually accompanied the process of self-translation is strategic reformulation shaped by relocating receivers, cultural borders, and communicative intentions. Vermeer (2012:191) explains that translational adequacy is materialized not by formal equivalence but rather by the intended function of the TT within its target culture. Self-translators, Dunya Mikhail included, navigate their texts within the dictates of this logic. She reconfigures voice, emphasis and cultural referentiality to secure intelligibility and impact across linguistic contexts. Hence, what might appear, from an equivalence supported perspective, as divergence or loss instead establishes a purposeful adaptation allied with the TT's communicative endeavour as will be accounted for further in the following sections.

3. Self-Translation: between Authorship and Creativity

Self-translation inhabits a unique and complex position at the crossroad between authorship and creativity. Popovič (1976: 16) defines it as "the translation of an original work into another language by the author himself".

Grutman and Bolderen (2014: 323) further elucidate that it encompasses both the process and product of translation. During the process of self-translation, the author transfers his/her work into a new language, and the resulting product is the self-translated text. The process of self-translation blurs the traditional boundaries between the ST and TT since the author becomes both the creator and mediator of both texts. The practice of self-translation can be traced back to the 1st century AD up to contemporary (post)colonial and migratory social, cultural and historical contexts (Hokenson and Munson, 2007; Santoyo, 2005, 2006). The key factor in the process is the author-translator who performs the roles of "author(ity)" and "authorised agent". The position is by essence hybrid. It merges cultural and linguistic identities within a single creative self, self-translation (Grutman and Bolderen, 2014: 324). Cordingley (2022: 83) declares that research on self-translation has yet to provide a comprehensive account of its primacy in

regions such as Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. He further argues that self-translation involves authors not merely translating but also deciding "how much liberty to allow themselves in rewriting and to what extent the text should be adapted to a new readership" (Cordingley, 2022: 75). Although this process has long been considered as a key factor of literary authorship, it is now widely conceived as a distinctive form of translation (López López-Gay, 2006: 218, 222). Self-translation is endowed with the hybrid nature of being both a translation and a rewriting at the same time (Oustinoff, 2001: 57). It is interesting to note that no language dictionary provides an entry for self-translation and hence the practice "escapes the ethical regime that applies to translation" (Cordingley, 2022: 76). To illustrate, while a number of self-translators do their best to achieve fidelity, others enjoy the freedom to edit and rewrite their work for foreign audiences to the extent that it goes beyond the original writing. Self-translators are distinctive beings who process creative geniuses (Grutman, 2013). Sometimes the self-translator creates the TT first due to his or her need to prove himself or herself in prominent literary realms. It is worth mentioning that the "self" in self-translation does not always indicate an exclusive state of authorship since it is very common to find a self-translator who teams up with a friend, a translator, another author or a partner (Cordingley, 2022: 80-81).

According to Hokenson and Munson (2007: 181), the notion that any translator serves as "a minimal interculture" finds its fullest expression in self-translation, both in the text itself and in the translator's personal experience. Supporting this view, Rose (1997) refers to the concepts of "stereoscopic reading" and "interliminal space" that exists between an original and its translation. Therefore, this opens up new analytical possibilities and projects the author as an intercultural agent. Such an approach interprets textual bilingualism as a form of "interliminality" (Hokenson and Munson, 2007: 4).

As far as authenticity is concerned, Grutman and Bolderen (2014: 324) observe that "the self-translating writer is commonly allowed to endow her work with an aura of authenticity… the author's authority is transferred metonymically to the final product, which thus becomes a second original." Moreover, self-translators are exceptionally free from abiding by the rules of the traditional concept of fidelity which allows them to rewrite, adapt and or profoundly convert their work. A tendency that overtly challenges the typical privileged status of the ST over the TT. As a result, self-translation withstands rigid classifications to occupy a liminal space between original writing and translation. The distribution of conceptual and procedural consideration of self-translation to the recognized hierarchy opens up entrances to reconsider the phenomenon as a restated act of creative authorship (Grutman and Bolderen, 2014: 330). Hokenson and Munson (2007: 2-3) assert that self-translation resists conventional frameworks of translation theory since the product of this process is bilingual texts that are

"neither…. fully autonomous nor definitively original." The process of translation becomes creative and the self-translator "does not merely transfer meaning across languages but re-enters the text as its originating consciousness, reopening narrative, stylistic, and ideological choices" (Hokenson Munson, 2007: 11-12).

The self-translated text has often been perceived as a privileged text since the author-translator owns elevated intuition into his/her own intentions which gives him/her a significant creative pass (Grutman, 2001: 67). The perceived authority legitimises creative deviations as intentional acts of rewriting, not as errors or betrayals of the original. Anselmi (2018: 1) contends that this authority does not simply reinforce fidelity; rather, it "enables creativity." The discourse on self-translation is thus saturated by a "contradictory tension" between its status as translation and its frequent conceptualisation as original writing. Many self-translators themselves prefer terms such as "rewriting," "recreation," or "transcreation," highlighting their authorial freedom and the creative opportunities provided by self-translation. Such perspective is echoed in authorial testimonies. Federman (1993: 79), for instance, rejected the idea of "translating" his own work, preferring to describe his practice as "rewriting, adapting, transforming, transcreating". According to Anselmi (2018: 1) an author uses self-translation to renegotiate voice, form, and emphasis for new linguistic and cultural audiences. However, the creative dimension of self-translation can be shaped by sociolinguistic demands. To elaborate, Grutman (2001: 73-74) argues that the multilingual author could face "double bind" for certain reasons.

Although literary ideologies prefer composing in one's mother tongue, pragmatic and symbolic demands force writers to write in dominant lingua franca. As a result, self-translation turns to be a deliberate and creative response to the strains of legitimacy, audience, and visibility. In certain cases, however, self-translation plays the strategic role of "linguistic minority complex". The role allows authors to reclaim their position within the international literary system through the mechanisms of creative writing (Dagnino, 2019: 108-110). As a result, the TT is usually distinct in comparison with the original which signals conscious authorial choice rather than translational inadequacy. Thus, authorship and creativity are two faces of the same coin. The writer recontextualizes the text within a new communicative environment. Self-translated texts can impact their so-called originals, which delivers a bidirectional connection that disturbs the concept of a fixed textual origin (Dagnino, 2019: 122).

All in all, recent scholarly arguments veer towards acknowledging self-translation as a phenomenon that is creative in both its process and product which place the self-translated text away from a fidelity based negotiation ground.Instead of completely focusing on concepts of faithfulness and loyalty, translation studies scholars investigate the possibility of transferring creativity

and authorship across linguistic and cultural spheres. The self-translator transfers translation into a fertile ground of literary agency.

4. The Self-Translated Text as a Paratextual Liminal Space with a Skopos:

When approached within the framework of self-translation, the TT cannot be reduced to a secondary or derivative product of an original ST. Rather, it emerges as a threshold that mediates between languages, cultures, and readerships, operating within a specific communicative context. Such a state entails expanding Genette's (1987/1997) paratextual model beyond its materialistic exterior to establish that the self-translated text functions as a threshold for reception, interpretation, and functional relocation. Genette's foundational definition of paratext already hints towards this liminality. He describes it as an "undefined zone", "an edge", "a fringe", or more precisely "a transaction zone" that enables a text to become a book and to shape its reception (Genette, 1987/1997: 3-4). Therefore, the paratext does not merely accompany the text but conditions its expressive capability. To decide whether an element functions paratextually or not, this requires particular focus on when, where, how it appears, who sends it, to whom, how it is sent, and what is the purpose behind it. Paratextuality, as a result, is both relational and functional rather than purely formal. Genette (1987/1997:7) differentiates between "peritext" and "epitext".

The former entails elements materially attached to the text like "the title or the preface and sometimes elements inserted into the interstices of the text, such as chapter titles or certain notes". The later includes external discursive materials such as interviews, letters, or diaries. Collectively, these components comprise a mediating discourse able to transmit interpretive signs. They may reveal the intention of the writer or the publisher or both. The paratext is seen by Genette (1987/1997: i) as "liminal devices and conventions" that can be located inside and outside any book which regulates the relationship between the book, its writer, and its publisher, and its audience.

Liminality is not an additional characteristic of the text. It is a fundamental aspect and performs an important function to shape how the text is received. For instance, a title can guide reader's expectations, a preface may affect the interpretation of the work, and the design of the cover would situate the book within a certain market and literary system. Hence, meaning is shaped through the lens of these paratextual elements and readers encounter the text across them.

In the case of self-translation, the author-translator is responsible for the moulding of that threshold through his/her effective employment of patterns of framing and context interpretive cues in his/her work. The TT starts to claim a paratextual function that is normally reduced to the margins which guides reception while concurrently forming the central textual surface (Batchelor,

2018:8). Significantly, Batchelor (2018: 9) maintains that Genette's proposal that the paratext should not be approached from a materialistic perspective only.

Immaterial paratext encompasses message rather than objects. She explains that a paratextual element might "consist of a message that has taken on a material form, necessarily has a location". Such outlook allows a space for the hypothesis that the translated text can take up a paratextual role in addition to its physical attachment. Batchelor (2018: 12-13) defines the paratext as "any element which conveys comment on the text, or presents the text to readers, or influences how the text is received". She illustrates that paratexts are ultimately concerned with how writers and their associates work to frame the reception of the text. This way, the self-translated text could be read as an extended paratextual interference. It could be judged as an authorially controlled act of reception management. Notably, Genette (1987/1997: 405) declares the paratextual involvement of translation. He makes it clear that a translation that is authorized or carried out by the author him/herself could function as a commentary on the ST. He (1987/1997: 408) further comments that the translator who is at the same time the author of the ST has "the right to be unfaithful" to the original text. The paratext then is not a fixed entity and it is liable to adaptation and alteration when transferred from one language into another. To assume translation as paratext, as a result, does not mean to reduce it but to scrutinise the ways it "comments on or (makes) present the original text" (Batchelor, 2018: 29). The translation's paratextual value lies in its interpretive purpose (Batchelor, 2018: 39-40). Logically, then, self-translation could be seen as an adaptive tool configured to new readerships and sociocultural environments. The self-translated text acts as a paratextual liminal (Turner, 1967) gate for a reimagined sociocultural landscape to fulfil a specific Skopos (Vermeer, 1989/2000).

A key factor that determines the process of translation from Vermeer's (1989/2000: 221) perspective "is the purpose/Skopos of the overall translational action". Vermeer (1989/2000: 187) asserts that translation is purposive action and it possesses "an aim, a purpose" and any text that has an aim/function/purpose should serve it in the end. As the translator and the author share the same identity, in the mode of self-translation, this purposive framework deepens. The translation brief is assumed and the Skopos is self-generated.

Variations from the ST are no longer seen as betrayals and could be assessed as functional adaptions. In turn, the self-translated text works as an interpretive threshold that influences reception and perception. It is more like a paratextual liminal space that is controlled by the author's aim. Within the hierarchical structure of Skopos theory rules, the prominence of the purpose authorizes the textual deviations that often accompany self-translations. According to Vermeer's (1989/2000: 221-222) Skopos rules one should "translate in a way

that enables a text to function in the situation in which it is used". This statement echoes the coherence rule that requires the translation to be "coherent with the target situation" to ensure cultural transparency for the receiving audience. At the bottom of the hierarchy of the Skopos rules comes the fidelity rule which has a subordinate function (1989/2000: 223). As part of the scope of self-translation, this classification gained greater theoretical impact. Since the author acquires ontological authority over the ST, deviations or alterations of it should not be considered as betrayals. Such departures establish functionally motivated rewritings modified to assure adequacy and acceptability within the new communicative situation. The concept of translation brief explains more about this functional relocation. Vermeer (1989/2000: 230) defines it as a set of instructions that are given to the translator generally by a commissioner, publisher, institution or a client to identify "the purpose of the translation and the conditions under which it should be carried out". However, in the case of self-translation the brief is presumed. The author who is at the same time the translator proposes his/her own translational order to determine readership, marketing, context, genre, and ideological set up. The brief can be decoded through paratextual commentaries, prefaces, structural modification, and publication situations. The self-translated text, therefore, operates not only as a translated text, but as a strategic instrument of cultural transmission, governed by an internally generated Skopos and shaped by the demands of its new communicative environment (Vermeer,1989/2000: 228).

5. Dunya Mikhail

Dunya Mikhail is an acclaimed poet and author with Iraqi and American roots. She was born and bred in Iraq. She descends from an ethnic Assyrian Chaldean Catholic family. She received her BA from the university of Baghdad (The Assyrian Poet and the Kurdish Boy, 2018). She worked as a journalist and translator for *The Baghdad Observer.* With the increase of political persecution and censorship she was forced to leave Iraq in 1995 (Dunya Mikhail | The Poetry Foundation). Her journey took her first to Jordan, and then she made a new home in Detroit, USA. She pursued higher education there and finished her MA degree at Wayne State University. Currently, she teaches Arabic and poetry at Oakland University, Michigan. She was praised by the Christian Science Monitor as "one of the foremost poets of our time" (www.ndbooks.com/author/dunya-mikhail).

Her works earned her prestigious awards, like the UNESCO Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture, and fellowships from United States Artists, Guggenheim, Kresge, and the UN Human Rights Award for Freedom of Writing. Mikhail's poetry and prose attracted media attention such as PBS News Hour, The New Yorker, The New York Times, The Guardian, and Poetry Magazine (Dunya Mikhail - Writer, Poetry).

She published several works among them *The War Works Hard* which has been translated into English by Elizabeth Winslow and it was shortlisted for the International Griffin Poetry Prize. She also wrote *Diary of a Wave outside the Sea* that won the Arab American Book Award. Among her prize-winning works is *The Iraqi Nights* which received the poetry magazine Translation Award and has been translated into English by Kareem James Abu-Zeid. *In Her Feminine Sign* was selected at the UK's Wild Card Choice and listed by the New York Public Library as one of the 2019's top ten poetry books. Her non-fiction book, *The Beekeeper of Sinjar* was final listed for the National Book Award and the Pen/John Kenneth Galbraith Award. She translated the work with the assistance of Max Weiss. Her first novel, *The Bird Tattoo*, was shortlisted for the international Prize for Arabic Fiction (Dunya Mikhail - Writer, Poetry). Her poetry is marked by its subtle irony and deceptively simple style, often delving into the painful realities of war, exile and grief. She moves effortlessly between different literary forms, from reportage and fable to lyrical verse. In an interview with NPR, Mikhail states that "poetry is not a cure, it's more like an x-ray. It lets us see our wounds and come to terms with them" (https://dunyamikhail.com/bio/).

6. Dunya Mikhail's في سوق السبايا VS. *The Beekeeper of Sinjar: Rescuing the Stolen Women of Iraq*

Al-Mutawassit Publication house published *في سوق السبايا* (literally: In the Slave Market) by Dunya Mikhail. The work is considered a literary nonfictional book that reconstructs the experiences of women who survived ISIS captivity through a series of extended interviews conducted and sometimes translated from Kurdish by the author. Importantly, the work does not confine itself to the testimonies of fugitives alone. It also documents the stories of men who emerged from trenches dug as their intended graves, as well as children destined to grow up with fragmented and disquieting memories (https://www.idu.net/mod.php?mod, 2017). According to Hatem Al-Sakr, an Iraqi critic, the work moves

beyond documenting a profoundly dramatic and tragic moment in the history of Iraq and the world, Mikhail's book offers a model of innovative cross-genre writing. It blends poetic techniques [i.e., poetic devices], an area in which she possesses considerable experience, with narrative strategies and the methods of reportage and direct investigation. What the author heard from the victims thus becomes a site where poetry and reality converge in a powerful and affecting fusion. (Quoted in Marcia Lynx Qualey, "*In the Slave Market: Rescuing Iraq's Stolen Women*," trans. Yusra Mar'i, Qantara.de, 2018).

It is noteworthy that the work undergoes a striking transformation in translation. In Arabic, the book bears the title في سوق السبايا (in the Slaves Market). At one point, Mikhail and her co-translator Weiss suggested that the word "sabaya" means "sex slave", although this rendering is not entirely precise.

In many contexts, the Arabic term "sabaya" has in fact been retained untranslated. However, the English title *The Beekeeper of Sinjar* shifts the focus of attention away from the women and from the slave market itself, foregrounding instead an Iraqi beekeeper from a small town, Abdullah Shrem.

Although Mikhail deliberately refrains from rendering the women's experiences through poetry, choosing instead to present their testimonies in their own words. Yet even though the term "sabaya" disappears from the English title, it remains conceptually central to the book. Although much of the book consists of women's testimonies presented in their own voices, Mikhail also incorporates episodes from her personal life into the narrative. At intervals, the prose seems to erupt into poetry when she evokes the painful bitterness of one woman's experiences (Marcia Lynx Qualey, *"In the Slave Market: Rescuing Iraq's Stolen Women,"* trans. Yusra Mar'i, Qantara.de, 2018). The English version of the book has been internationally celebrated, complimented, and reviewed by many critics and journalists on many occasions as being exceptional and out of the ordinary as can be seen below:

"This is remarkable work, voiced through an exceptional poetic sensibility that reveals striking paradoxes of destruction and dazzling beauty." Ron Charles, *The Washington Post*.

"Dunya Mikhail conveys global events with an authenticity and intelligence that make her a truly essential and rare poetic voice." Robert Stewart, *New Letters*

"This is not an easy read, but an essential read. These voices need to be heard to raise our collective awareness and consciousness of the human impact of the atrocities committed by Daesh." Venil Ali, *Human Rights Pulse, 2020*.

"This book makes a sound, and it should be a loud one. It is not for the faint-hearted, but they should read it anyway. We should all read it, if only to bear witness to an atrocity that happened on our watch, and that we cannot simply sweep away as concerning a faraway people of whose faith we know little." Peter Stanford, *The Guardian*, 2018.

The story begins when Mekhail inquired about her displaced people, especially those who were forced to leave their homes and villages, Mikhail happened, by chance, to encounter a rescuer of enslaved women named Abdullah. He and his family were among the many who fled Sinjar on the day ISIS overran the region. Abdullah, originally a beekeeper, managed to rescue

dozens of captive women while searching for his own sister. As he states: "every day I save her, and I save a queen from among those they call sabaya" (https://www.idu.net/mod.php?mod, 2017). Over the course of a whole year, Abdullah narrated to Mikhail a true story each day about a captive woman he had either succeeded or failed to rescue. In many cases she listened to the surviving women's or children's stories over the phone with his help to get in touch with them. However, after a year of listening and documenting these stories and following two decades of absence from Iraq, she returns and meets those who stand at the edge of mass graves. Those graves contain the bones of grandmothers deemed unfit for enslavement or sex, their grandchildren clinging to them, and men separated from their families. Sinjar or "Shingal", whose Kurdish meaning is "the beautiful side", has thus become synonymous with a land of mass graves. The author observes that while violence is available and cheap, like air, everywhere" and pain likewise exists universally, she insists that "our pain hurts more" (https://www.idu.net/mod.php?mod, 2017).

7. Methodology

The present study adopts a qualitative, interpretive, and analytical approach to examine the creative and paratextual dimensions of self-translation in Dunya Mikhail's *في سوق السبايا* and its English self-translation *The Beekeeper of Sinjar*. The analysis is grounded in a comparative framework that investigates how the process of self-translation reconfigures authorship, creativity, and narrative structure across languages.

The study focuses on both textual and paratextual elements that signal shifts between the ST and the TT. These shifts are manifested through addition, deletion, modification, and reorganization, are not treated as deviations. They are treated as functionally motivated strategies that serve broader socio-cultural and communicative purposes within the target context. The study applies the theoretical concepts of Genette's (1987) paratextuality and Vermeer's (1978) Skopos theory. These conceptual frameworks offer a thorough investigation and analysis of both the ST and TT. The TT will be treated as a paratextual being to meet a purposeful communicative function. The current analytical methodology involves two interrelated phases:

1. Textual and Peritextual Comparison and Theoretical Application

The first phase comprises a textual and peritextual systematic comparison of the ST and TT. At this phase the cover design, the title, subtitle, acknowledgements, structural organizations, chapter titles, and modes of narration will be examined. The reason behind this investigation is to detect patterns of changes which signal alteration in the orientation of the audience and representational precedence. During this phase, the analysis and discussion employ Genette's (1987)

classification of peritextuality to decode how the collected data will be interpreted as threshold to assist reception and perception. On the other hand, Skopos theory is implemented at this phase to prove how these textual and paratextual shifts impact the TT's functional appropriateness. Subsequently, the TT does not replicate the ST. It is seen as a reconstructed textual whole. It negotiates a different audience at the linguistic, social and cultural levels.

2. Contextual and Epitextual Analysis and Functional Evaluation

At the second phase, the analysis moves beyond the textual level to encompass contextual and epitextual elements into an integrated approach. The process of analysis involves placing the TT within a wider sociolinguistic, cultural and humanitarian context. The process also entails the examination of external materials like interviews, public talks, statements delivered by the author herself. The scrutiny of the epitextual materials is crucial for offering information about the production, circulation and reception of the TT. They are constitutive components that provide access to the intention of the self-translator, decision making process, and the position of the TT within the global literary and humanitarian communicative environment. From a Skopos oriented perspective, this phase enables an evaluation of the extent to which the TT fulfils its communicative purpose within the target culture. Instances of omission, addition, and modification identified in the contrastive analysis are interpreted as purpose driven strategies rather than deficiencies. Furthermore, attention is given to indicators of accessibility, acceptability, and international circulation, assessing how the TT functions within Anglophone literary and humanitarian contexts.

8. Analysis and Discussion

8.1. Textual and Paratextual Comparisons and Theoretical Application

8.1.1. ST vs. TT Cover Design



Figure 1: ST and TT Front Covers



Figure 2: ST and TT back Covers

From a paratextual theoretical perspective, the TT at the book cover level cannot be reduced to a peripheral or secondary item. It works as a threshold that intensely shapes reception and meaning. The contrast between the ST and the TT covers as shown in figures nos. (1&2), presents a significant example of how self-translation operates both at the textual and paratextual levels. Building on Genette's (1997:1-2) theory of the paratext as a "zone of transaction" between a text and its receiver, the cover acts as a mediating element which frames interpretation before the act of reading begins. The role of paratext, then, is double glazed in translation since the paratext itself is subject to reframing depending on the needs of TT socio-cultural context.

As far as the cover design of the ST is concerned, it is a folded cardboard cover that includes the name and title of the book at the front, blurb, three reviews at the front inner flap, and a picture and a brief biography of the author at the back inner flap. The ST is published by منشورات المتوسط(Al-Mutawassit publications) mostly using dark green and black colours with the black colour featuring women shapes in the form of hills and mountains of Sinjar fully covered in black covers which is typical of Daeshi women's dress code. There is only one hand forming a fist in the middle of the book that holds a head cover which represents the resistance of those women. At the top of their heads, there is a barcode. The barcode is associated with systems of identification, pricing, and exchange and within the context of the present cover it is a metaphor for commodification. Through shrouding the landscape with a barcode, the image indirectly encodes female bodies as objects within a market system which renders the violence of enslavement into the contemporary language of economic transaction. Hence, the cover shortens the distance between the reader and the events which presents violence not as an abstract narrative but as a structure and systemic reality. In fact, a book cover could be understood as both paratextual threshold and a semiotic construct, where visual and textual elements interact to shape meaning and guide reader interpretations (Barthes 1977; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006).

The cover immediately establishes a bleak atmosphere. The font emphasizes the word "سبايا"in white, "سوق"in black, and a grey-tinted preposition "في"in smaller type. The black colour of the word "suok" evokes the cruelty and grimness of that place; while the white colour of the word "sabaya" reflects the innocence of those trapped, raped, bought and sold in that place. However, it gives a glimpse of hope and light at the end of the tunnel. The name of the author, in white colour, is situated at the top of the front cover above the title.

Interestingly, the title as whole would read "دنيا ميخائيل في سوق السبايا" (Dunya Mikhail in the Sabaya Market) which indicates the author's metaphorical presence with the captive women. While listening to their stories, she shares their

suffering, dislocation, and death threats by recalling similar experiences herself before leaving Iraq to the USA in the 1990s.

The back cover presents a direct narrative summary of Daesh/ ISIS, mass graves, displacement, and trauma. In Gennete's (1997) terms the publisher's peritext "allographic endorsement" is represented by the front inner flap displays translated into Arabic reviews of the Washington Post and New Letters Literary Journal, in addition to an Arabic review by, an Iraqi critic, Hatem Al-sakr. It suggests the predominant endorsement of the Western community which indicates the text's authority is not created internally. It is rather mediated through its international reception that reflects a circular economy of "symbolic capital" in which global validation supports and underpins local legitimacy (Bourdieu, 1991). Additionally, the insertion of the author's picture and biographical note introduces a layer of embodied authority that balances institutional recognition. Consequently, the author is placed as a mediating witness whose identity anchors the narrative in both experiential authenticity and transnational circulation.

In contrast, the TT is covered by a typical paper cover. From the paratext of the TT what becomes evident from the cover design is mitigated treatment of violence. The TT does not foreground the theme of cruelty explicitly but rather reframes it via the point of view of a humanitarian and literary perspective. This perspective prefers accessibility and ethical reflection over confrontation. The front cover, visually, presents a neutral and calm artistic design. It is dominated by pale colour palettes and minimal imagery. The images of the bees are placed delicately across the right top corner. The bees here work as a symbolic extension of the title. They do not represent a direct reference to the events narrated in the story. The bees denote care, hard collective work, and survival and hence suggest a metaphorical allusion to access the story. The symbol is meaningful since it replaces violence within an indirect locus that is more acceptable within a global literacy environment. The imagery does not portray torment. It encrypts resilience and continuity. It allows the TT reader to approach the text without the side effect of abrupt visual trauma. At the bottom of each bee appears a butterfly. The marginal placement of them performs as a subtle symbol of transformation. The butterfly hints at hope without marginalizing the effect of the prime focus of survival and resolution.

At the middle of the front cover the title of the TT is placed: *The Beekeeper of Sinjar* with a subtitle below that reads *Rescuing the Stolen Women of Iraq*. The title is given a golden colour that matches the bees and probably the honey colour. The subtitle is given a black colour with a smaller font size. At the bottom right corner appears the name of the author in white colour. The background of the front cover of the TT depicts a grainy, dusty texture with faint stains or smudges. It represents unidentified location and landscape. The stirring

up residual and dust aura at the front cover transforms violence into a disciplined visual trace. Such an approach aligns with the TT global strategy and Skopos to filter trauma content via figurative and affectively moderated elements. Moreover, the TT front and back covers introduce approvals in forms of reviews from renowned Western media outlets like *The New York Times, The Financial Times and the Observer.* Such an "allographic paratexts" (Genette, 1997) deliver outsider validation and guiding TT reader's expectation. The addition of these endorsements and positive critical reviews has the power of situating the TT within a frame of global literary authority. In fact, the work has already been internationally praised, credited, and acknowledged. This paratextual element enhances the work's integrity and relocates it as part of a broader humanitarian discourse. Within the scope of discussion, the narrative of suffering is constructed via established journalistic and literary outlets. These five selected quotations, one at the front and four at the back cover, stress themes of bravery, resilience, and humanity more than themes of violence or trauma. And when violence is stated, it is masked within the narrative of resistance and resilience.

The discursive choice is not random but rather an international publishing tradition to introduce traumatic events in a sentimental and passable fashion.

Such tendency ensures a wider TT audience reception (Fassin and Rechtman, 2009). The TT reader is placed in the position of ethical observers and a witness of abduction and suffering as seen from a structured and moderated perspective. Moreover, the back cover presents a brief summary of the story focusing on the role of the rescuer Abdullah Shrem and the mediation of Dunya Mikhail to tell his and the Yazidis stories of confinement and survival.

Collectively, all the above discussed elements perform as a negotiated humanitarian paratext. This mediation is necessary to fulfil the communicative Skopos of accessibility and global distribution. Functionally, the TT cover is designed to attract the general public and at the same time to strike a subtle balance between the emotional attachment and discursive distance, to pave the way for the reader to find his/her way into the text. The paratextual element as a whole directs the TT reader's encounter with sensitive content. It directs the TT readers' expectations and guides their interpretation of the TT. Put differently, the TT is outlined as a narrative of resilience and survival, rather than merely a product of violence, a text that is not defined or overwhelmed by it.

8.1.2. ST vs. TT Titles

Following the cover, one of the most salient differences between the ST and TT is the title. The title of the ST that reads *في سوق السبايا* foregrounds the space of the slave market where women are sold and bought. The expression السبايا(al-sabaya) conjures classical and Quranic images of female captives taken in wars.

The market "السوق" is a place of exposure and humiliation because females' bodies are displayed and inspected in an underlying sexual purpose. It places the women's suffering at the heart of the text even before a reader opens the book. In comparison, the title of the TT *The Beekeeper of Sinjar* foregrounds Abdullah Shrem. He is the man who arranges the escape routes for women and their children in some cases. The subtitle *Rescuing the Stolen Women of Iraq* completes the image by identifying the women not as "سبايا"but as "stolen". The word stresses the criminal act and victimhood senses more than the traditional implication of war plunder. The lexical transference from "market" to "beekeeper" and from "sabaya" to "stolen women" is not random. This shift helps the title live up to the high expectations of recipients of a different language and culture. The Arabic reader is more familiar with the religious and historical denotation and connotation of slavery and captivity. The harshness of the Arabic title is generated from the fact that ISIS/Daesh has restored an ancient and allegedly abandoned institution. In comparison, the role of the title in an English speaking context, would be to attract attention and to provide accessible entry threshold. The non-Arab reader would feel at home following the journey of a single hero (the beekeeper) who rescues unfortunate captives, a character that might be familiar in Hollywood films. In so doing, the TT's title can be understood as a recontextualizing means that shifts the narrative from a mainly local discourse about the "sabaya" to a transnational discourse about liberation and human rights. However, this does not mean that the torment of Yazidi women is overlooked. Their suffering is rendered familiar through the figure of a male rescuer and through lexis that are familiar within international NGOs and media discourse. Still, a local foreign identity of the original story location is kept in the TT's title by the word "Sinjar".

8.1.3. Acknowledgements

Genette (1997: 135) considers acknowledgement that comes in a form of dedication or a word of thanks or debt as a peritextual element. It has been discussed within the scope of dedications and prefaces. It can be seen as a "proclamation of a relationship" and a "moral, intellectual, or aesthetic backing" (Genette, 1997: 135). Put differently, it regulates the relationship between the text, author and the reader which impacts the interpretation and reception of the text. Through the use of acknowledgements or words of thanks, the author could show appreciation, address intellectual debts, and overtly or covertly present her

social and/or professional networking that collaborates in the creation of the work. That kind of peritextual element works as strategic apparatus that affects the persona of the author and the comprehension of the reader of the process of the work's creation and its intertextual context and co-text (Genette, 1997: 212).

.ST

"كلمة شُكر بسيطة

شكراً للناجيات من أيدي داعش؛ لقبولهنّ التحدّث عن تفاصيل معاناتهنّ، بالرغم من أن الجروح العميقة لا تُحكى، هي تُحَسُّ فقط.

شكراً للجرحى الذين قُتلوا، ولم يموتوا. عادوا؛ ليحكوا لنا قصصَهم.

شكراً للناس في المخيمات؛ لقلوبهم المفتوحة في العَراء، كخيمهم.

شكراً لعبد الله شريم، بطل من أبطال هذا الزمان."

TT. "A Simple Word of Thanks

Thank you to those women who escaped the clutches of Daesh for their willingness to speak about the details of their suffering, despite the fact that deep wounds don't speak, they can only be felt.

Thank you to those victims who were killed but didn't die, who came back to tell us their stories.

Thank you to all those people in the camps for their hearts, which are as open to the air as their tents.

Thank you to Abdullah Shrem, a hero of our time."

Accordingly, as it is quoted above both the ST and the TT introduce the reader to "كلمة شكر بسيطة"/ "A Simple Word of Thanks" in which the author thanked four groups of people who contributed to the creation of the work.

However, there are key differences between the ST and TT in terms of addressing those groups and presenting them to different readerships at the threshold of the text to fulfil certain purposes. The first Arabic word of thanks is directed towards "الناجيات من أيدي داعش"(female survivors from Daesh) while its English counterpart is directed towards "those women who escaped the clutches of Daesh". The TT employs strategies of explication and lexical intensification.

The self-translator assumes that the TT readers may not have direct contextual knowledge to understand who "the female survivors" are. The translators directly inform their TT readers to ensure that the intended emotional impact is not lost because of lack of context. Hence, the ST frames the females through their shared experience of survival which is an active and empowering identity. However, the TT frames them firstly by their gender "those women" then qualifies them by what has happened to them. The description shifts the focus from their resilience to their gender and status as escapees. The TT constructs a somewhat different authorial voice. The voice in the ST is direct, poetic, and assumes a shared understanding with its readers. The TT's speaking voice is gauged towards guiding unfamiliar reader. It explains and mediates

between the events narrated and potentially unfamiliar reader. The voice is paratextual in nature that overtly guiding and ensuring that the TT reader has the key details necessary to appreciate the main text to come. The same applies to the replacement of "الجرحى" (injured) with "those victims". The term "victims" serves the Skopos of generating a powerful emotional connection between the TT readers and the subjects of the acknowledgement since this term carries a heavy weight of injustice and can elicit a strong empathetic response more than simply the "injured" of the ST. In addition, the translators soften the harsh reality of some of the settings through the replacement of the word "عراء" with "the air".

So, instead of the ST's focus on the physical struggle and trauma of the camp, the TT emphasizes the spiritual beauty of the people using a domesticated style that is familiar to the TT readers. The author's voice in the TT sounds more like a Western humanitarian activist and less like a witness to the desert. It changes the colour of the paratextual frame from the dusty and harsh Arabic to the clear and open English environment. Similarly, to emphasize the role of Abdullah Shrem as, one of a kind hero of the present time, the self-translator shifted the ST's collective representation from "بطل من أبطال هذا الزمان" to "a hero of our time". The translation of the separative Arabic to the singular English construction is a deliberate choice that enhances the idiomatic flow and individualized impact for the TT readers. It aligns with the communicative purpose of honouring Abdullah Shrem, as a significant contemporary figure within the English cultural and cognitive environment.

8.1.4. Visuals





According to Genette (1997) the paratext involves elements that can be located within and outside the main body of a text. They can surround and extend the text to form a threshold that influences the text's reception and interpretation. As a result, the insertion of photographs in the ST serves as a powerful form of visual peritext to create a certain kind of threshold for the ST reader such as authentication and documentary evidence, humanization and empathy, and to boost up credibility and connection. As far as authentication and documentary evidence are concerned, images of the survivors and parts of Sinjar, for instance, provide direct undeniable visual evidence of the events and the people involved. The photographs that are included in the TT tie the narrative in a recognizable and concrete reality. Working as documentary peritexts, they reemphasize the testimonial feature of the entire work and aid its entitlement to factual authenticity. Pictures of Sinjar, for example, place the events within a particular geographical location which allows the readers to envision the surrounding environment in which the narrated tragic stories took place. More importantly, the insertion of the photographs of the survivors by showing their faces directs the readers' attention to their personal suffering. These visual elements may boost the emotional engagement of the readers with the narrative.

The statistical accounts then are transferred into accounts of recognizable persons and lived events and incidents. Similarly, Abdullah Shrem's photographs provide a visible existence to the figure who risks his life to rescue the Yazidi women. Furthermore, the photo of the author signals her direct contribution to

the events and with the women she listens to and recounts their stories. Collectively, these visual elements echo an instant and meaningful emotional gate for the ST. As a threshold, they usher the ST readers to enter a realistic world sculpted by personal testimonies and experienced events. This exercise frames the narrative as a documentary and genuinely humane. Comparatively, the TT that is published by Profile Books (Serpent's Tail), London, registers an absence of any visual image of the ST. The Skopos of the TT determines the translation strategy. The complete absence of images in the TT suggests a different communicative purpose and an adaptation to the expectations of its TT readers (Reiss and Vermeer, 2013). The TT adheres to different cultural and genre conventions prevalent in the TT publication conventions (Toury, 1995).

Moreover, the TT is aimed at an audience that is geographically and culturally distant from the events described. The publisher has opted for a more textual, less visually immediate approach to sensitive topics, allowing the reader to engage with the narrative primarily through language, which can be perceived as less intrusive or confrontational. In a response to an email that I have sent to Dunya Mikhail asking about this, she says the removal of the images from the UK edition was the publisher's decision not hers.

The exclusion of the photographs from the TT may be related to a strategic editorial decision. A possible explanation for it would be the avoidance of the accusation of overstating and exploiting the torment described in the survivors' stories. An additional reason would be the publisher's choice to engage the reader with the events from a distance and through reflecting on the narration more than through an emotionally loaded direct reaction to photographs. The written TT, without these visual images, claims its full power to convey feelings, context and integrity. In this case the TT converts to be the principal source for the readers to dwell on the survivors' experiences. Explained from a Skopos point of view, it implies the significant role of rhetorical and narrative apparatus apart from the visual testimonies. There might be some pragmatic factors that direct the choice to exclude visual materials, such as copyright restraints, printing expenses, and/or restrictions related to specific publishing formats. This decision, in turn, impacts the fulfilment of certain translation purpose. The lack of visual images in the TT without doubt change the paratextual threshold experience of the TT readers. Readers of the TT would depend exclusively on the verbal description to picture individuals, things, and places that are involved in the narrative. In comparison, the ST provides an immediate, visually aided encounter to these experiences. The paratextual shift fundamentally reconfigures the reader's initial encounter with the text, moving from a visually authenticated and emotionally direct experience in the ST to a more textually mediated and potentially more distanced one in the TT. The TT created a threshold that is more text related and less immediate. In fact, the decision to exclude every visual

element from the TT is an intentional institutional preference motivated by a particular Skopos that matches with the TT publishing norms, to prevent backlashes from exposing the TT readers to explicitly sensitive materials and, above all, to emphasize the power of the written word.

8.1.5. Liminal Narratology: Poetry, Interviews, Testimonies, Chapter titles, and Modes of Narration

The present section explores the various narrative strategies that are employed or unemployed in the TT in comparison with the ST which serve the communicative purpose of the TT and contribute to the overall aim of the TT as a paratextual liminal space. Through the analysis of these liminal devices, the ontology delves into the methods by which the author engages the reader. This engagement helps construct meaning and navigate the complexity of the cultural difference between the two readerships.

8.1.5.1 Poetry

In an interview with Kathryn Ryan "From Nine to Noon" (2019) on radio New Zealand national, the presenter asked Dunya about her experience in writing poetry in general and about including poems in the *Beekeeper*. Dunya replied that her response to things comes in the form of poetry. This is how she expresses and processes her feelings. It is considered a liminal space she evokes when feeling overladen in life and listening to the survivors' stories. She wanted to make their stories heard both in the ST and TT and she felt she needed to see them face to face. Although these stories include multiple voices, they are blended, as she said, into one voice that is of the survivor, the victim. For the "other" point of view, poetry in the *Beekeeper of Sinjar*, as the presenter puts it, helps them recognize and comprehend things incomprehensible. Dunya comments that although she exercised her authorial agency through the incorporation of poetry to process trauma and agony of the stories she heard, mediated, and translated, she kept those poems short and down to earth to avoid sabotaging the survivors' stories.

In certain parts of the TT the self-translator inserted extra entire poems or just a few lines to an existing poem to accommodate certain emotions and vividly picture the suffering of the victims as in the following example:

In her dream,
She was safe
Inside her mother's belly (P. 36)

In this poem the self-translator describes the feeling of a nine-year-old girl who has just lost her father and witnessed the horror of a Daeshi man who has beaten her mother and sisters and then got rid of them. She remained alone with

the man who claimed that she will be looked after as if she is his own daughter. However, this does not mean that he could not marry her at any moment according to Daesh law. Hence, she escaped her fate running in the streets without any direction. Finally, she fell asleep next to a sheep imaging herself as if she is in her mother's belly. Such a state presents a liminal space to escape the harsh reality for both the little girl and the author/self-translator.

8.1.5.2. Chapter titles, and Modes of Narration

There is a significant difference between the ST and the TT in terms of the titles of the chapters, their order and modes of narration. On page (81) in the ST, the title of the chapter reads "ليس أنانيا من يزرع الزيتون"and the following chapter reads "في معسكر داعش". Following the same order in the TT, the chapters carry different titles: "In Daesh Camp" comes first then followed by a totally different chapter called "Exodus". Moreover, the content and mode of narration of these two chapters of the ST have been mediated in the TT. What the self-translator did is that she merged the contents of "ليس أنانيا من يزرع الزيتون" و "في معسكر داعش" in one chapter in the TT, that is "In Daesh Camp". The opening of the ST chapter "ليس أنانيا من يزرع الزيتون"starts with a narrative encounter of a female survivor named Shukrya and her interview with Mikhail. After that Mikhail returns to talk with Abdullah (the beekeeper) about his assistance in rescuing Shukrya and her sister. Next, he moves on to narrate a national heritage Yazidi story about the dispute between two Yazidi tribes who have been dislocated in two different areas to stop the fight between them. One tribe settled in Zakho and the other one settled in Sinjar, However, after the Daesh invasion, the Zakho tribe helped the other one to settle the tribal feud between them. Then Mikhail moved on to ask Abdullah about the password for rescuing women from Daesh which mostly was his name or the question "هل تريد ان تشتري بعض التمر؟"(do you want to buy some dates?). The exchange of conversational cues moved on to ask Abdullah about the risk that he and the survivors might run when these stories got published. Abdullah replied that it is actually important for him and the survivors that the

whole world learn about these crimes and do something to stop Daesh. At the end, Abdullah tells Mikhail about the planting of olive trees in his village in the bygone days. The chapter ends with a picture of him with another man holding a rescued baby from Daesh without his mother, as it is shown below:



(الطفل وصل، ولكن أمّه ما تزال في الطريق. عمّه على اليمين، وعبد الله على اليسار)

The following chapter under the title "في معسكر داعش" opens up with a poem about the death of an immigrant baby on a Turkish shore as follows:

على الشاطئ التركي،
طفلٌ هادئٌ جميلٌ أنيقٌ مُنكَبٌّ على بطنهِ،
والموجُ يداعبُ جثّتَهُ الصغيرة،
لا يبدو محتجّاً على سخافاتنا،
ولو مُديراً وجهَهُ عنّا جميعاً،
عن حياتنا المقلوبة كزورق صدئ. (ص ٩١)

Dunya Mikhail then moves on to narrate what she could watch and listen to TV shifting from one channel to another. Subsequently, she was thinking about the rescued baby without his mother three days ago. She finally texted Abdullah after five days and he replied asking her to call him if she is free. She called him and he told her the mother still has not been rescued. After that he started telling her the news about the rescue of another boy from the Daesh camp, his name is Raghb and his father Ilyas and how they were caught by Daesh and then the tricky journey to rescue the boy. He moves on to tell Mikhail the story of Camy, Raghb's mother, and her daily routines as a servant in Daesh houses until she got rescued with her two sons. The chapter ends with a remark from Mikhail about her meeting with Camy showing her funny side.

Consequently, the TT shuffles up the details of those ST aforementioned chapters in a single chapter called "In Daesh Camp". The reason for these changes, as it is explained by Mikhail in her response to my question via an email, is that it was her authorial decision. She adds that the "translation often gives me the opportunity to revisit my work in more depth, and at times to fine tune it or improve upon it". She adds in an interview with Kathryn Ryan "From Nine to Noon" (2019) on radio New Zealand national, that she wanted to be freer with the translation that is why she did it herself.

Accordingly, the chapter in the TT opens up with the following poem:

On the Turkish shore,
A calm beautiful graceful child is on his stomach
The wave caresses his tiny corpse
He doesn't seem to protest our ridiculousness,

Though his face is turned away from us,
From our lives overturned like a rusty boat. (P.77)

The poem and other main parts and the structure of this chapter are the same as the ST "في معسكر داعش". However, essential parts of ST chapter "ليس أنانيا من يزرع الزيتون" are embedded in it as follows. On pages (80-81) in the TT the self-

translator embeds stories told by Abdullah about his family and daughters and planting olive trees as it is stated below:

"My youngest daughter Rula is six. She asks me if Daesh can get inside our house. When I tell her no, we won't let them, she tells me she's glad to know they're not allowed inside. I buy them lots of toys, no matter how much they cost. When my mother complains about the price, I justify it by saying that it's to make up for how much they suffered during those days in the mountains. My mother chimes in, Twenty years from now you'll still be giving them things to make up for those days. My mother is sweet. She makes us laugh, in spite of everything. She tries to hide her tears from us, but I notice them anyway; and I notice the way her ears prick up whenever the telephone rings. Some people tell me that they switch off their telephones when they're relaxing or sleeping, but I can't switch mine off. How would I ever be able to sleep?" (P. 80)

This part has been modified, and extra details have been added to the account of planting olive trees, as can be seen below:

"And even if I did manage to fall asleep, I would be haunted in my dreams. My brother would come striding out of our childhood. I'd see him once again in our garden with our two trees, one beside the other. We used to sit side by side in the shade of the two trees. My father and my uncle had been working together on that garden since the fifties – they'd planted many olive trees.

But my brother and I had planted different kinds of trees: mine was a mulberry tree and my brother's was a chinaberry. I'm afraid to go back there one day and see all of those memories. In the old days the people in my village used to plant olive trees despite the fact that olive trees take a long time to bear fruit, sometimes even longer than the life span of the planter. That's why they say 'the olive grower isn't selfish'; whoever plants the tree knows in advance that its yield won't belong to him. Actually I no longer see the point in growing anything, even if it only takes a couple of days, because I can't be sure what's going to happen tomorrow. And I don't like growing a tree that I'll only have to leave behind." "I know. Abdullah, you left behind your house, your garden, and all of your belongings in Sinjar. If you could be back at your house for one hour, what would you take with you from there?" "I wouldn't take anything. I'd just want to water the plants , especially the mulberry and chinaberry trees ". (P.80-81).

8.1.5.3. Interviews and Testimonies

The power of Mikhail's journalistic self prevails in the text to give the victims and survivors a voice to be heard by others, as she said in an interview with Kathryn Ryan "From Nine to Noon" (2019) on radio New Zealand national. However, some changes have been noticed in the TT as it has been self-translated and modified as follows:

In the original text and on page (83) the quotation below was attributed to a female survivor. However, this quotation has been assigned to Abdullah in the TT:

"After a moment of silence, one of those punctuating moments for which we stand and dedicate to mourning some kind of loss – the loss of a person or a homeland or a meaning" (P.81)

Direct indications of the crying of the survivors have been deleted from the TT, due to the fact that Mikhail did not want to sentimentally overload the TT, which might discourage the TT readers from finishing the stories being narrated as for instance in "chapter where Claudia's weeping episodes has been deleted from the TT: "النبع

(بكت كلوديا: لا اصدق ما حدث، لا أصدق أبدا) (ص ٢٠٣)
(بكت كلوديا: كل يوم اتذكرها، لا استطيع أن أنساها) (ص٢٠٥)
(بكت كلوديا: تلك العضة تأتي ببالي كل مرة) (ص ٢٠٦)
(بكت كلوديا: لا استطيع أن أنام. كلما أهرب الى النوم يأتي هوار في حلمي، أصحو، ولا أجده، فأجن) (ص٢١٠)
) (ص .(بكت كلوديا: أنا خائفة، دائماً أشعر بأن داعش وراء الباب. بي حاجة ماسّ ـ ة إلى أبي ٢١٠)

There are parts that have not been included in the TT probably because reveal a harsh truth about what has happened in Sinjar regarding the motivation and attitude of some Yazidi's who worked with Daesh for mainly financial reasons as it is explained in the example below:

"استمر عبد الله بالكلام: معارفي كثيرون، ولكن لم يتمكنوا من مساعدتي. منهم من ظل يسأل، ويبدي تعاطفه، ومنهم من انقلب الى داعش مهللا بأن "الدولة الإسلامية ستسود". من بين أولئك الذين لم يخجلوا بالمجاهرة بمناصرتهم لداعش أشخاص كانوا قد استدانوا مني مالا، ولم يرجعوه. الكثير من المفلسين نظموا الى داعش." (ص ١٠٤)

In the same vein, the last part of the "chapter has been deleted from the TT: "الكفار

"- أدريس هو صديق خالد. أليس كذلك، يا عبد الله؟
-لا أدري. من قال ذلك؟
- كان خالد قد ذكر لي عن جريح اخر، اسمه ادريس. خالد عرض عليه أن يصعد على كتفه، ليساعه في الخروج، ولكن ادريس لم يتحرك، فتركه خالد. ربما لم يسمعه ادريس أصلا؟
- أو كان مشغولا تماما بابنه واخيه القتيلين بقربه، ولم ينتبه الى الجرحى الاخرين؟
- ذلك ممكن. تمنياتي أن تعود اليه عائلته. كم طفلا عنده؟
- عنده ابن اصغر من الذي قلا، وبنتان. عنده أيضا ابن وابنه من زوجته السابقة. كلهم مفقودون. ادريس صار من اعز أصدقائي، فنلتقي بين حين واخر.
- الصداقة نعمة، وخاصة في مثل هذه الظروف.

- ادريس طريف، بالرغم من ظروفه الصعبة، ونحن كثيرا ما نضحك معا، ونتبادل النكات، بالرغم من الحزن الذي بداخلنا. تسمعين نكتة؟
- يا الله.
- واحد محشش يشاهد فلما مع جماعة إسلامية. مرت لقطة اغراء. قال: أعوذ بالله من غضب الله. أعيدوا اللقطة، لنرى ماذا يفعل الكفار." (ص ١٧٦)

In the following examples we have comparative excerpts from the ST and TT that their content has been modified by the self-translator who is practicing her authorial agency at this point to edit and refine her writing in the other language, as it is shown below:

ST: "جمدتُ هناك حتّى صرتُ في نهاية القافلة، ولم أعثر على هوار. حسب إحساس ماما عذراء، هو مع أمراءة كبيرة السن، تعتني به، وهو يبحث عني، ليت أحساسها يصيب."(ص ٢١١)

TT: "I waited there until I wound up at the back of the convoy. But I still couldn't find Hawar. People were curling like waves and I was soaked in my own disaster. Their stream carried me along as I held Maryam and looked everywhere in hopes of finding Hawar. Later, in the camp, they took me to see Umm Raad, who reads fortunes out of the dictionary. She told me he was with an old woman who was taking care of him, and that he was looking for me. I could only hope that her intuition was correct." (P.198)

ST: "استيقظتُ فجراً، ولم أستطع العودة إلى النوم. كان مناماً غريباً. أحدهم كان يعزف على البيانو، وفجأة نهض غاضباً، واتّجه نحو الطاولة، وبعثرَ الكُتُب التي فوقها، وأنا غضبتُ؛ ألنني كنتُ قد رتّبتُها. لكنهُ، وهو الغريب الذي ال أعرف مَن هو، تقدّم نحوي، وعانقني. وفجأة تغيّر المشهد، وكنتُ مع ذلك الغريب في مصعد، يرتفعُ بنا ولا يتوقّف. لم يكن به سقف، وكنتُ مرتبكة..." (ص ٢١١)

TT: "I woke up at dawn and couldn't fall back asleep. I'd had a strange dream. A man was playing the piano. Suddenly he stood up in anger, bumped into the table as he turned around, scattering all the books that were on top of it. I was upset because I had arranged them there" (P. 199).

8.3. Contextual, Epitextual Analysis and Functional Evaluation

The present analytical section introduces the reader to the epitextual (Genette,1997: 4) materials that surround the TT, such as interviews with Dunya Mikhail, talks, and the publication situation. These materials provide tangible evidence of the communicative orientation of the TT. The section is basically concerned with what is being said or written on *The Beekeeper of Sinjar*.

In an interview with Kathryn Ryan "From Nine to Noon" (2019) on radio New Zealand national, Mikhail states how she was first introduced to the Yazidi women's stories and her motivation to write the book. She was shocked at first when she discovered a real "market" for enslaved women "sabaya". There were prices, labels, types, online selling, and Q&A section. She expressed a personal closeness by comparing her age with victims'. It indicates emotional proximity that motivates her decision to make "their stories heard". This is a direct epitextual evidence represented by the "author's voice" to fulfil the Skopos of raising awareness internationally. It stresses the TT's function of exposing hidden realities to the world. Technically, Mikhail reflects on how she handled the survivors' stories. She gave rise to one voice that is of the survivors. She further adds that she avoided sentimentality and emotional extravagance by using poetry as a controlled response to trauma. It shows a conscious narrative shaping to assure readability that serves the Skopos of clarity over literal reproduction.

She said that "I wanted to be free with the translation that is why I did it myself". Her decision reinforces authorial creativity to serve a bigger Skopos rather than mainlining formal equivalence. She also adds that, in a response to a question I sent her asking about her experience in translating the book, she states that "it was important to me that this book be published in other languages, as I believe the stories it contains deserve to be publicized on a wider scale".

Dunya Mikhail was invited to speak about the Beekeeper of Sinjar at the Sydney Writers' Festival (2019). This is Australia's famous celebration of literature, stories and ideas. The festival brings together the world's best authors, leading public intellectuals, scientists, journalists and more. The central tenet underlying the reception of the work is that both the interviewer and the audience frame the *Beekeeper of Sinjar* as a medium for revealing hidden stories to an international audience. The book sheds light on these narratives and brings them to a global audience. That is, it reaches Australia and beyond. Listening to the interview, one could recognize the reaction of the people from different backgrounds to Yazidi stories. It strengthens the book's wider appeal. It also supports Mikhail's Skopos both as the ST author and self-translator of the TT to bring the entire world to hear these testimonies which signal a strong epitextual evidence of the others reception. It further supports a wider range of distribution.

In the interview, Mikhail explains how she collected, translated these stories, and by rewriting them she affirms the multi layered mediation process handling

the narrative at all levels including the emotional. So, the self-translator's role here is to mediate between the survivors and international readers. She valorizes listening to formal questioning. This makes Mikhail as a story carrier rather than an owner. The epitextual impact assigns the author/self-translator the role of a mediator of voices in both the ST and TT to fulfil the communicative purpose of making an international human rights case. The case is made and heard through the recognition of the international's audience interaction, discussion, recognition of the Nobel Prize laureate, Nadia. In addition, the audience was also interested to get acquainted with behind the scenes events that lie behind the work of the *Beekeeper* and how the victims feel in relation to their reaction towards how the whole world let them down at their time of need. Dunya Mikhail portrays the *Beekeeper of Sinjar* as an ethical responsibility and gendered perspective. Feeling humiliated as a woman and obliged to speak out. It reinforces women's war narratives and sustains humanitarian and cultural contexts. In the interview, Mikhail reemphasises her "free" translation strategy. Consequently, a purposeful strategic translation decision does not incur losses have been designated here. Both interviews and talks state authorial intention, real world reception, and worldwide circulation. The TT satisfies its communicative Skopos and transforms culture specific experiences into globally accessible narratives which in turn validates the strategic changes made between the ST and TT.

On another encounter, Hugh Martin's critical analysis of *The Beekeeper of Sinjar* at The Kenyon Review (2020) declares that the work is constructed as a niche and significant intervention that fits Iraqi Yazidi women into typical global literary discourse. To make the voices of the survivors accessible to the international community and readership, the TT, as much as the ST, relies on interviews, dialogues, and testimonial reconstructions. These devices were often mediated across multiple languages such as Kurdish, Arabic then English. Thus, the translation process has been foregrounded to interpret these voices. It stresses the role of translation as an integral part of both the ST and TT production.

Mikhail's choice of using questions and answers strategy shows a deliberate decision to assure authenticity and immediacy side by side with maintaining readability for a universal market. Martin (2020) underlines the upsetting impact of the TT on Western readers in the sense that how it disrupts everyday peace. It pushes towards involvement with distant atrocities. It is demonstrated that the TT's capability to smooth out cultural as well as experimental differences. This once more accentuates Skopos theory's foundational framework that the TT's efficiency lies in its influence on the TT culture more than in its fidelity to the ST's verbatim rendition. As a result, the TT's structural adaptation enables the narrative to perform as a formidable vehicle for global awareness. Thus, the role of the TT in this context works as a carrier for survivors' testimonies. It is a vital work that urges readers to bear witness to Yazidi suffering.

Furthermore, in the Human rights book review, Ali (2020) reflects that the work engulfs the reader with "complicated and conflicting emotions", in the sense that to be saved from ISIS also means starting somewhere from a scratch.

Liberation from ISIS means uncovering ugly truths about rape and, mass graves and destruction. It is a difficult but necessary reading because survivors need a collective voice and it needs to be heard not only locally but internationally to raise awareness of the reality of what had happened and what had been committed by the so called Daesh. Similarly, Peter Stanford (2018) at the Guardian reviewed the book saying that it "makes a sound, and it must be loud". He adds that it is not easy to read this book but one feels he/she must. We must acknowledge the brutality of what Daesh committed against the Yazidis, a religious minority that the world might not even have heard about before 2014.

We need to ease the pain of those brave Yazidi women in any possible way.

We need to bear witness to the natural response of humanity that emerges in the very core of ISIS terrorist estate regardless of the fatal consequences for those who risk their lives to help others. According to the WLT weekly magazine (2018) *The Beekeeper* opens up a door into the mind-blowing sufferings of the Yazidis who have been abducted and tortured by Daesh for various reasons such as their faith or refusal to abide by Daesh norms. The work involves "a collection of transcribed survivor testimonies, interviews, and research into these crimes, which, combined, stand as a stark and vital work of testimony". It represents a form of narrative non-fiction materialized through the smooth mixture of statements, over the phone conversations, and Mikhail's poetry breaks that come in a similar fashion to a Haiku[1]. The self-translator has preserved the testimonies' immediacy through the employment of the first person narrator which helped the reader nearly touch upon the pain of the survivors. All the factual recounts of the survivors' stories about rape, torment, killing, and self-annihilation make the reader want to witness what has happened to them rather than run away from its agony. One feels obliged to do so. Mikhail stands as the "vessel" for the survivors' stories. She employed poetry to process and respond to integrated traumatised experiences of her own and the Yazidis. Mikhail herself is a refugee, a victim and a survivor of doctrine regime. Even ArabLit (Qualey, 2017) journal shared pre-publication excerpts from the book shedding some light on the collaboration between Mikhail and Weiss to translate the book. The self-translator revealed herself not merely as a narrator but as a dynamic negotiator between lived events and international readership. She explains in a response to an email I sent her asking about the nature of her collaboration with Max Weiss to translate the book. She explains that "Max Weiss and I collaborated on the

[1] "An unrhymed verse form of Japanese origin having in English three lines containing usually five, seven, and five syllables respectively" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)

translation by dividing the work, then reading and editing each other's drafts and posing questions along the way".

To sum up, the recognized and publication related epitext of *The Beekeeper of Sinjar* proves that the TT achieves its communicative Skopos within the target cultural environment despite the organisational and formalistic modification, relocation, and framing in comparison with the ST. It is evident through the longlisting of the book on the 2018 National Book Award for translated literature. Moreover, the work gained a great deal of recognition within the Anglophone literary establishments which assures its involvement within the universal literary circulation. Hence, such an institutional recognition works as a significant epitextual material in line with Genette's (1987/1997) approach. It shapes the reception and position of the TT in the target culture. The publication of the TT by Profile Books (Serpent's Tail), London, publishing house places the work within an outstanding translational establishment to facilitate its accessibility to the TT readers worldwide.

9. Results

The findings of the present paper are as follows:

1. Self-translation in *The Beekeeper of Sinjar* works as a purpose driven, creative, and paratextual process rather than a fidelity bound transfer between languages.

2. The contrastive analysis of the ST and TT reveals consistent patterns of addition, deletion, modification, and restructuring. These patterns operate as strategic adaptations aligned with the communicative Skopos of the TT.

3. At the peritextual level, the transformation of the title from *في سوق السبايا* to *The Beekeeper of Sinjar: Rescuing the Stolen Women of Iraq* reveals an explicit shift from locally embedded, culturally dense reference to a globally accessible humanitarian framing which is further enhanced via the new design of the cover. The cover of the ST renders visible violence commercialization. However, the figurative themes of resilience and survival took over the design of the cover of the TT.

4. The peritextual changes are not mainly for aesthetic purposes but rather they perform the role of threshold to guide TT readers' reception and to fulfil their expectations.

5. In terms of the textual and narratological changes, the TT witnesses dramatic shifts that result in the fusion of chapters, reshuffling of the sequence of the narration, and the intentional erasing of culture bound elements and or distressing accounts. Again, these shifts are not accidental, but they are implemented to assist understanding, comprehension, accessibility and acceptability of the TT by a foreign receiver.

6. The lexical adjustments such as the replacement of the word *survivors* with *victims* and the covert references with overt ones indicate an adjusted modified voice directed toward universally decipherable communicative environment.
7. As far as the epitextual elements are concerned, authorial statements, interviews and reception data enhance the fact that these changes are intentional and serve a particular Skopos. Mikhail openly acknowledges her wish to be free in the translation. This indicates that the TT constitutes a form of rewriting rather than replication.
8. Epitextual materials further demonstrate that the work has achieved a wide international recognition, including critical acclaim and institutional validation which evidences its successful circulation within Anglophone literary and humanitarian contexts.
9. The epitextual materials addressed the TT as an original text written in English without being subordinate to or derivative from another text.
10. The translation does not merely reproduce the ST. It repositions, reframes, and rearticulates it to fulfil a distinct communicative purpose.

Conclusion

The present paper concludes the following:
1. Self-translation in Dunya Mikhail's *The Beekeeper of Sinjar* formidably challenges traditional translation paradigms grounded in fidelity and equivalence.
2. Through the integration of Genette's concept of paratextuality with Skopos theory, the research demonstrates that the TT should be approached as a functionally autonomous, purpose driven rewriting that operates within a paratextual and liminal framework.
3. The analysis exposes that the TT expands beyond its status as a translated product to act as an operational negotiating threshold that shapes how the narrative is going to be received, decoded, and spread internationally.
4. Through strategic modifications at textual, peritextual, and epitextual levels, the author/translator reconfigures the narrative to align with the expectations, sensitivities, and knowledge schemes of the target audience. These shifts do not mark losses but function as necessary adaptations that ensure communicative effectiveness and cultural accessibility.
5. The communicative purpose of the TT is to rouse international awareness of the grief and sorrow of Yazidi victims which has the power to situate their experiences within worldwide human rights advocacy. Such Skopos has been successfully established through textual alterations, the text's reception, critical appreciation, and institutional endorsement.
6. The self-translation of the *Beekeeper of Sinjar* aids the translational distribution of marginalized voices which fulfils its role as a vehicle of cultural intermediation.

7. Self-translation must be treated as a creative and strategic act of authorship, where the boundaries between writing and translation disappear.
8. The TT emerges as a paratextual liminal structure, governed by internally generated Skopos and shaped by the author's agency.
9. *The Beekeeper of Sinjar* exemplifies how self-translation can perform as a powerful tool for recontextualization, visibility, and global involvement.
10. The study concludes that deviations from the ST are not markers of failure but rather indications of pragmatic success.

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