

Critique of the Arabic Translation Strategies of Verbo-Pictorial Gendered Metaphor: Doris Lessing's The Cleft

“There is never art but always meaning”(Barthes& Heath, 1977,p. 25

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Abstract

This article is mainly concerned with the strategies employed in translating verbo-pictorial gendered metaphor when used as a literary work cover. It focuses on the translation strategies employed by Arab translators in translating the cover of Doris Lessing's novel The Cleft. It raises the questions of to what extent translating a verbo-pictorial gendered metaphor employed as a literary work cover may clarify and elucidate nontraditional new images in different cultures. The article also emphasizes how a verbo-pictorial gendered metaphor plays a role in structuring gender relation new images. The article argues that the translation of gendered metaphors that appeared in feminist literary works invites different translation strategies when it is translated from English into Arabic.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article is mainly concerned with employed translation strategies in translating verbo-pictorial gendered metaphors when used as a literary work cover. It focuses on the translation strategies employed by Arab translators in translating the cover of Doris Lessing's novel *The Cleft*. It raises the question of to what extent translating a verbo-pictorial gendered metaphor employed as a literary work cover may clarify and elucidate nontraditional new images in different cultures. The article also emphasizes how a verbo-pictorial gendered metaphor plays a role in structuring gender relations' new images. The article is divided into three parts; the relationship between a text and its paratextual elements, namely a text cover and the role literary text cover plays in presenting and interpreting the text's idea, Doris Lessing's verbo-pictorial gendered metaphor-based cover analysis, and finally a critique of the translation strategies employed in translating Lessing's verbo-pictorial gendered metaphor-based cover.

1.1.The Role Played By Literary Text Cover In Interpreting Text's Idea.

In his seminal work *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, Genette states that Paratexts are that small elements which serve to present or comment on the text in question, “it is what enables a text to become a book” (Genette, 2001,p. 1). He asserts the importance of paratextual elements’ role -including a book cover- in designating, identifying or describing the work content and genre (Genette, 2001). He affirms the inseparable relationship between a text and its cover. While he focuses on the aesthetic nature of paratextual elements, explaining that a text needs paratextual elements because a book is “rarely presented in an unadorned state” (Genette, 2001,p. 1), he addresses the role played by text cover in introducing and presenting the text’s connotative value to reader and how it provides the possibility of either reading it or turning back. Genette (2001) states that a book cover is a shared responsibility of the author and the publisher. For him, a book cover bridges the author and reader. It accompanies the text to present it and conditions the reading of the text both in terms of meaning and message. To put it clearly, a book cover has two different roles; first an aesthetic role is to captivate reader’s attention enticing the reader to buy the work. Second, introducing the author’s stance or perspective on the idea that s/he offers in the book.

Stanitzek (2005) adopts Genette’s theory and affirms the inseparable relationship between text and its paratextual elements; however, he introduces a broader perspective of the role played by paratextual elements in a text. Stanitzek (2005) takes the relationship between a text and its paratextual elements to a further step by affirming paratextual elements' role in interpreting a text. He also gives more attention to non-verbal elements and highlights the different usage of paratextual elements in films and book/work forms. For him, any book needs paratextual elements to uncover what is written between the book layers or lines. A book’s cover investigation or analysis offers good opportunities for a clear interpretation allowing the book’s ideas to come to light. Or as Sugadev (2023) states, paratextual elements significantly impact how a text is received. She argues that each element of the paratext contributes meaning to the text. Skare (2020) also adapts Genette's view of paratextual elements; however, she argued that new paratextual elements have appeared due to the appearance of electronic literature, digital documents and digitized narratives. She argues that the application of the paratext notion to the new forms of media narrative will lead to alteration of reading habit.

Unlike Stantizek and Sugadev, who did not address paratextual elements translation, Genette argues that in case of a translated work, “translations must, in one way or another, serve as commentary on the original text” (Genette, 2001,p. 405). Genette's conservative view of translation, as a faithful copy of the original text, has encouraged translation studies scholars

to state that Genette is arguing for “an approach that would view a translated version of a text as part of the paratext of the original text” (Batcholar, 2018,p. 19). Therefore, scholars have used Genette’s paratextual framework to raise questions about the strategies used “to claim or contest authorization in the Paratexts of literary translations” (Batcholar, 2018,p 2), and introduce new frameworks that consider translation as a text with its own paratext (Batcholar , 2018).

Batcholar states that a book cover “is a consciously crafted threshold for a text which has the potential to influence the way (s) in which the text is received” (Batcholar, 2018,p. 142). For her, the changes applied to the cover “can tell us things about the society in which they are produced” (Batcholar, 2018,p.171-172) as well as the “translator’s emotional stances towards the material they are translating” (Batcholar, 2018,p. 177). Batcholar (2018) argues that translating image-based cover is governed by the same conventions that govern other paratextual elements translation. She also states that the majority of translators are not trained in reading images, and they need to have some level of competence in the strategies used in image-based discipline if they need to take full account of these images and the interplay between words and image. Batcholar, in her illustration of literary works with image-based cover, employs Kress and Von leeuwen’s framework, in which they deal with verbal and non-verbal elements independently (Kress & Von leeuwenm ,2006). In other words, Batcholar deals with the book cover interpretation as a separate entity apart from text itself. In Batcholar’s framework, a translator does not need to look for the meaning of the cover inside the text. Nonetheless, the employment of a different framework that looks for the analogy of sentences in images will not only help the translator to choose the most appropriate translation strategy that will help in interpreting the image on the cover and the idea that presented, but will also get hold of the actual and implicit image-based cover meaning.

In Batcholar’s work, considerable attention has been paid to the definition of paratext; however, little attention has been paid to the translation strategies that might be employed in translating paratextual elements in general and literary works’ image-based cover in particular. Moreover, Batcholar addresses the cover influence on how text is received in the target culture more than text impact on cover interpretation. Batcholar deals with the cover from a commercialized point of view. Indeed, a literary text cover plays an important role in provoking readers’ imagination and enticing her/him to buy the book; however, a literary text’s cover might also help in interpreting, conveying, and elaborating the author’s idea. Or, as Dovichynyna (2021) puts it, paratext elaborates, supports, and adds background information to the text.

Barthes and Heath also affirm the inseparable relationship between a text and images. In his framework, a translator needs to look for the analogy of sentences in images. He raises the question, “does the image duplicate certain information given in the text ...or does the text add fresh information to the images” (Barthes& Heath, 1977,p. 38). Barthes argues that there is a dependent relationship between a text and the used images and states that “it is not the image which comes to elucidate or realize the text, but the latter which comes to sublimate ... or rationalize the image” (Barthes & Heath, p 25). Put clearly, in Barthes’s framework. We cannot separate an image from its text. In the case of a literary work, a deep analysis needs to be conducted to get a clear interpretation of the chosen or employed images because images might be loaded and burdened by the author’s new or controversial ideas of the text, escaping the restrictions of culture that s/he might faces when introducing her/ his ideas in direct words.

Sonzogni (2011) also affirms the role a book cover plays in presenting a text. He argues that a book cover should function as a visual explanation; an entire text is interpreted through a single image. He states that the cover should engage first and foremost with the book genre and then with the content. For him, a book cover pictorial design suggests the atmosphere of a book by depicting specific details of its contents; and thus when translating a book cover image that dissects crucial elements from a story it can often be reflected in a different way. (Sonzogni,2011). A translator can reproduce the image in different ways such as symbols, illustrations or photographs.

2. THE ANALYSIS OF LESSING’S VERBO-PICTORIAL GENDERED METAPHOR BASED COVER

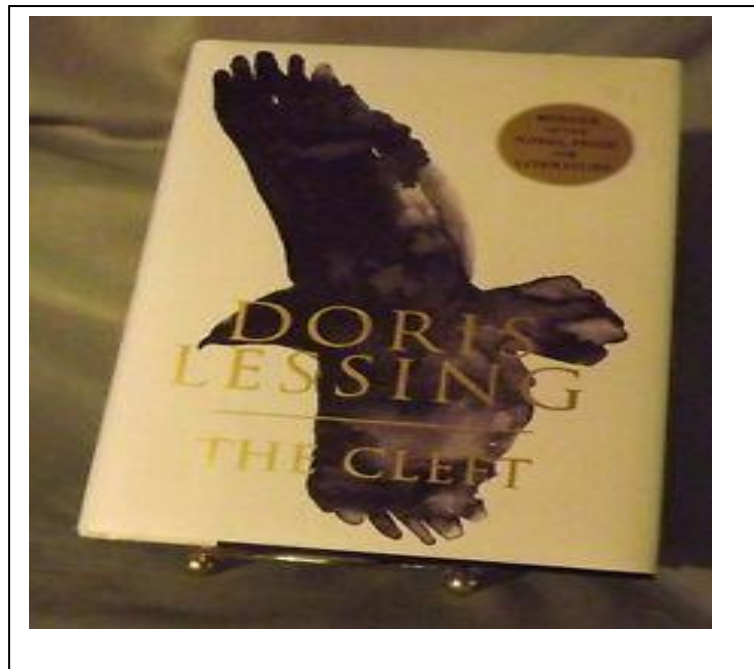
In *The Cleft*’s cover, verbal and pictorial modes are integrated into a single coherent message that constructs a verbo-pictorial gendered metaphor and carries the novel’s core idea. According to Forceville (2008), verbo-pictorial metaphor is a metaphor encoded in both visual and verbal forms. The author who employs this metaphor type usually uses words and symbols to tell the story. Image and text go hand in hand to express the author’s idea. Forceville (2008) argues that “in as much ... pictures are more easily recognized transnationally than ...language, pictorial metaphors allow for greater cross-cultural access than verbal ones” (p.463). They are deliberately used by authors to avoid the verbal ones’ restrictions (Forceville, 2008). He also concludes that text, along with image, facilitates correct metaphor interpretation. The text functions as a means to elucidate image meaning. Even if the image is clear and understood, verbalization helps in identifying and translating verbo-pictorial metaphor. (Forceville, 2008).

The Cleft analysis shows that Lessing employs the non-verbal symbol of the Eagle in two different places; the first on the cover and the second to mark the start and the end of each paragraph told by her Roman male narrator. The cover of Lessing's novel offers a visualized depiction of one of Lessing's sentences that carries her novel core idea; the war between Clefts 'females' and Eagles, the protectors of Squirts 'males'. The war that old Clefts were forced to enter against the most powerful and significant saviour and protector of males. The power responsible for male existence and safety, or the power responsible for the emergence of Squirts' society. That society tended to be more arrogant and less neutral towards Clefts. In *The Cleft*, the Eagle presents the patriarchal mind that has caused women's suffering and inferiorisation.

In the novel's cover, Lessing shows the Eagles, the Squirts' saviors, and the Clefts enemies hovering above, putting them to death. Or as she states

“Something like a war developed between the eagles and the first females, who could not possibly win ...Some of the females,...were killed – swept into the sea and then kept from climbing out because the eagles hovered above them...until they drowned”(Lessing,2007,p. 22).

In their explanation of the relationship between the cover elements, Kress and Von Leeuwen (2006) argue that changing the layout or elements arrangement would completely alter the relation between written text, image and the whole meaning. Reviewing *The Cleft's* cover and the relationship between its elements -yellowish background, dark brown Eagle and the word cleft- allows readers to state that the image might depict the Golden Eagle in its natural inhabitant. However, reviewing the cover's image in connection with the novel content offers a different interpretation. The cover will be conceived as a projection of the novel's relationship nature between Eagles and Clefts. The way the Eagle hovers over the word “Cleft”, bushing it down to the bottom of the page, affirms Eagle's authority and power on the Clefts.



(Figure 1) Lessing, 2007

The Cleft's cover is not only a case of translating one paratextual element, but it is a case of reviewing a verbo-pictorial gendered metaphor employed as a novel cover. Lessing genders her metaphor by using the pronoun 'He' when she referred to Eagles,

We are the Eagles, the Eagle, the Children of the Eagle. The Eagles bore us on their wings, they bear us on their breath, they are the wings of the wind, The Great Eagle watches us, he knows us, he is our father, he hates our enemies, he fights for us against the Clefts (Lessing, 2007, p. 27).

The Eagles symbolize masculinity, the father or the patriarchy that sets the norms, and whoever dares to challenge or show sign of disobedience to these norms should be punished, or as Lessing puts it: "The Eagle people continue the strongest clan, the rules. Even now anyone killing an Eagle must be punished...kill the Clefts, Kill them,/ Kill them,/ They are our enemies/Kill them all" (Lessing, 2007, p.27-28).

Lessing used her image-based cover to control the novel's reader towards a certain meaning remotely. *Cleft's* cover presents the novel straightforwardly by connecting the image with the plot. Forceville (2008) states that authors use verbo-pictorial metaphors because they are easily recognized other than wordings. They allow for greater cross-cultural access than verbal ones and have a stronger emotional appeal.

Lessing (2007) also employs the Eagle as a non-verbal symbol in her novel. In *The Cleft*, there are two narrators; Maire, one of the Clefts, who tells females history. She presents the female version of the canonical history in which she defies the fixed notion that men are the ancestors of all human beings. And the Roman narrator who tells the patriarchal version of history and whom Lessing marked the start and the end of his speech by the non-verbal symbol of Eagle. The Roman narrator is utilized as the voice of Eagle, his speech expresses the society perception of female, or as Lessing (2007) puts it,

[The clefts] swam a little and shook their long hair ...the long hair is my invention, based on a mention of long hair from ages after this time. Perhaps the earliest Cleft were as smooth as seals, but then grew long hair in obedience to some imperative they were hardly conscious of (p. 44-45).

The Roman narrator reminds us of the appropriate physical appearance of females in society. He tells us that females might be born smooth as seals, but unconsciously they were taught to preen and maintain their bodies and appearance. Lessing shows how society prescribes norms in relation to female body, thus a female body undergo something like training in accordance to the patriarchy perception of female body. In the novel, Clefts are independent creatures; they have a peaceful life, they are able to conceive babies without males and they run their daily life activities in well-arranged manner. It was not until the Clefts came into contact with Squirts that gender stereotype and gender roles are assigned to Clefts and Squirts. Before the existence of Squirts society, Clefts worked as “The Cleft watcher, the Fish Catchers, the Net Makers, the Fish Skin Curers, the Seaweed Collators.” (Lessing, 2007, p. 11), there were no work Clefts could not do, but once they joined the Squirts community, they were assigned the role of housekeeping, they cleaned the Squirts’ shelters, cooked their food, and took care of babies (Lessing, 2007). Lessing shows that the moment Eagles saved Squirts, helped them creating their own community is the moment they witnessed the emergence of gender roles. Clefts who used to be strong and independent had to be weak, fragile and dependent.

I think we must assume their physique had changed, the strong, muscled, fat-protected bodies of the girls who swam faster than they could ever walk had slimmed and become lithe and flexible (Lessing, 2007, p. 153-154).

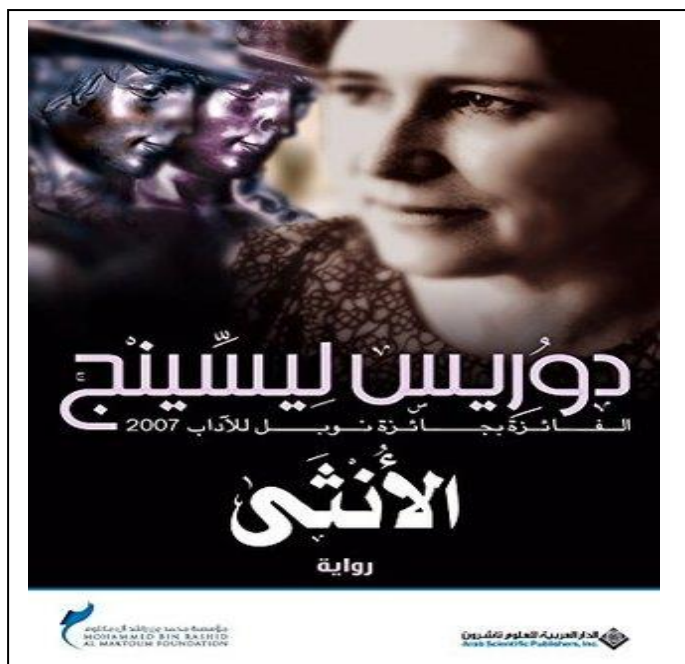
Lessing affirms that all these changes started with Eagle saving Squirts and helping them to establish community. The way Lessing genders the symbol of Eagle by using the pronoun he, and the way she employs it, as a book cover, and as an indicator to the patriarchy version of

history oblige us to review the way this verbo-pictorial gendered metaphor is translated. Translation studies scholars stress the essential role performed by non-verbal elements and argue that non-verbal elements are powerful tools in the presentation and manipulation employed by the translator or the commissioners of a translation (Pellatt,2013; Yuste Frias,2012; Oittinen, 2003), as images can be domesticated and foreignized (Oittinen, 2003). The article will take this argument as a starting point to analyze strategies employed in translating Lessing’s verbo-pictorial gendered metaphor-based cover.

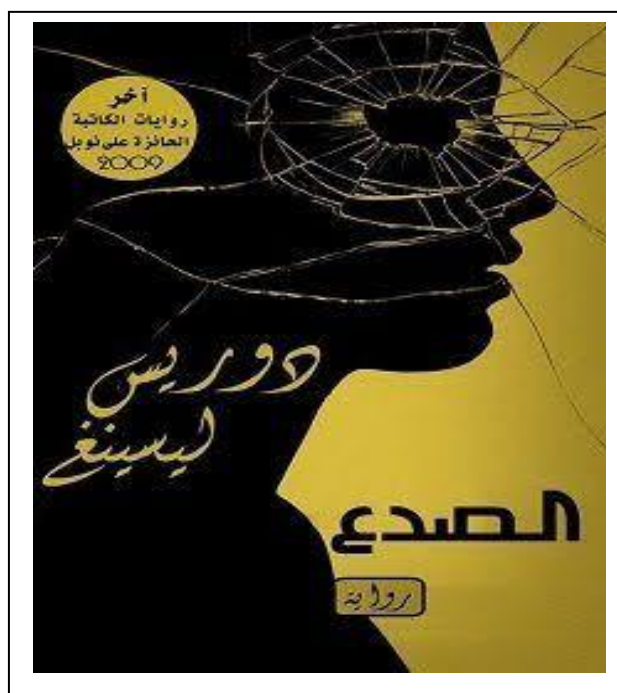
3. THE CRITIQUE OF TRANSLATION STRATEGIES EMPLOYED IN TRANSLATING LESSING’S GENDERED METAPHOR-BASED COVER

One of the main issues translators face when dealing with a literary work cover is copyright. “It is widely known that image copyright is not always sold along with rights to publish verbal text” (Gerber, 2012,p. 54). Therefore, only few translations use the source text cover art. Translators' and publishers' translated works usually use “thematic cover images produced by local artists from the target culture” (Gerber, 2012,p. 56). However, this cover art alteration allows translators to highlight or conceal certain aspects of the original text. So, the source texts covering art translations may be seen as indicative of the translation strategies translators employed. In other words, Lessing’s verbo-pictorial gendered metaphor-based-cover translations might answer the overall approach translators take in their novel translation.

Lessing’s cover translation examination shows that both translators have opted for new covers in which Lessing’s gendered metaphor of the Eagle does not exist. However, each translator has utilised a different translation strategy. Darwish’s cover (figure 2) is dramatically different in terms of the cover’s physical features and the idea conveyed by the cover. Al Abdalla’s cover (figure3) can be seen as a diegetic presentation of Lessing’s original cover idea.



(Figure 2) Darwish, 2008



(Figure 3) Al Abdalla, 2012

Reviewing Darwish's cover (Figure 2) shows that the cover is divided into two opposite parts; on the right side he offers an image of middle-aged Lessing with half of her vision blurred. On the opposite side of this blurred female vision he offers two males bronze sculptures with sharp and clear vision. He also used the cover to highlight the fact that the author is a

Noble prize laureate. Gerber (2012) states that the cover art alteration allows for quite deep examination of any obvious marketing strategies implemented by translator and publisher. It is undeniable that Lessing's image usage and the emphasis on her Noble prize will help with the novel marketing in the target culture. However, Darwish's cover lessened "the essential role performed by paratextual elements, their participation together with text, in translation that is in the construction of the publishing work meaning" (Yuste Frias, 2012,p. 118). Scholars suggest that in translating an image-based cover, translators may domesticate or foreignize the image (Oittinen, 2003) in a way that implicitly "foreground particular details of the novel narrative" (Pellatt, 2013,p. 17). However, Darwish employed a translation strategy that allows him not to domesticate but to take over Lessing's idea which is hijacking, he deleted Lessing's gendered metaphor and concealed the idea that Lessing intended to convey through her cover.

Darwish's cover, strayed from the text by avoiding the book's main idea through omitting anything that would address Lessing's gendered metaphor. Indeed, a translated text is a new work with its own paratexts, or as Batcholar (2018) puts it "[a] translated text would be considered a text in its own right and with its own paratext" (p. 142); however, the strategy employed by Darwish in his translation causes technical issues not only on the level of paratext translation, but also on the level of gendered metaphor translation. In Darwish's cover the paratext function was disregarded. The most essential feature of text cover is functionality, whatever aesthetic or marketing intention may come into play. The main function of a book cover is not to suite the text but rather to ensure that it is consistent with its purpose especially if the translated text is a literary work, as Pellatt(2013) puts it "paratext is the text that surrounds and supports the core text, like layers of packing that initially protect and gradually reveal the essence of packaged item" (p. 1). Darwish's cover contains little about the text content as the word *al-Ontha* "female" shows that the text goes around a female figure, but it does not convey the genre, the setting or the atmosphere of the text. This cover employs images and symbols derived from outside the text which leaves target reader unaware of what to expect from the text.

Darwish's employment of the hijacking strategy in dealing with Lessing verbo-pictorial gendered metaphor, along with his lessening the paratext function, indicates that the text may have been manipulated to conform to cover marketing indication. Sonzogni (2011) quotes House's statement that "a book cover design could be simultaneously an overt or covert translation of the text. Thus the very choice of image, to emphasize certain content and meanings, implies that other aspects may be ignored" (p.36). In other words, a translated textbook cover examination may have profoundly impacted how the translated text is written.

As aforementioned, Lessing used the same Eagle symbol to initiate and conclude her Roman narrator speech throughout the text. Darwish employed a hijacking strategy, deleted the symbol throughout the text and replaced it with three dots. Unlike Lessing, who used the symbol to indent the paragraphs, emphasize the patriarchal version of history, and show that gender roles were assigned to Clefts with the Eagle power, Darwish used the three dots to separate paragraphs. He employed a hijacking translation strategy to soften Lessing's idea that the Eagles or society experience power over females, forcing them to accept specific gender roles. The power relation that Lessing emphasized in her novel cover was softened, if not undermined. The idea becomes clear in Darwish's translation of the word "rape".

"the girls- who had to defend themselves, as otherwise they would have been raped (a word and concept that would not appear for a considerable time)" (Lessing,2007,p. 98)

"البنات اللواتي عليهن الدفاع عن انفسهن،والا سيتعرضن للخطف(هذه الكلمة والفكرة لم تظهر الا بعد حين)"

(Darwish,2008,p.85)

Darwish interpreted the word "rape" into kidnapping to soften the violence Clefts faced once they entered the Squirts community. The translation strategy –specifically hijacking- is used in translating gendered metaphors to lessen Lessing's nontraditional images, softening the power relation that wraps gender roles.

In Alabdalla's cover, figure 3, the major part is occupied by an illustration depicting a different scene from the novel. He dealt with Lessing's image based-cover from a different perspective. He used another important theme in Lessing's novel to be presented in his translated work cover. He employed the moment in which one of the Old Clefts came up the mountain to see the valley where Squirts live and the emotional and physical difficulties she had in seeing them.

She stood,...and looked into the valley, but what could she see with eyes used to focusing on the rough and tumble of waves? But she did try to look and to understand ...she was here, after that awful journey up the mountain ...with the angry eagles so close all around her on their tall rocks (Lessing, 2007,p. 110-112).

In this scene, Lessing does not only describe the difficulty that one of the old Clefts had in seeing and comprehending what is presented in front of her, but also her fear of Eagles. According to the novel 'Old Shes' do not want to go up the mountain to see the valley where the Squirts live because of the Eagles, they know that Eagles can kill them, but the civil war they had in their peaceful community because of the valley residents forced one of them to go

and look into the valley. “There was ...upheaving of emotions, and that nearly did for them, in a kind of civil war”(Lessing,2007,p. 23). Barthes and Heath (1977) argue that reviewing literary text pictures. Usually, the verbal ones will help identify the picture's meaning. In figure 3 -Al Abdalla’s cover- a female figure is trying to look through a broken glass. The broken area takes the shape of an eye. However, the rough edges of the broken glass make her experience of seeing through a painful one. Castro (2009)states that when translators choose paratextual elements such as cover, they follow an ideological communicative strategy. We need to examine “how the translator first reads and then transmits his or her interpretation” (p.12), or as Batcholar (2018)puts it “the translation analysis of pratexual elements, such as image-based cover, offers an insight into the cognitive processes that underline the creation of new paratextual elements for the target text” (p.177-178).

Al Abdalla’s addresses the text genre and content through female image usage. The cover has some reference to the text setting, and it strongly conveys the female pain and fear atmosphere offered by the text. Al Abdalla allows his new cover to function as a transitional zone between the text and target text reader. His cover provides target readers with a glimpse of what they should expect from this novel. In other words, on the level of paratext, Al Abdalla’s cover persevered the cover functionality as an element of paratext.

On the level of translating pictorial gendered metaphor, Al badalla changed Lessing’s metaphor into another metaphor. Larson (1998) states that in translating new metaphor, translators need to identify the metaphor in the text which is being translated to make sure that the correct meaning is communicated . Larson(1998), also, argue that the metaphor meaning could be translated without keeping the metaphorical imagery. Al Abdalla in Lessing’s cover examination identified “the indexical relationship of the verbal and the visual” (Oittinen,2003,p.139); he focused on the feeling conveyed by Lessing’s metaphor which is the relationship between Clefts and Eagles power. He employed a different image but it carries the same feeling. Sonzogni (2011) argues that when an image cover dissects crucial elements from a story, it can often be reflected in a different way. Thus, Al Abdalla’s cover is dense with unpleasant feelings of pain, fear and anxiety, usually associated with power relations.

Al Abdalla in his quest to interpret Lessing’s verbo- pictorial gendered metaphor utilised a one side portrait, which means he offers a single perspective. The use of this image is clever as he kept it neutral and did not state whether he agrees or disagrees with the idea offered by Lessing’s cover. He just introduces the author’s idea, giving it space within the target culture, which is the main function of the hybridity strategy. Al Abdalla’s cover does not lose the Arab conservative identity, “rather he goes beyond the identities carrying the

responsibility of articulating the signifying bridge between two different cultures” (Wilson,2011,p. 243). The hybridity strategy becomes clear in Al Abdalla’s choice of image ‘a face with no features’, he paid attention to the target culture's view of gender relations in which his translation will be published, while the broken glass that has taken the shape of an eye indicates that the text will break some of the taboos concerning gender relations. In other words, reading this novel will be like a journey “of knowing what should not be known” (Lessing,2007,p. ii).

4. CONCLUSION

Verbo-pictorial gendered metaphors have been utilised by authors with feminism stances to offer a new and different perspective on provocative ideas, they are less clear but richer in meaning than verbal ones. These metaphors are able to carry a text’s core idea avoiding the restrictions that surround verbal metaphors. Employing this metaphor type on a book cover is considered a creative technique that allows the cover to function as a transition and transaction zone between text and reader. Therefore, this metaphor translation type needs unconventional strategy that is able to render the disturbing meaning of the metaphor without offending target culture. In Lessing’s verbo- pictorial gendered metaphor based- cover translations, both translators opted for hijacking strategy. Darwish used it to covert Lessing’s idea and utilised the cover for commercial propose as the combination of the elements of his cover; the bronze sculptures, Nobel prize, the word “female” and the author’s image in which she has a motherly smile and aura, suggests that this text is about femininity. On the other hand, Al Abdalla utilised hijacking to overt Lessing’s metaphors allowing her literary clue to convey new perspective on gender relations. The broken glass that has taken the shape of an eye and the word '*As-Sad*' (The Rift) gives the perception that the text offers something powerful; the reader will witness or come to realize something new. The difference between Darwish’s and Al Abdalla’s translations comes from the integration between hijacking and hybridity techniques that Al Abdalla employed in his translation. This integration created an in-between space that allows the translated work to host the author’s provocative idea in a different culture without offending the target reader. Al Abdalla's strategy in his translation of Lessing’s verbo-pictorial gendered metaphor shows that he dealt with translation as a transformative, cross-culture phenomenon rather than a linguistic transition between cultures.

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