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Representations of Saudi Culture in the Translated Narratives of 'Abd al-Rahman Munif's '*Annihayat'- "Endings*"

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Abstract

This study delves into the intricate realm of narratives within the context of translation, focusing on the seminal work of Saudi author Abd al-Rahman Munif, 'Annihayat' (Endings). The exploration is grounded in Mona Baker's narrative framework (2005, 2010, 2014), which examines the fidelity of Roger Allen's English translation 'Endings' in capturing the diverse narrative types proposed by Baker. The analysis extends beyond narrative types to scrutinize key narrative features. By employing these features, this study aims to uncover the nuances introduced during the translation process, exploring how Allen's choices impact the relationships among narrative elements, the appropriateness of selected details, the significance attributed to events, and the faithful representation of temporality. The findings show that Allen maintained the same narratives constructed by Munif and therefore kept the same positive image of Saudi culture. Allen was successful in translating *Endings* into English, Munif's voice was heard, and the essence of Munif's work was conveyed.

Keywords: Allen; Munif; narrative theory; Saudi literature; translation; Saudi culture.

1. Introduction

It is clear that literature has always been humanity's refuge, allowing us to express reality, dreams, ambitions, opposition and hopes, among other things. Saudi literature is no exception to this. Its early seeds were planted in works published in newspapers and magazines, and it developed along with the spread of printing houses, which coincided with social development in Saudi society and in the Arab region. It was thriving to adopt new styles and themes that reflect the aspirations of both writers and readers, themes that express change and shifting powers even if it was through symbolism, which is a strategy heavily used by various writers.

The landscape of Saudi writers, as delineated by Jayyussi (1989), reveals a dichotomy: the first camp engages with external, local, and social realities, advocating reform with socialist rhetoric, whereas the second camp delves into the internal struggle of the individual, expressing the creative strife faced within a community that may not comprehend the writer's ambitions. Saudi society witnessed tremendous changes, especially after 9/11 and the bombing in Riyadh, and the authors started to live this change as well, especially after Saudi female production reached the surface, tackling themes such as women and their relationships with males, among others. This "Saudi tsunami" was denied and overlooked by Saudi secretiveness defenders, who roughshod over all the changes that were taking place in Saudi society at that time. Consequently, this created congestion, and turmoil led later to the emergence of "the new Saudi novel"; a very large number of novels were written and produced during this time.

The new Saudi novel addressed a number of topics related to alterations in daily life and customs; the conflict between modernity and heritage ; justice; freedom; social and cultural life; self-suffering; historical and political issues; terrorism; and alienation, among other topics. Some prominent authors include Ibrahim al- Nasir, Sharifah al- Shamlan, Abd al-Rahman Munif, Abdullah Al Ghathami, and Turki al- Hamad. Furthermore, some Saudi works discussed taboo themes such as love, sex, politics, and racism, which were confronted by the Saudi authority at that time and led to banning the distribution of some works. This censorship brought fame to those works, especially those of the West, and encouraged it to translate them. Ironically, controversial works of narrative fiction that conflict with Saudi society have drawn the attention of Western publishing houses and have been distinguished by translations into English and other languages (Alharbi 2022, 41).

Moreover, English translations of the Saudi novels and literature were clearly capable of communicating a multitude of ideological views, events, cultures, and histories of the region. These translations might reflect those narratives constructed by Saudi authors faithfully or unfaithfully. For such assumptions, this study has examined a novel translated from a Saudi well- celebrated author, Abd al-Rahman Munif, to scrutinize the extent to which his narratives were faithfully translated into English.

Abd al-Rahman Munif (1933--2004), a Saudi writer and author, described this as "the era of the novel" in Arabic literature. His first novel was published in 1973 (*Tress and the Assassination of Marzouq*). He was born in Amman to a Saudi father, raised in Jordan, studied in Iraq and Egypt, and lived in Syria, Lebanon, France, and Belgrade. He wrote more than 15 novels and short stories. His novel *'Annihayat' "Endings" was* written in 1977, and it was the first of his works to be translated into English by Roger Allen in 1988. The reasons behind this translation were explained by Allen, who "argues that the contribution of translating a novel like 'Annihayat' is that stereotyped themes were predominant; therefore, novels which take place in the desert were left behind the scenes and were unheard of. However, a narrator like Munif tried to bring these themes to a wider audience by inviting the reader to listen and to explore the cultural traditions" (Allen 1988, v).

In this study, we have examined the social and cultural narratives constructed by Munif and their translations by Allen, employing Mona Baker's narrative framework (2005, 2010, 2014). This study is

not comparing the original Arabic text with the English translation. Instead, it is a study to extract and analyze the narratives constructed by both Munif and Allen. Through this examination, we aim to unravel the extent to which Munif's narratives resonate authentically in the translated form and explore the potential ideological, cultural, and historical representations communicated to the world through English translations of Saudi literature.

2. Questions of the Study

Did the translation, *Endings,* by Allen succeed in conveying, maintaining and adhering to the narrative types from the source text into the target language?

3. Literature Review

1. Saudi Literature: a Historical Overview

Saudi literature has witnessed tremendous literary growth and development recently, invading Arabic literary circles after the economic and political booms were dominated by Syrian, Egyptian, Iraqi, and Lebanese literary works. Since recent Saudi literary works have pushed boundaries after being largely sensitive to cultural and religious implications, current writers and authors "have created well-defined literary structures that mimic those of great international literature" (Albalawi 2022, 12).

The evolution of Saudi literature has been subject to an enormous transformation in the status of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The period between the 1930s and 1960s represents the beginning with the establishment of Saudi Arabia until its discovery and the beginning of receiving oil benefits and revenues. The economic boom in Saudi Arabia has generated social and political transformations that have had critical impacts on social and political aspects and structures, changing aspects of Saudi literature as a result of transforming society's acceptance and adaptation of the newly incoming values and ideas, whether this change is desired by the public or imposed by the government (Alharthi 2015; Alkhamis2013; Alharbi 2022).

In this stage, Saudi Arabia tended to increase its educational, cultural and social aspects by establishing schools for both genders and developing social services, leading to a growth of the academic and intellectual domains and demanding the need for more intellectual institutes such as universities, scholarship programs, libraries, literary clubs, press and magazines, publishing houses, and translation movements. This development was initiated when the first newspaper, *Umm Al Qura,* was established in 1924, a foundation for nurturing literature in Saudi Arabia. *Sawt Al Hijaz* (voice of Hijaz) was subsequently established in 1932 and was later named *Al Bilad* in 1942), which was deemed the mouthpiece of literature evolution. In addition, in 1937*, the Al Madinah* press was established as a publishing hup of literary works and articles. During the same period, three magazines emerged: Al *Islah* in 1928, *Al Manhal* in 1937, and *Al Nida'a Al Islami* in 1937, among which Al Manhal magazine, which

was the first literary magazine established by Abdel Quddus Al Ansari, the founder of *Al Tawa'm* (the Twins), was the first Saudi novel published in 1930 (Alharbi 2022; Alharthi 2015; Albalawi 2022).

Consequently, these Saudi magazines and presses paved the way for improvements in Saudi literature, the publication of short stories, literary works of well-known Arab writers, and the translation of literary works of international writers. Consequently, dedicated presses and magazines for culture, literary studies and works, and philosophy emerged. A famous example was Al Faysal cultural magazine, one of the most nationally well-known cultural magazines in Saudi Arabia; this magazine was founded in 1977 and addresses the topics of Arabic and international literature.

These developments also affected another type of literature, Saudi novels and fiction writings, which have gone through three stages of emergence and improvement. The primary and experimental stage started from 1930 to 1958, in which only fifteen novels were produced starting with the publication of Abdel Quddus Al Ansari's *Al Tawa's* (the Twins) in 1930, in addition to two well-known novels issued in 1948, Ahmad Alsubaia's *Fikra* (Thought), and Muhammad AlMaqhribi's *Alba'th* (the resurrection). The main focus in this stage was experimental, when the first Saudi scholarships were sent to the region and internationally to obtain an intellectual framework.

The second stage was from 1959--1979; it was characterized by being intellectually mature, experiencing transformations and enhancements of literary styles, and was impacted by regional authors, especially Egyptians. For example, Hamid Daminhori's *Thaman Altadhiah* (price of sacrifice) was deemed the first Saudi literary novel published in 1959, affecting the later novels that appeared during this period. This stage also witnessed the rise of Saudi women authors and writers such as Sameera Khashoggi, who was the first Saudi female to write a novel called *Wadda't Amali* (Farewell My Hopes) in 1960.

The third stage, called the renewal stage, which started in 1980 and has lasted until the present, represents a milestone in the enormous role that Saudi literature plays in the field of Arabic literature as a whole. Owing to being exposed to regional and international languages and cultures, Saudi literature adopted larger changes in the way it approached topiscs in its literary works. The first novel to review sensitive topics such as political ideologies, sexuality, and human rights was written by Ghassan Alqusaibi and was called *Shaqqat Alhurriah* (The Freedom Apartment). Furthermore, famous writers such as Turki Alhamad wrote *Athulathiyah* (the Trilogy) in 1996--1998 and *Alshmaisi* in 1997; Abdo Alkhal *Mudon Ta'kol Aloshb* (Cities Eating Grass) in 1998; Raja'a Alsanea's *Banat Al Riyadh* (Girls of Riyadh) in 2005; and Raja Alem's *Tawq Alhmamah* (The Dove's Necklace) in 2010 (Albalawi 2022; Bafaqih2016; Alhazimi 1981; Qualey 2017). The themes of Saudi literature vary in several aspects, such as Saudi modern lifestyle, social and cultural values and challenges, family, religion, and national identity. However, after the 9/11 incident, Saudi authors tended to research various facts with the aim of writing in more realistic settings and addressing issues of Saudi society in their writings (Albalawi 2022; Almenee 2020).

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Despite the massive evolution of Saudi literature, the Saudi government imposed strict censorship over writers and the topic and themes they are allowed to write about without risk being banned from publication in Saudi Arabia in the past. Therefore, the Saudi government has banned many books from some Saudi authors (Asfour 2021; Yehia 2007).

2. Saudi Literature and Translation

Since the establishment of Saudi Arabia, the political, social, cultural and economic transformation has affected the international status of Saudi Arabia and its relationship with other countries; Western countries in particular changed drastically from the beginning of the 1950s until the present (Alkhamis 2013). The discovery of oil has been a strong political tool in international relationships. Owing to the economic boom of Saudi Arabia, the translation movement has an enormous share in developing intellectual aspects and exposing Saudis to different languages and cultures abroad, and as mentioned before, this has been reflected in Saudi literature throughout translation movements and the establishment of translation centers and institutions and the lunching of translation contests such as King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz International Award for translation to encourage translation efforts (Alkhamis2013; Al-Otaibi 2015).

Translation in Saudi Arabia has gone through two phases. The primary phase started in 1955, when the first university was established in 1957, and a sociocultural transition occurred when TV broadcast began in 1965. In addition to the economic boom in the 1980s, which helped in the transition of wealth and status in Saudi Arabia, the first book ever translated in the country was in 1995. The translation movement has multiple aims in this phase: enhancing the education system and improving the intellectual aspects of society; spreading Islam and Islamic heritage; and obtaining knowledge of medicine, science, literature and humanities, which was the primary purpose of translation in this phase (Alkhamis 2013; Al-Otaibi 2015).

The modern phase began in the 2000s, when access to the internet and technology shifted the translation processes and enabled more open translation movements. The goals of translation in this phase were to enable Saudis to adopt and cope with repaid developments worldwide, to reflect a new image of Saudi culture and society, and to continue spreading the message of Islam (Alkhamis, 2013; Al-Otaibi 2015). Saudi translation projects in the Kingdom itself have been subject to major factors such as ideology and power. The translation process and strategies—from English to Arabic and vice versa—used within the Saudi school of translation are concentrated on the principles of preserving Saudi national, cultural, and religious norms, making these norms and customs apparent. This provides a centric ideology of religious and cultural norms in Saudi translation schools (Al-Otaibi2015).

However, by the time, Saudi literature had maximized its role in Arabic and international literature. The Saudi literature itself has been subject to translations from outside Saudi Arabia, away from its set of assigned translation principles. In addition to the interest generated by the banning of some Saudi literature, since the 9/11 incident, Western translators and publishers have demonstrated a growing

interest in Arabic culture and views, in general, over the past two decades. (Asiri 2020).This interest has been particularly evident in the case of Saudi literature, with a number of translators seeking to translate works by Saudi authors. Some Saudi authors, such as Abdulrahman Munif, the first Saudi author whose books were translated into foreign languages, such as Ghazi Al Qasabi, Turki Alhamad, Abdo Alkhal, Muhammad Hassan Alwan, Raja'a Alsanea, Zainab Hanafi, Rajaa Alim, and Yusef Mahamid (Alqahtani 2018), were the focus of attention. The selection of Saudi literature to be translated by Western translators and publishers was mostly based on the stereotypical images of Arab and Saudi cultures in the West. On the other hand, the selection of some literature can also be a tool to offer a new perspective about the hidden aspects of Saudi society and present other aspects of Saudis' lives (Alqahtani 2018).

In conclusion, the development of Saudi literature has undergone significant transformations, mirroring the broader societal changes in the Kingdom. From its early stages characterized by experimental works to the mature and intellectually enriched period, Saudi literature has evolved to its current phase of renewal, marked by a global outlook and an exploration of sensitive topics. The establishment of schools, universities, and cultural institutions, along with the emergence of literary magazines and newspapers, has played a crucial role in shaping Saudi literature. These platforms provided avenues for the publication of short stories, translations, and novels, fostering a vibrant literary environment. The stages of Saudi novel development reflect a journey from experimental beginnings to intellectual maturity and, finally, a phase of renewal marked by a more global perspective.

The cultural aspect in translating between Arabic and English has been also the center of concern by many scholars. Almuhanna (2022) goes through the evolution of Saudi female literary works, expressing the way the use of language created gender divide between men and women and describing the past reality of women presence in the literary domain and how they were excluded from being writers or readers. Almuhanna (2022) presented a set of short stories of female Saudi writers from the three generations of female Saudi literary evolution and provided translations of each of them using 'thick translation', a foreignizing translation method. The researcher aim was to concentrate on choosing a translation method that can preserve the core concepts and cultural-specific elements, and to expose the culture of source text to foreign audience, that is to say, serving the purpose of cultural representation of Saudi female short story.

A study by Sarah I. Aldawood (2017) explores how the culture of the target language is presented in translation. This is demonstrated by going through how the stereotypical representations of Arabs influences the English translations of Arabic literature. In addition to how these stereotypical representations influence the selection of literary works to be translated into English and which translation studies are used in this process, with focused on how culture-specific elements are translated an if they are manipulated in the light of the stereotypical images of Arabs. The researcher chose Fikhakh Al Ra'iha (فخاخ الرائحة) 'Traps of the Smell", an Arabic novel written by the Saudi author Yousef Al-Mohaimeed, translated by Anthony Calderbank *Wolves of the Crescent Moon*. Aldawood opts to shed the

light on this novel and its English translated version for the high controversy that surrounded such novel in its original Arabic version and containing a large number of culture-specific elements of Saudi society.

After the assessment, the researcher finds that strategies of foreignization are predominant, that is to say that the translator opt to use and literal translation giving a foreignization effect and sometimes mistranslate some words or phrases due to the nature of cultural-specificity. Nevertheless, the researcher finds that some strategies were used giving "a domesticating effect in cases when it would be inappropriate to use literal translation due to differences between the two languages and cultures." (ibid: 39). However, after the assessment, the researcher finds that strategies of foreignization are predominant. This highlights the point that the translation of some Saudi literature can be selective.

The study of narratives and narratology has been seen not only as a way to study the human act of narration but also as a way to investigate and analyze communicative acts of narration and translation and to scrutinize the embedded fundamental features that contribute to changing and reshaping human stories and their actions in addition to the underlying agendas to influence human actions. Moreover, the use of narratives has started to gain currency in the field of translation studies, forming narrative and socionarrative theories for analyzing the act of translation and how it affects the construction, reconstruction and circulation of narratives. Seeing translation from a narrative-theory perspective, translators are participants in the circulation and the spread of narratives, not bridge or gap builders between narratives, as they are located "at the heart of interaction, in the narrative that shape their own lives as well as the lives of those for whom and between them translate and interpret" (Baker, 2005: 12).

Baker (2005, 2010, 2014) summarized the types of narratives in accordance with Somers and Gibson (1994) as follows: First, ***ontological (personal)*** narratives represent personal and individual stories and experiences that define the place of the individual in the world and make sense of their lives (Somers and Gibson 1994; Harding2012; Baker 2005). This type of narrative is "interpersonal and social by nature" (Baker 2005, 5). Second, ***public narratives*** highlight the stories and experiences that are shared and circulated within social institutes or configurations. The third type is ***conceptual (disciplinary) narratives*** that are articulated and explained mostly by social researchers, i.e., scholars and scientists presenting narratives founded on their interpretations and perspectives (Baker 2005, 2010, 2014; Somers and Gibson 1997).

Finally, ***meta- or master narratives*** indicate concepts, theories or perceptions that are socially encoded in this type of narrative (Baker, 2005). This type of narrative is a "highly influential, resilient narrative with high degree of geographical and temporal reach and a very high level of abstraction" (Baker 2014, 160), such as capitalism, Marxism, and nationalism. (Baker 2005).

The study of narratives also had to be considered in relation to the manner in which narratives are formulated and function. This necessitates an examination of the various characteristics that a narrative possesses, which facilitate the utilization of narrative theory in the field of translation. Baker (2005, 2014)

outlined several features of narratives presented by Somers and Gibson (1994)*: relatedness, selective appropriateness, casual empirical, and temporality*.

Relationality defines the relationship between narrative elements or events, which function as episodes and chunks of a story. These events are derived from the overall narrative context, without which they cannot be comprehended (Somers and Gibson1994; Baker 2005, 2014; Harding2012). **Selective appropriateness** refers to the option to highlight or include details or certain narratives while marginalizing others. Translation choices have a significant effect on this feature, as some narratives are selected for translation, whereas other narratives, events or details may be altered, marginalized or omitted, affecting the course of the narrative and reshaping it (Harding 2012; Baker 2014). The concept of a **casual** emplot refers to the significance of the event itself and the manner in which an event occurs in accordance with the narrative perspective (Baker 2005). The fourth feature of **temporality** pertains to the chronological setting, namely, the time and the place in which narratives are embedded. This is because the use of time and space is meaningful in the construction of narratives on their own terms (Baker 2014).

Despite the challenges associated with censorship, Saudi literature has gained international recognition, with some works being translated into foreign languages. The translation movement within Saudi Arabia, both historical and modern, has contributed to the intellectual growth of society and has enabled Saudis to engage with diverse cultures. The translation of Saudi literature into other languages introduces complexities, as it is often influenced by stereotypical perspectives and external agendas. This study therefore examined the cultural and social narratives presented in the translation of the Saudi novel 'Annihayat' to ascertain whether those stereotypes were reinforced or eliminated by Allen.

4. Methodology

In this study, the analysis of the narratives in Munif's "Annihayat" and in Allen's translated narratives "Endings" were grounded in the narrative typology and features proposed by Baker (2005, 2010, 2014) above. The novel and its translation were thoroughly read and analyzed according to types and features of narratives discussed above. The discussion below explores how these types and features manifest in both the original and the translated narratives, shedding light on any nuances introduced through the process of translation.

5. Findings and Discussion

Features of Narratives in *Annihayat* and in *Endings*

The elements in Munif's and Allen's narratives were arranged in a coherent sequence that makes sense. With respect to the feature of casual emplotment, which is the arrangement of events in a narrative, the element that "allows us to make sense of events, because it enables us to make moral sense of events, because it enables us to account why things happened the way a given narrative suggest they happened" (Baker 2005, 8). In this context, both Munif and Allen provided interpretations of events and selected

events to incorporate into their narratives. These interpretations were strikingly similar to the extent to which the reader receives a narrative that is almost identical.

The ***emplotment*** of the Munif and Allen narratives is evident in the sequence of events presented in the novel. The causal relationship is tacitly understood by readers of the novel. The events of the novel are divided into three parts, although Munif did not provide subheadings or chapter numbers contrary to Allen, who did. However, upon reading the novel, it becomes evident that the events were divided into three sections: an introduction, the magical night's tales, and the end. Munif begins his novel with the phrase "drought...drought once again," where he describes draught as a catastrophe that affects not only agriculture and water but also the entire population, including the elderly and young, villagers, peasants, shepherds, merchants, visitors, and trade. The effects of drought extend beyond the immediate physical consequences to encompass a range of indirect impacts. These include the emergence of diseases, which can result in mortality, as well as the migration of birds, which can have a knock-on effect on wider ecosystems. Ultimately, the effects of drought can also be felt at the individual level, influencing mood and even faith.

Subsequently, Munif proceeded to delineate the geographical setting of the narrative, namely, Taiba, a small town situated on the border of the Arab region and the desert. He also provides a detailed account of the inhabitants of Taiba, their linguistic style, and their narrative techniques, which he employs to create a sense of suspension. He subsequently delineated the geographical location of Taiba, the prevailing discourse surrounding the migration of its inhabitants to urban centers, and the nature of their interactions with hunters and shepherds. He proceeded to delineate the manner in which drought instigated a state of mania throughout the region, precipitating a surge in hunting activities. The protagonist, designated either "Assaf" or "Abo Liala," was subsequently introduced as a tall, thin, single male in his mid-forties. The novel is structured in a logical sequence, with events becoming increasingly complex following the onset of the drought. The rationale behind hunting is elucidated by Munif, who portrays Assaf as the "Saver" and "Godfather" of Taiba. Assaf hunting practices are characterized by strict adherence to necessity rather than mere recreation.

Subsequently, Munif began to discuss the government's pledge to construct a dam to collect rainwater for agricultural use, with the intention of alleviating the impact of droughts. Despite the worsening situation and the challenges faced by the population, this misfortune has the effect of uniting them, bringing them together. The government reiterates its commitment to constructing a dam, establishing electricity, and constructing roads. The first indication of protest against the government's failure to fulfill its promises was provided on page 60.

The rising action was when the hunting journey commenced in late summer, when four guests arrived at Taiba's residence accompanied by several of the latter's sons, who reside in the city. The purpose of their visit was to engage in hunting activities. The guest perceived a pervasive atmosphere of tension and anger among the people of Al Taiba, a sentiment that was largely concealed by the locals,

who were accustomed to welcoming guests. The visitors requested that Assaf accompany them, citing his reputation as a skilled hunter. Assaf experienced a peculiar sensation during this period. Munif describes how Assaf discussed the challenges and scarcity of hunting, the reluctance of Taiba residents to adhere to his hunting regulations, and their persistent invitations to visitors to hunt in Taiba until they had killed all the birds and animals. Assaf asserted that hunting was a pursuit reserved for the poor, not the wealthy (1977, 72).

Furthermore, the events were in accordance with Munif's perceptive analysis. The journey of hunting, which he refers to as "the beginning of the end," begins and ends with Assaf's death. During this journey, hunters experience a range of emotions, including bitterness and the cruelty of nature. Munif posits that the conclusion of this journey marks the end of the oppression phase experienced by the al Taiba people. The death of Assaf marks a new beginning for them. Munif describes how Assaf's dog attempted to protect him after his death, as reported by Mukhtar, who was profoundly affected by the death of Assaf, as if he had suddenly awakened from a prolonged period of unconsciousness. The people of al Taiba began to recount tales of transformation, the necessity for human and animal change, the fidelity of dogs and other creatures, and the repeated warnings of Assaf, who sought to alert them to the deterioration of their circumstances, after which stories began.

Munif's *emplotment* was structured in a hierarchical manner, as was Allen's. The opening pages introduced the novel, followed by the fourteen stories that explored the theme of animal loyalty and protection. These stories depicted animals as being more devoted and protective toward humans and their families than humans are toward each other. The text discusses how animals protect and save other animals, even those not from their own families. It also considers how humans have transformed towns and agricultural areas such as Taiba into cities with no spirit. The text also discusses how humans hunt animals in a very cruel way and even kill other humans at times. It narrates two stories from AL Jahiz (numbers 6 and 9) to highlight the fact that animals have been considered loyal and protective since ancient times and across different cultures and locations.

The general narrative of Munif and Allen concludes the novel with a description of Mukhtar's emotional response to the death of Assaf and to the appropriate manner of burying him, who was then regarded as a hero for his actions in defending Taiba and its people. The magnificent description of Assaf's funeral and the jubilant celebration of Taiba's people at his funeral mark the beginning of a transformative process, a revolution against oppression, injustice, modernism, and other forms of social and political oppression. This was the inaugural act of insurrection against the preceding order.

The second feature, namely, *selective appropriation*, becomes evident upon closer examination of the novel and its translation. Certain elements were deliberately repeated in the texts. These include references to Taiba's people and their unique narrative style, their generosity and hospitality, the impact of drought on various aspects of life, including hunting, change, the importance of change and protest, and the loyalty shown by animals.

The feature of ***temporality,*** which includes the time and occurrence of narratives. We can see that the way Munif and Allen construct them influences the production and meaning of those narratives. Examples can be found in the opening chapter (time), where Munif and Allen described in detail how the people of al Taiba were fond of narrating stories in a special way to prepare the readers for the fourteen stories narrated at the magical night of Assaf's death, where almost everyone in Taiba narrated something.

The feature of ***relationality*** posits that any event cannot be fully understood in isolation; rather, it must be situated within the context of other related events (Mahasneh 2023, 311). This feature was exemplified by the narratives constructed by Munif and Allen, in which Assaf was depicted as the savior and godfather of Taiba. This narrative was situated within the context of previous events, including instances where the Assaf was engaged in hunting activities with the objective of providing sustenance to those in need, particularly women and elderly individuals, during periods of drought. In these instances, Assaf demonstrated a reluctance to hunt female animals and a tendency to refrain from hunting frequently to ensure the survival of the animals he hunted.

Another example of ***relationality*** can be observed when Munif and Allen constructed a public narrative that reinforced the existing meta narrative about the loyalty of animals and their capacity to be protective of their families and other animals. This narrative also highlighted their mercy toward humans in the fourteen tales narrated at the magical night following Assaf's death. This narrative was contested with another narrative that described the cruelty and disloyalty of humans toward their own kind and toward animals and nature.

A third example of ***relationality*** was illustrated by the first and second parts of the novel when Munif and Allen described the people of Taiba before and after drought, the fourteen tales (the behavior of the animals encouraged people to act like them) told at the wake of the Assaf body to prepare the readers for the last part and at the end of the novel when people started to wake up from their state of silence and oppression and decided to protest and stand for their rights of living a good life and head to the city to demand the government for the last time to build the dam, electricity and roads before they announced a revolt or an insurgence: "Mukhtar said I am not going back to al Taiba again unless it is to carry a rifle and stay up in the mountains. Up there and with other people to help, we can do great things besides hunting" (Endings 1988,140).

Narratives Types in *Annihayat and in Endings*

This paper addresses the concept of narrative in the field of translation as a story constructed through translation and/or through writing about the translated work or the process of translation. Consequently, various types of narratives are present in Endings. These include narratives constructed by Munif himself in the original novel or about it (frames constructed by paratexts), narratives constructed by the translator Roger Allen in the translation itself, narratives about the translation (frames constructed by paratexts), and narratives by other people about the translation (paratexts). The analysis did not focus on comparing

the original Arabic text with the English translation. Instead, it aimed to extract and analyze the narratives constructed by both the author and the translator, as performed by Mahasneh (2023) when she analyzed the narratives in King Abdullah II's speeches.

This investigation of the counterterrorism narratives of King Abdullah II in both English and Arabic speeches is not a comparison of the English and Arabic stretches of those speeches. Rather, it is similar to what Baker (2014, 60) described in her study because, according to her, narrative theory does not make comparisons between the source and the target text. "Instead, it attempts to identify the stakes involved in any encounter and the narrative means by which these stakes are fought over and negotiated (2023, 309).

Munif's Narratives in *Annihayat*

Munif constructed three main types of narratives: ontological or personal narratives, public narratives, and meta- or master narratives; some illustrative examples are discussed below. The ontological narrative of the experienced hunter Assaf, who was united with nature, familiar with its secrets and secret places, and who differentiated between hunting and killing. This contrasts with the city hunter (representing authority), which leads to the destruction of nature by overhunting (killing) for pleasure.

Meta narratives Examples include the narrative of the refusal of nature to be overhunted by visiting hunters from the city, which is represented by the sending of a gigantic sandstorm, which killed Assaf. Another example is the narrative of different forms of change in life, including drought madness, ruptures in human relations as well as the cycle of nature, struggle between generations, and the narrative of awakening, which was evoked by individuals (Assaf) and moves to community (people of Taiba). This narrative of social change emerges from the community and its collective well-being. This awakening was not evoked by a prophet or a leader, nor was it forced from an institution. Rather, it grew from the collective memory inherited in place, enriched by human experience. It is the cornerstone for a new beginning in Tiba and elsewhere in the Arab region, according to Munif. The Arabist narrative stems from the origin of Arabs (desert) as the place from which revolution emerges against oppression and injustice, which was a common theme of Munif's works.

Moreover, the meta narrative was constructed by Munif and maintained by Allen about the fourteen philosophers who lament Alexander's Tomb. This narrative was used by some Arabic writers, as stated by Maher Jarar

This enjoyed great popularity among Muslim writers from an early time, e.g., al-Ya'qubi (d. 284/897) in his history book.), 24 and al-Mas'udi's (d. 346/956) Muruj al-dhahab.25 Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi (d. ca. 412/1021) mentioned that, upon the death of the Buyid ruler, 'Adud al-Dawla (d. 372/983), some philosophers eulogized him in imitation of the "Sayings of the Philosophers at Alexander's Death-bed (2007, 65--66).

Munif employed an analogy between Asaf's death and that of Alexander to emphasize the significance of Asaf as the exemplar of the sagacious hero, who instigated the awakening of Taiba's people (which might be understood as an allusion to Arabs, as depicted in other works by Munif) "by

evoking these two scenes of the funeral oration genre, Munif iterates the 'symbolic' and 'singular/fictional' death of 'Assaf in a transtextual relation to the 'unique' funeral oration of the wise conqueror, Alexander…the similarity between Alexander and 'Assaf rests upon two common traits: wisdom and having a vision" (Jarar 2007, 65--66).

Furthermore, a crucial narrative constructed by Munif and maintained by Allen is the public narrative of different forms of ending, including the ending of Assaf, the ending of injustice, and the ending of an era of silence and oppression. This is in accordance with Markus Schmitz's assertion that "Munif's tentative endings remind us that death is not the end and that a beginning necessarily follows an ending." This was achieved in a variety of ways, including literally, allegorically, and metafictionally. Although the frame narrative reaches a conclusion, it does not conclude definitively. In contrast, the novel's conclusion without resolution enables the consideration of future possibilities involving the emergence of new beginnings across and within diverse contexts (Schmitz 32, 2020). Furthermore, the term "ending" was reiterated on several occasions throughout the novel, as indicated by the following page numbers (20, 22, 32, 33, 37, 39, 66, 79, 85, 90, 98, 102, 152, 157, 159). The sequence of events depicted in the novel model encompasses a range of human, animal, and avian characteristics. The narrative of endings was constructed in opposition to the meta-narrative of "beginnings", that is, the beginning of the future and the beginning of a new era. The transition from the "ethnographic realism" observed in the initial sections of the novel to a kind of "marvelous realism" observed in the latter half was driven by the death of Assaf, which prompted the narrator to pose rhetorical questions about the meaning of life. This transition was observed by Layoun (2009, 598).

Allen's Narratives in *Endings*

In the introduction to his translation, Allen states the rationale behind his decision to translate English. He highlights the novel's unique thematic content, set against the backdrop of the Arabian desert, in contrast to the majority of Arabic novels of the era, which were predominantly situated in cityscapes. He asserts that novels entirely set within the desert are "almost unheard of" and that this represents the novel's distinctive quality. He lauded Endings, stating that "Munif's novel Endings was in the 1970s and still is now the kind of radical departure in novel writing—and in terms of both context and technique—to which I am referring" (Allen 2010, 478). Moreover, Allen was keen to translate novels that do not perpetuate stereotypes about Arabs, those that do not reflect the Arabian Nights images, as stated by Almousa (2012, 81).

Furthermore, Allen was accustomed to contacting the authors of the works he intended to translate: "for my own part, I have never translated a living author with whom I have not been personally acquainted, and in the cases of deceased authors, I have established contact with relatives" (Allen 2010, 476). Prior to undertaking the translation, Allen contacted Munif, as he stated in the introduction to Endings. He wrote, "it is a pleasure to acknowledge that this translation has been undertaken in consultation with the author. I would like to extend to him my most profound thanks for his

encouragement" (1988, X). Furthermore, in the introductory section of the translation, Allen asserted that he endeavored to adhere as closely as possible to the style and content of the original novel: "I have made every effort to convey in the English translation the clarity and neatness of his style, ranging from the gnomic pronouncements about the community as a whole to the highly poetic descriptions of nature and animals, to the narrative styles of the collection of stories, to the liveliest of arguments and discussion" (Allen 1988, x). This introduction is crucial to understanding the peritext, as defined by Gérard Genette. It reveals the underlying meaning behind the narratives constructed about the author and the translation (1997). Accordingly, Allen was highly faithful to the fundamental meanings and styles of Munif, thus retaining all narratives as they were initially presented by him. These include narratives about nature, the dynamics of change, Assaf, the lack of specific references to a specific place or time, and the small number of characters that are reminiscent of a mythical tale.

Another crucial element for the development of narratives is the framing of the narrative itself. This framing may occur within the body of the translation, or alternatively, around the translation (Baker 2007, 158). These paratexts assist in comprehending the narratives constructed by both the author and the translator. Consequently, the examination of paratext prompts the question of the extent to which paratext in the translation contributes to the narrative constructed by and in the minds of readers about the translated work (Embabi 2018, 614). This could be seen in his seminal book about Arabic literature in 1982 and prior to its translation. In this book, Allen discussed *Annihayat* of Munif and constructed narratives similar to those of Munif about the community of Taiba. He viewed the village as a unified entity, and he depicted Assaf, the godfather of Taiba, as a taciturn loner who repeatedly warned the villagers about overhunting. The personal narrative of anger and grief over the death of Assaf in the hunting trip, which ultimately led to the awakening of the people of Taiba to revolt, was juxtaposed with a public narrative of animals that highlights the meta-narrative of animal loyalty versus human cruelty by telling a "remarkable series of fourteen tales of varying lengths, two of which are actually taken from the kitab al -hayawan (book of animals) of Al Jahiz" (Allen 1982, 159). The meta-narrative of the human struggle with the forces of nature and the nature struggle with abusive humans (as exemplified by overhunting for pleasure) provides a context for the villagers' collective purging of the community following the tragic death of Assaf. This narrative offers some relief to villagers and their struggling people (Allen 1982, 162).

Moreover, *Endings* marked the inaugural English-language translation of a Saudi novel and of Munif's oeuvre. The novel is notable for its focus on the "place" itself, the desert without any temporal or spatial frame of reference, as previously outlined by Allen. Taiba represents any Arab town situated on the border of the desert, as Allen effectively conveyed Munif's description of nature, particularly in the final hunting trip before Assaf's death.

Moreover, Allen's translation of *Endings* into English is notable for its clear preference for foreignization over domestication. This preference is evident in his general approach to translations from Arabic, where he tends to opt for foreignization in most cases. Allen retained all cultural references and

cultural terms in the translation. In a subsequent publication, Allen acknowledged that his own preference, both in the selection of texts and their translation, has been toward the "foreignizing" aspect, in accordance with Schleiermacher's theoretical framework. He said, "Returning to Schleiermacher's divide, I must confess that my own preference, both in the selection of texts and their translation, has been toward the "foreignizing" aspect" (Allen 2020, 478). Furthermore, to convey the same narratives and style to the target readers, numerous parts of the novel were translated literally into English by Allen, despite the existence of equivalents for them. The following examples illustrate this point: (ST) اذا استطاع (TT) ذلك الطير الذي دفع ثمنه محصول سنه كاملة; that bird cost the equivalent of a whole year's produce" (1977, 103); حين ورأى اجرائها تستعين من أطبائها (1977, 144) Seeing the bubbies making full use of her teats نصل إلى مكان الصيد الحقيقي سوف تجلس مكاني When we get to the real hunting area, you'll sit where I am here (1977, 51); كان يوصف بأنه قادر على أن يرش على الموت سكر, it was often said that he could pour sugar on death itself (1977,71); لقد أخذ الله وديعته God had taken his deposit (1977,131). Consequently, Allen's foreignising approach serves to maintain the narratives constructed by Munif and thus transfers them to the target readers in an accurate and faithful manner.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated the social and cultural narratives presented by Munif and their translations by Allen, using Mona Baker's narrative framework (2005, 2010, 2014). Our goal was to evaluate how faithfully Munif's narratives were echoed in the translated versions and to examine the potential ideological and cultural representations conveyed to the world through English translations of Saudi literature.

As shown in the discussion above, in his seminal work, *Endings*, Munif presents a number of narratives, the most significant of which were the personal narrative about Arab people in general and peasants and Bedouins in particular. He depicts them as people who are good-natured, cooperative, and supportive of each other, particularly in times of misfortune. Assaf, a simple and kind-hearted man, was chosen to represent this characteristic. Assaf was considered the "Godfather of Taiba." The meta-narrative of the oppression of peasants and Bedouin (the majority of the Arab population at the time of the novel's composition) by the governments of the era deprived them of the most basic rights, including access to water, electricity, and transportation. The public narrative of loyal animals versus cruel humans emphasizes a meta narrative about the same theme. The personal narrative highlights the importance of change. Munif believed that humans must change themselves, become aware of their rights, and stand up against oppression. This was the novel's main theme, sparked by the death of Assaf after a hunting trip with strangers who only visited towns or the desert for fun. Furthermore, the name of the novel itself as a symbolic narrative conveys two opposing meanings: end or death and beginning. After death and endings,

a new era, a new life, emerged. Therefore, the Assaf's death was the end of silence and the start of change, resulting in a better future.

As we can see from the discussion above, Allen kept all Arab and Saudi cultural representations portrayed by Munif. He did not deviate from them or dilute them in any way, maintaining all cultural references and foreignness in the Saudi context. He openly admitted that he usually opted for foreignness (including literalness) in translating Arabic literature. This is a choice that translators who intend to represent the original culture make, as Sara Aldawood stated about Anthony Calderbank's *Wolves of the Crescent Moon*, a translation of a Saudi novel called فخاخ الرائحة by Yousef Al Mohaimeed (2017, 39).

Furthermore, Allen's assertion that he consulted closely with Munif about the translated work and his statement in the introduction to the translation that he has maintained the style and narratives in the original as closely as possible allowed the translation to flow smoothly and clearly. This means that both his narratives and Munif's narratives were completely aligned.

The narratives constructed by both Munif and Allen were used deliberately to affect readers and receivers, with the intention of influencing their actions, as both presented authority figures. This finding was highlighted by Mahasneh's study about the use of authority to spread narratives by some leaders of terrorist groups, such as ISIS (2023). Furthermore, Munif and Allen used their authority as authors and translators to construct narratives about the life of Arabs in Bedouin areas, revolting against oppression and injustice at that time to highlight those narratives to spread them to readers and receivers.

Interestingly, Allen's narratives did not reinforce any Western stereotypes about Arabs or Saudis. In fact, Allen's overt translation maintained the originality of the work and did not distort the positive images created by Munif about Arabs. This is in stark contrast to Raja Al Sanea's covert translation of her novel girl of Riyadh, which reinforced these stereotypes. This is a fact that the original translator of the work, Marilyn Booth, stated, as cited in Embabi (2018, 620).

Overall, the original and translated narratives of both Munif's and Allen were aligned, and they supported each other to render the intended meaning and message of the novel. Allen was successful in translating *Endings* into English. In fact, Munif's voice was heard, as Mahfouz's voice was in Allen's translation of *Khan al-Khalili* (Al-Batineh and Al Samadi 2021, 597). The translation of *the English* was accurate but not fluent. The translator was "visible" (Venuti 1995). Allen took the Western readers of the novel toward Munif's Arabic *Annihayat* (Schleiermacher 2012). This foreign approach gave the readers the chance to be more open-minded and experience the roughness and troubles of exploring the source culture.

Representations of Saudi culture in the Translated Narratives of 'Abd al-Rahman Munif's *'Annihayat'-*
"Endings"

السرديات الثقافيّة السعوديّة في ترجمة رواية *(النهايات)* لعبد الرحمن منيف

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الملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة السرد في سياق الترجمة، مركزة على العمل الاستثنائي للكاتب السعوديّ عبد الرحمن منيف، *(النهايات)*. وترتكز على الإطار السردي لمنى بيكر (2005، 2010، 2014)، حيث ناقشت مدى وفاء الترجمة الإنجليزيّة لروجر آلن " في التعبير عن الأنماط السرديّة المتنوعة المقترحة من بيكر.. ويمتد التحليل إلى ما وراء أنماط السرد لفحص سمات السرد المقترحة من بيكر، وتهدف الدراسة أيضاً إلى استكشاف كيفية تأثير اختيارات آلن على العلاقة بين عناصر السرد، وملاءمة التفاصيل المختارة، وأهمية الأحداث، والتمثيل الدقيق للزمن، وتظهر النتائج أن آلن حافظ على السرديات التي صاغها منيف نفسها، وبالتالي حافظ على الصورة الإيجابية نفسها للثقافة السعوديّة، ونجح آلن في ترجمة "النهايات" إلى الإنجليزيّة، حيث يمكن سماع صوت منيف في الترجمة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السرديّة، الترجمة، الأدب السعودي، الثقافة السعوديّة، منيف، آلن.

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