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Translation and the Quest for Meaning: Adūnīs and Yūsuf al-Khāl’s Translation of T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*

Imed Nsiri

Introduction

It is common knowledge to state the centrality of translation in the modernist project be it in English or Arabic. The translation act itself, especially when performed by a poet, is an instance of the poet’s liminality as he puts himself in betwixt and between. The English poet T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* is itself a liminal and the energy engendered by that liminality is a central aspect of the power of the text. The end-product is a liminal text that shares so much of the original text. It is revealing that the first task that the reader of *The Waste Land* must come to terms with is a multi-tongued European text: the epigraph, in Latin; the dedication, “for Ezra Pound,” in English; and the allusion, *il miglior fabbro*, in Italian. With the publication of *Facsimile* (Eliot 1971c) it became clear how Ezra Pound’s “Cesarean operation,” had changed the poem.

This article examines some Arabic translations of T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* with special reference to Adūnīs (Alī Aḥmad Saʿīd) and Yūsuf al-Khāl’s *al-ʿArḍ al-kharāb* (1958). Translation requires a close reading of an original text; however, in the case of Adūnīs’s and al-Khāl’s (1958) *al-ʿArḍ al-kharāb*, I found that the translation is the offspring not of one original text, but of an original and a translation, which are Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922) and its earliest French translation by Pierre Leyris (1983/1947). The reason for Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958) inclusion of and reliance on the French version may be attributed to the fact that, at the time of the translation, Adūnīs’ English was limited—it was, at most, at the intermediate level. The article shall discuss this multiplicity in the recreation of the text viz-a-viz the decisions that Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958) made.
to agree or disagree with Leyris’ (1983) choices. I shall also use other translations of *The Waste Land*, such as those by ‘Awaḍ (1968), Lu’lu’ah (1980), and Saqqāl (1996) in order: i) to show the other possibilities that Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958) had in rendering the text into Arabic and, ii) to underscore the point that the choices that they made shed light not only on their activity as translators, but also on the nature of their artistry as poets.

Drawing on translation theories and the poetics of translation, the article will have a twofold focus: to trace Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958) understanding of a key poem in the development of modern Arabic poetry and their aesthetic principles as they emerge in their decisions, to use Venuti’s (1994) terms, to “domesticate” or “foreignize” their translation (p. 20). I will demonstrate how, despite the mistakes that the two poets made, their translation is sound and holds an important place in the history of Arabic literature inasmuch as, on the poetic level, it communicates the essence of the original poem. I conclude that there is ample room for many more translations.

**Influence of Eliot and *The Wasteland* on English and Arabic Literatures**

Before delving into the issue of the translated texts, I would to note here the influence of the English poet and essayist T. S. Eliot and his *The Waste Land*. *The Waste Land* is considered by most critics as one of Eliot’s masterpieces, if not the masterpiece on which Eliot’s fame rests (Brooker & Bentley, 1990, p. 3). Eliot and his poem under consideration were also celebrated by Arab writers and critics of the twentieth century. For instance, noting the centrality of Eliot and *The Waste Land* to modern Arabic poetry, Jabrā (1971) writes: “T.S. Eliot influenced many Arab authors […] But most important of all was *The Wasteland* which, regardless of how it was understood, seemed to provide the key to the new movement in Arabic poetry” (pp. 82-83). According to Moreh (1976), Eliot’s influence on Arabic poetry “almost cut it entirely from
its roots. Eliot’s work changed the form and technique of Arabic poetry—as well as its content—to an extent that has no precedent in the whole history of Arabic poetry” (p. 216).

**Arabic Critiques and Translations of *The Waste Land***

If *The Waste Land* has exerted such an influence in English and Arabic it is because it is what I call a ‘liminal text’ that touches the heart of modernist sensitivity and anxiety. As such, it warrants a multiplicity of readings; for the poem has generated a large number of interpretations. *The Waste Land* is said to reflect both the impersonal and the personal aspects of Eliot’s poetry (Canary, 1982, pp. 1-11). No matter, for example, how sound is the personal'autobiographical treatment of the poem, the appeal of the disintegrated reality and the now “traditional” interpretation still retains its validity. My point is that any interpretation of *The Waste Land* is not to be discarded but rather can help in further understanding the poem. Though I read the poem as the treatment of poetic creation, I do not discredit any other interpretation for I see the poem as a celebration of multiplicity and disclosure.

Below are examples of the translations of the poem which I will be discussing.

Eliot’s original text:

I sat upon the shore
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me
Shall I at least set my lands in order?
London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down
Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina
Quando fiam uti chelidon—O swallow swallow
Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie
These fragments I have shored against my ruins
Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.
\[\text{Shantith shantith shantith}\]

Lerys’ s translation:
\[
\text{Je pêchais sur la rive}
\]
\[
\text{Et derriere moi se déroulait la plaine aride}
\]
\[
\text{Mettrais-je au moins de l’ordre dans mes terres?}
\]
\[
\text{London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down}
\]
\[
\text{Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina}
\]
\[
\text{Quando fiam uti chelidon… Aronde Aronde}
\]
\[
\text{Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie}
\]
\[
\text{Je veux de ces fragments étayer mes ruines}
\]

Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.
\[\text{Shantith shantith shantith}\]

Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958) translation:

\[
\text{جلست على الشاطئ}
\]
\[
\text{اصطاد ، والسهل الفاحل وراتي}
\]
\[
\text{ترى ، أضبط على الفاحل يدي ؟}
\]

\[
\text{جسر لندن ينهار ينهار ينهار}
\]
\[
\text{poi s’ accose nel faco che gli affina}
\]
\[
\text{أه إبلع إبلع}
\]
\[
\text{Quando fiam uti chelidon}
\]
\[
\text{Le Prince d’ Aquitaine à la tour abolie}
\]
لماذا، إذن، لا تناسب معك. هيرونيمو غاضب.

دانا. دياب همام. ديامينا.

شانتيه شانتيه شانتيه

‘Awaḍ’s translation:

على الشاط جلست

أسطاد السمك، من ورائي السهل الفقير

أرتب أملاكي على الأقل، قبل الرحيل؟

جسر لندن يهوي، جسر لندن يهوي

ثم توارى في النار التي طهرهم.

يا عصفور الجنة، يا عصفور الجنة؟

امير الكوتيين في البرج المحطم.

هكذا كسر جمعتها إنا حطامي

إذن انت وأنا صنوان.

ها قد عاد (( هيرونيمو )) إلحنوبي،

أعط، أعطت (أعط) : سيطر

سلام. سلام. سلام

Lu’lu’ah’s (1980) translation:

جلست على الساحل

أصطاد، والسهل الفاقه خلفي

أما يتوجب علي في الأقل ترتيب شؤوني؟

( جسر لندن ) يتهاوى يتهاوى يتهاوى
According to Lu’lu’ah (1980), four translations were produced before his own and that what made him decide to translate the poem again was his dissatisfaction with the previous translations (p. 5). Saqqāl (1996), too, expresses his discontent with the previous translations, though he finds very few problems with Lu’lu’ah’s (1980), except his use of standard (fuṣḥā) versus dialectical Arabic (a topic I will discuss later). As a matter of fact, Saqqāl (1996, pp. 105-112) virtually paraphrases Lu’lu’ah’s (1980) criticism of the previous translations. They both discuss how Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958) translation of The Waste Land is teeming with misunderstandings of the source text.

I posit that the belated translator does not necessarily have to be dissatisfied with previous translations or seek to belittle them in order to justify his own attempt. This is in aligning myself with other critics such as J. Barth (1982) when he notes “that literature can never be exhausted, if only because no single literary text can ever be exhausted” (p. 38). Any translation, like any reading, no matter how good it is, can never capture all aspects of a literary text; hence, the necessity for a multiplicity of translations/readings.

The first point of criticism leveled at Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958) translation by Lu’lu’ah (1980) is the omission of Eliot’s preface which, he rightly argues, is important for the poem and hence should have been included (Lu’lu’ah, 1980, p. 66).
Eliot’s original text:

Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi puere dicerent: Σιβυλλα τι θελεις; respondebat illa: ἀποθανεῖν θέλω.

Yes, and I myself with my own eyes even saw the Sibyl hanging in a cage; and when the boys cried at her: “Sibyl, Sibyl, What do you want?” “I would that I were dead,” she caused to answer (Southam, 1994, p. 133).

Leyris’s (1983) translation:

Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi puere dicerent: Σιβυλλα τι θελεις; respondebat illa: ἀποθανεῖν θέλω.

Lu’lu’ah’s (1980) translation:

بعيني أنا رأيت (سبيلآ) في (كومي) معلقة في قارورة، وعندما كان يصيح بها الأولاد: "سبيلآ ماذا تريدين" ؛كانت
تجيبهم دوما: "أتمنى أن أموت.”

The above example shows different understandings in the importance of the preface. While Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958) as well as 'Awaḍ chose to omit the preface, Lu’lu’ah (1980) translated it into Arabic and Leyris (1983) kept it as is in the original text. Leyris (1983) and Lu’lu’ah (1980) seem to have understood the role the preface and the dedication play in shaping the meaning of the poem. Kenner (1959), among many other critics, believes that the preface is central to the understanding of The Waste Land; thus, its exclusion is a major deficiency of Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958) translation. Another shortcoming in their translation that Lu’lu’ah (1980) points out relates to the notes (Lu’lu’ah, 1980, pp. 66-67). Both the notes and the preface are an integral part of the text and have always been published with the poem. Eliot himself jokes about the fact that the notes
have almost become more popular than the poem itself (Eliot, 1975, p. 117). His notes on the poem became a bibliographical list of what an educated person after 1922 should know: from Frazer’s *The Golden Bough* to Weston’s *From Ritual to Romance*. “English courses,” writes Pettingell (2000), “became guidebooks to the writers quoted in *The Waste Land*” (p. 45). On the Arabic side, Jabra thinks, for instance, that the notes are so important that he translated into Arabic the three parts of *The Golden Bough* that Eliot said were crucial for understanding the poem (83).

Other translation problems that Lu’lu’ah (1980) mentions are the translation of lines 99-100:

Eliot’s original text:

The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
   So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
   Filled all the desert with inviolable voice

Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958) translation:

تحول فيلوميل المفروض بقسمة
من الملك البربري؛ مع ذلك فهناك العندليب
ملائ الصحراء بصوت محرم

This is an important image of the poem: the metamorphosis of Philomel. The barbarous king Tereu rapes her and cuts out her tongue to prevent her from telling on him to her sister and his wife. She turns into a nightingale to sing her story with inviolable voice. This image of rape, violation, and suffering that is transformed into art is a key concept in the poem. Although I agree with Lu’lu’ah
(1980) that as poets themselves Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958) did not reproduce some aspects of the scene, the overall image of the transformation of Philomel is still there.

Also, the same aspect of transformation can be seen in the resurrection of Christ, as mentioned in Part V of the poem, which links the archetypal image of suffering and death to rebirth and the transformation of the land and the people. Another version of it is the scene of the typist and the clerk.

“The time is now propitious, as he guesses, / […] Flushed and decided, he assaults at once.” So, there is not much loss there.

Nevertheless, Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958) made a serious mistake in reading the reference to Philomel at the end of Part V of the poem, line 429:

Eliot: quando fiam uti chellidon – O swallow swallow


Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958): أه ابلع ابلع quando fiam uti chellidon.

In the above line, “swallow” does not refer to the verb “to swallow”, as shown Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958) rendering, but rather to the bird. Although some differences in translations can be attributed to differences in taste and interpretation, there are also clear-cut cases of mistaken interpretation of the text, and the above example is clearly a case of a misreading of the original text. This misreading could also give us an idea about the collaboration between Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958). It is well known that at the time of the translation Adūnīs did not know English or at least not enough to translate The Waste Land. Rather than translate from the original text, Adūnīs, I believe, relied on Leyris’ (1983) translation as his source text. It seems to me that Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958)
divided the task of the translation, with Adūnīs taking the first part and al-Khāl the latter, for the French text leaves no room for any misunderstanding as is obvious in the above quote. Thus, while Adūnīs used the French text for his translation of the first part of the poem, al-Khāl used the original English text for his translation of the second part of the poem.

Another example “of serious misunderstanding of the source text,” according to Lu’lu’ah (1980), is turning the frustrated woman in line 132 of “A Game of Chess” into a man (Lu’lu’ah, 1980, p. 67).

‘What shall I do now? What shall I do?
‘I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street
‘With my hair down, so. What shall we do tomorrow?
‘What shall we ever do?

Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958):

"ماذا سأفعل الآن ؟ ماذا سأفعل ؟
سأندفع خارجاً كما أنا ، واسير في الشارع
مسدل الشعر ، هكذا . ماذا سنفعل غداً ؟
ماذا سنفعل ابداً ؟"

Although the third line in this excerpt makes it probable that the speaker is a woman, reading the line as said by a man is not totally out of line with some interpretations of The Waste Land.

As a matter of fact, around the time of Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958) translation, there were many speculations about the possible autobiographical element in the poem, especially with reference to Eliot’s sexuality. A letter to Aiken in 1916 (Eliot, 1988, p. 125) shows that Eliot considered the death of his friend Verdenal and his wife Vivienne’s health
and financial problems among the reasons why he could not produce much. This letter has given some power to the Verdenal hypothesis, which Peter (1990) developed in his essay, “A New Interpretation of *The Waste Land*,” which interprets the poem as some sort of elegy for Eliot’s friend Verdenal who died during WWI and to whom Eliot dedicated *Prufrock and Other Observations* and *Poems 1920* (as cited in Moody, 1979, p. 330).

There is another significant aspect of *The Waste Land* in which Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958) translation differs from those of Lu’lu’ah (1980), Saqqāl (1996), and ‘Awaḍ. The poem is brimming with excerpts in many different languages: Latin, Greek, German, French, Italian, and even Sanskrit. While Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958) decided to keep those excerpts in their original languages, Lu’lu’ah (1980), Saqqāl (1996), and ‘Awaḍ translated them all into Arabic. Lu’lu’ah (1980) sees it as a deficiency on the part of Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958) not to have translated those excerpts (Lu’lu’ah, 1980, p. 66). However, I believe that Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958) decision, consciously or unconsciously, is exemplary of the way they treated an important aspect of the poem that goes to the core of what the source language text seeks to communicate. This aspect has to do with the voices in the poem. There are many levels of understanding in a work of art; and, especially in poetry, the literal level does not necessarily have a better claim to being represented than the myriad of the other levels especially in a liminal text like *The Waste Land*.

In this regard, we should note that “*The Waste Land*” as a title was an afterthought, as the original title of the poem was “He Do the Police in Different Voices” (Bedient, 1986, p. 1). Rather than look for one sole protagonist or a center to the poem, Eliot was investigating the multiplicity of voices in the work. One of the mistakes committed by most critics, as Davidson (1985) argues, is to look for or supply a protagonist or a center to a centerless poem. For her, the absence of one center is the main theme of *The Waste Land* (2-3) just as it is an important technique of the poem.
As *The Waste Land* is a celebration of voices, it is hard to give eminence to one voice over another. From Marie, the Son of man, Stetson, the quester, Sosostris, the Hyacinth couple and Tristan and Isolde, to name but a few voices from the first part, none of them can claim to be “a center around which the other details can be organized” (H. J. Miller, 1982, p. 59). Furthermore, Brooker and Bentley (1990) study this aspect of the multiplicity of voices and they convincingly argue for it, especially for what they call “the contingency of language” as a theme in the poem (p. 6). This notion of multiple voices and multiple interpretations is clear, for example, in the reference to the wisdom of the thunder god and the multiple meaning to one single utterance: “Da.”

Another example of this multiplicity is the reference to Sibyl’s way of giving her wisdom: she would send her divination to the seekers of her wisdom in scattered leaves and the meaning would depend on how they would assemble the leaves and interpret the message. Kenner (1959) believes that in this respect Eliot is the Sibyl of the twentieth century, for *The Waste Land* seems to reiterate such a practice. This goes hand in hand with Eliot addressing the reader as a partner in the making of the meaning of the poem, “mon semblable, mon frère” (Kenner, 1959, p. 159). The emphasis here is on the multiplicity of voices and the quest, and the excerpts in their original languages are an integral part of that aspect. This can easily be illustrated with a quote from the very end of the poem (lines 425-30):

Shall I at least set my lands in order?
London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down
Poi s’ascose nel foco che gli affina
Quandp fiam uti chelidon- O swallow swallow
Le Prince d’ Aquitaine à la tour abolie
These fragments I have shored against my ruins
When the non-English excerpts are translated into Arabic, as in Lu’lu’ah’s (1980) translation, the text is more understandable, but the effect of multiplicity is lost. The sense of loss or being lost that the original reader experiences is lost. The search for meaning that the English reader goes through is denied the Arab reader. It is not the task of the translator to deny their reader an active participation in the above-declared partnership (“mon semblable, mon frère”) between the author and the reader.

It is in this light that I argue in support of the decision of Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958) not to translate those quotes but rather to leave them in their original language. The only power of the writer, R. Barthes (1994) contends, “is to mix writings” (p. 224). This is the same idea Eliot (1953) advances in “Tradition and the Individual Talent.” This aspect of the poet as a bricoleur, “amalgamating disparate experience” (Eliot, 1975, p. 117), is what comes through those excerpts in their original language. It is also an important aspect of the historical sense and of Eliot’s belief in the European mind as an important component of his notion of tradition. The historical sense, says Eliot (1953), “compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe [...] has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order” (p. 23). This notion of a European literature is so woven in “the pattern in the carpet,” Schneider’s (1975) title-phrase, that without this European color the whole piece would have looked pale.

Admittedly, the first task that the reader of The Waste Land must come to terms with is a multi-tongued European text: the epigraph, in Latin; the dedication, “for Ezra Pound,” in English; and the allusion, il miglior fabbro, in Italian. In “The Burial of the Dead,” Marie does not want to be considered Russian and prefers to speak German to confirm her origin. The hyacinth-garden scene is set between the first and the final acts of Wagner’s opera Tristan und Isolde. The hyacinth couple and Tristan and Isolde are then fused and the German sub-text, the entire
story behind the opera, is thus vividly incorporated into the poem, enhancing the feeling of loss and desolation in different voices and different worlds:

*Frisch weht der Wind*
*Der Heimat zu.*
*Mein Irisch Kind,*
*Wo weilest du?*

'You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;
'They called me the hyacinth girl.'
—Yet when we came back, late, from the Hyacinth garden,
Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
Looking into the heart of light, the silence.
*Od' und leer das Meer.*

Likewise, the *Inferno* of Dante is projected onto and it as well parallels the London scene, giving it the hell-like mood needed for the understanding of *The Waste Land* (Bedient, 1986, p. 64).

Blended with Baudelaire’s “unreal city” and the allusion to “Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves / Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche le passant” (Eliot, 1971b, p. 51), the whole passage gains much in meaning and significance through the simple technique of amalgamating different voices. Thus, the dilemma sweeps out of its locality towards a much more universal implication that yokes together Dante’s, Baudelaire’s, and Eliot’s time. This multiplicity of tongues goes hand in hand with the multiplicity of the unreal cities. Towards the end of the poem, reference to Hieronymo (from Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy*) points to his way of creation to emphasize that of Eliot (lines 431-32).
These fragments I have shored against my ruins
Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.

The last line here is a self-reflexive cue to Eliot’s technique. Hieronymo was not mad, but was fusing a muddle of languages for his own purpose (revenge), a practice Eliot repeats.

The historical sense that Eliot tries so hard to express is achieved through this juxtaposition of past and present experiences, which serves to highlight the differences and similarities, not to refer to a clear-cut good and bad, but to fuse and confuse perspectives so as to allow as many points of view as possible. The juxtaposition of different languages, numerous voices, and disparate experiences is an aspect of Eliot’s “raid on the inarticulate” (Eliot, 1971b, p. 128).

By subjugating all those voices into a mono-tone voice, both Saqqāl (1996) and Lu’lu’ah (1980) failed to communicate that multiplicity of voices and experiences and limited the universality of the dilemma of the protagonists of *The Waste Land*.

By doing so, they both have deprived the poem of what makes it a modernist text, which represents the quest for meaning and the feeling of loss in this modern, chaotic world that Eliot calls “the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history,” (Eliot, 1975, p. 177). Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958), however, like Leyris (1983/1947), produced a translated version of *The Waste Land* that poetically communicates an almost equivalent effect in the target language and this is partly due to their effort not to “domesticate,” but rather to “foreignize” their translation (Venuti, 1994, p. 20).

Lu’lu’ah (1980) admits that “Eliot himself had put [the excerpts] in this form, and that they became a part of the poem. But the average English reader raised this very issue in their *first rejections* of the poem when it was published in 1922” (Lu’lu’ah, 1980, p. 66, emphasis mine). Lu’lu’ah (1980) is right when he says “first rejection,” but Eliot refused to change the poem. Time has proven that Eliot was right, and the poem and the foreign excerpts are no longer rejected. Adūnīs
and al-Khāl’s (1958) decision to keep some of the foreign words is supported by the fact that Eliot approved of Leyris’ (1983) retaining the original languages of the excerpts; “such approval, with its implication of shared aesthetic values, suggests that Eliot himself saw his poem as aesthetically realized in French” (Hooker, 1983, p. 11). E. G. Miller (1996) notes that the hindrance to “accomplishing an excellent translation, i.e., the recreation of the multiple facets of any text, may either be regarded by the translator as unimportant, or he/she simply may not possess the scholarly knowledge or the prerequisite creative skills for a translation to approach the original text in its complexity” (p. 10). While Lu’lu’ah (1980) possesses the scholarly skills, he has deemed the inclusion of the foreign excerpts in the poem unimportant not crucial for his audience. But some translation studies scholars would disagree. For instance, Shakir and Farghal (1994) observe that:

For the translator, the consideration of the TL [target language] audience emanates from his awareness that the TL reader/recipient is not a passive target. Viewing the TL recipient as a passive target is, in fact, an oversimplification of both the translating and the reading process[es]. (p. 78)

Nevertheless, Lu’lu’ah’s (1980) decision, like Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958), is grounded in its own time and addressed to its own audience. While Lu’lu’ah’s (1980) translation was produced in 1980, arguably for students and scholars of Arabic literature, Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958) translation was published in Majallat shiʿr, an avant-gardist magazine that was seeking to change the aesthetics of Arabic poetry. When I asked Adūnīs—in an interview conducted with him in December 1999—about the circumstances under which they undertook the translation, he replied:
It was within the translation movement to learn about the Western experiments, especially the English language ones. For there was little knowledge about it in Lebanon [...] It was a type of discovering and uncovering; letting the Arab poets know about the great [Western] poetics, especially uncovering a poetics that is in a way, far from the duality of the Arabic poetics (translation mine).

There is, thus, a difference in the purpose of the translations, and Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958), despite its mistakes, was meant for a specific audience. I believe that it successfully accomplished what it set out to do when one studies the influence of the translation/original on the Arab poets of the time. When I asked Adūnīs about the influence of translating the poem, he said:

It is a poem that has a history. And it was crucial in the poetic language of that time and it is not possible for it not to influence whoever translates it. But how? We do not know. It is hard to determine that. However, it influenced the Arabic poetic experience.

Shaheen (1990), however, more affirmatively acknowledges the influence of Eliot and The Waste Land on modern Arabic poetry:

demonstrated from the poetry published in [the Spring issue of] Shi‘r (poetry), a journal devoted to the new movement in Arabic poetry. (p. 154)

Moreover, Zeidan (1979) states that, starting from his collection of 1961, “[Adūnīs’] poetry became a mixture of mysticism and surrealism. His voice became less direct by adopting the masks and personae of historical figures’ (p. 85). The mixture of voices/masks that are not direct is an important development in Arabic poetry, and it is interesting that this comes in 1961.

The proliferation of masks, personae, and mixing of voices and the indirect way of the poetic language is an important aspect of fragmentation both as a technique and as a reality. This fragmentation is central to both English and Arab modernist poetics and poses a stark contrast to traditional Arabic poetry. “Until the 1950’s,” says Jabrā (1971) “nothing could be more unlike Arabic poetry than The Waste Land: the endless juxtapositions, the sudden jumps, the parodies, the quotations […] the use of different languages […] all previously unknown in Arabic poetry” (p. 84). It is, specifically, this aspect that Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958) translation communicates, that is, the insistence on fighting the urge to domesticate the English text that kept the inspirational power and the obstinacy of the original poem. The chaos and the disjointedness that their translation expresses and that Saqqāl (1996) and Lu’lu’ah (1980) call confusion is, according to Eliot himself, at the “heart of the light” of the poem, and those foreign excerpts with the English allusions are objective correlative to the central line in the poem, as he declares: “These fragments I have shored against my ruins,” which makes him to ask: “shall I at least set my land in order.”

It is interesting that the original text of The Waste Land is the end product of collaboration between Eliot and Pound; what is even more fascinating is that some of the translations—the aesthetically successful ones from the point of view of this article—are the result of the collaboration between more than one individual or voice. For his French translation, Leyris (1983) worked with John Hayward (and to a certain extent with Eliot) and for the Arabic one, Adūnīs and al-Khāl
(1958) acted as a team (with the French translation supplying an additional voice). Furthermore, Eliot was under the influence of the French symbolist movement; as a matter of fact, “Death by Water,” the part V of *The Waste Land*, was originally “Dans le Restaurant,” a poem Eliot wrote in French and then reworked it to become the basis for an important part of *The Waste Land*. It is equally telling that at the time of the translation, Adūnīs himself admits—during my interview with him—that he was “more inclined towards the French style of poetics and it is possible, also, that [he] included, inadvertently, the language of the French poetics in the translation. [He] was engulfed to a great extent by the sensitivity of the French poetics.” All these coincidences, I believe, have contributed to a better aesthetical understanding, translation, and reproduction of the poem.

If Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958) were influenced by the translation of Leyris (1983), they also made different decisions when they saw fit. Whereas Leyris (1983) kept all of the non-English excerpts in their original tongues, Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958) decided against keeping some of the intertextual allusions in their original English language. We see this, for example, in line number 125: “These are pearls that were his eyes,” which Leyris (1983) kept as is in the original English, while Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958) chose to translate it. Another important difference between Leyris’s translation and that of Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958) is the pub scene. While Leyris (1983) was true to Eliot’s technique of juxtaposing the difference of the speeches and voices of Lil and her friend with those of the aristocratic lady of the previous scene to universalize the dilemma of their similar fate, Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958) chose to deprive the former of their common (Cockney) speech and blend them with the latter. Whereas Leyris (1983) chose to preserve the contrast in class-based linguistic registers (Cockney vs. aristocratic), in Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958) translation the two passages exhibit a shared *fuṣḥā* Arabic. In this aspect, Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958) are like ‘Awaḍ, Lu’lu’ah (1980), and Saqqāl (1996), in failing to reproduce Eliot’s technique.
Lu’lu’ah (1980) and Saqqāl (1996) seem to agree and somehow not to agree on the use of the ʿāmmiyya, the dialectical Arabic instead of the fuṣḥā, Standard Arabic. Lu’lu’ah (1980) criticizes Lūwīs ‘Awaḍ (1968) at length for using “a lot of words from the Egyptian dialect” (Lu’lu’ah, 1980); nevertheless, ‘Awaḍ did not use the Egyptian dialect for the pub scene. Yet, the only major fault—unconvincing, though, as I argue below—that Saqqāl (1996) finds with Lu’lu’ah’s (1980) translation is that the latter uses ʿāmmiyya “in his attempt at translating the common speech that Eliot made on behalf of Lil and her friend in the bar” (Saqqāl, 1996, p. 112).

Eliot’s original text:

When Lil's husband got demobbed, I said -  
I didn't mince my words, I said to her myself,  
HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME  
Now Albert's coming back, make yourself a bit smart.  
He'll want to know what you done with that money he gave you  
To get herself some teeth. He did, I was there.  
You have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set,  
He said, I swear, I can't bear to look at you.  
And no more can't I, I said, and think of poor Albert,  
He's been in the army for four years, he wants a good time,  
And if you don't give it him, there's others will, I said.  
Oh is there, she said. Something o' that, I said.  
Then I'll know who to thank, she said, and give me a straight look.  
HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME  
If you don't like it you can get on with it, I said.  
Others can pick and choose if you can't.  
But if Albert makes off, it won't be for a lack of telling.  
You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique
(And her only thirty-one.)
I can't help it, she said, pulling a long face,
It's them pills I took, to bring it off, she said.
(She's had five already, and nearly died of young George.)
The chemist said it would be all right, but I've never been the same.
You are a proper fool, I said.
Well, if Albert won't leave you alone, there it is, I said,
What you get married for if you don't want children?
HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME
Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon,
And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot -
HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME
HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME
Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight.

Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958) translation:

حين أدرك زوج ليل الجمود، قلت
لم امغم كلماتي، قلت لها بنفسي
أسرعوا أرجوكم حان الوقت
الآن ألبرت راجع، خليك فطنة قليلا.
يريدان يعرف ماذًا فعلت بمال الذي أعطاك اياه
لشتري لك أستانا. أعطاك، كنت هناك.
انزعيها كلها، بالليل، واستبدوها بأخرى جميلة،
قال، اقسم، لا أطيق النظر اليك.
ولا أنا، قلت، وفكري بالمسكن ألبرت.
بقي في الجيش أربع سنوات، يريد وقتاً طيباً،
واد لم تمنحه اياه، فهناك آخريات يفعلن، قلت
أوه هل هنالك، قالت. شيء من هذا، قلت.
إذن سأعرف من اشكر، قالت، وتطلع بي جيداً

أسرعوا أرجوكم حان الوقت

إذا لم تعجلوك لا ضير عليك، قلت.
آخرون يقدرون ان اختروا، ان كنت لا تقدرون.
ولكن إذا ما تحرب أهرت، فليس عن جهل بالأمر
يجب أن تخلجي، قلت، من ظهورك هكذا هرمه
(وعمرها فقط إحدى وثلاثون)

ماذا يمكنني أن افعل، قالت، وعلى وجهها ألمة الغضب
إذا الغاتر التي استعملتها، لأوقف ما بي، قالت.
(عندها خمسة وكادت تموت بجورج، آخرهم)
الصيدلي قال لا بأس، لكنني لم أعد كما كنت.
يا لك من معتوهة، قلت;
حسناً إذا ما تركك أهرت وشأنك
فما تفعلين، قلت؟
ام تزوجت ان كنت ما تريدين أطفالاً؟

أسرعوا أرجوكم حان الوقت

هذا الأحد كان البرت في البيت وكانوا
بلعبون الورق

أسرعوا أرجوكم حان الوقت
أسرعوا ارجوكم حان الوقت
تصبح علي خير يا بيلي، تصبح علي خير يا ولي.
تصبحون علي خير يا بامي، تصبحون علي خير.
تاتا، تصبحون علي خير، تصبحون علي خير.

ʿAwaḍ’s translation:
حين سرح زوج ((ليل)) من الجندية، قلت،
وأنأخف كلماتي، قلت لها بنفسني:
هي عجلني فألوقت أرف،
أما الآن ((وألوبرت)) عائد، فأنا في قلبي.
فسبيح أن يعرف ماذا فعلت بما أعطاك من مال
لتشتري معكم، فقد كنت معكم.
قال: اخلعها كلها يا ((ليل)) واشتري طقمًا جميلاً،
فلست أطيل النظر البлик يا ((ليل)), هذا قال.
وقلت: وأنا أيضاً لا أطيل، فلنظر في ((ألوبرت)) المسكن،
إنه قضى في الجيش أربع سنوات، وهو ينتظر وقتًا طيباً،
فان لم تعطه ياباً، فهناك غيرك يعرفه، هكذا قلت.
قالت: أهناك غيري حقًا؟ قلت: تقريباً.
قالت: أين سأعرف من صاحبة الفضل ونظرت إليه شدراً.
هيا عجلني فالوقت أرف،
قلت أن لم يرق لك الأمر ففي استطاعتك احتماله.
إن كنت لا تعرين الانتقاء، فغيرك يعرف.

ولكن إذا هجرك ألبرت فلن يكون ذلك لقلة الوشاة.

قلت: ينبغي أن تخجلي من منظرك العني.(وهي في الحادية والثلاثين لا أكثر)

قالت، وهي تمس وجهها: لا حيلة لي في هذا،

اما الحبوب التي أخذتها الحمالة لا أحبها، هكذا قالت.

هي أنها أنها لبها خمساً، وكادت تموت يوم جورج الصغير.)

الصيدلي قال إن كل شيء سيكون على ما يرام،

ولكن لم أعد بعدها كما كنت أبداً.

قلت: أنت حمقاء مائة في المائة.

قلت: إذا لم تتركك (أ berlin) وشائلك، لم بيق إلا ان ترضخي,

ثم فهم تزوحت إذا كنت لا تريدين الأطفال؟

هيا عجلني، فالوقت أزف.

هيا عجلني، فالوقت أزف.

طابت لينك يا ((بيل))، طابت لينك يا ((لو)). طابت لينك يا ((ماي)).

طابت لينكن.

شكرًا. طابت لينكن، طابت لينكن.

Lu’lu’ah’s (1980) translation:
لما سرحوا زوج (ليل) قلت لها-
وما اختلفت كلامي، قلت لها بنفسى

أسرعوا رجاء اتهني الوقت

لاَنَّ (ألبرت) راجع، حسن حالك حية.
حتى يريد أن يعرف الذي عملته بالفساد الذي أعطاك إياها
حتى تعمل نفسك بما أسئنا، أعطاك، كنت حاضرة.
اقلعهم كلهم يا (ليل) واعمل ضبة لطيفة،
قال أقسم أنني لا تحمل النظر الباك
ولا أنا تحمل، قلت، وذكري، (ألبرت) المسكن
كان في الجيش أربع سنين، يريد أن يتسلل
وإذا أنت لا تستعدين، هناك غيرك على استعداد، قلت
صحيح؟ قالت. يعني، قلت.
إذن سأعرف من أشكر، قالت، وحملت وجهها.

أسرعو رجاء اتهني الوقت

إذا ما أعجبك الحال استمري على هذا المنوال قلت
غيرك يقدر أن ينتظري ويخطر إذا أنت لا تقدر
ولكن إذا أفلت منك (ألبرت) لن يكون السبب من قلة التنبه.
يجب أن تخليص، قلت، من هذا المنظر الهرم.
(وهي ما عبرت الواحدة والثلاثين)
ما بيد جينية، قالت، ومطث وجهها،
هذي الحبوب التي انطلقتا، حتى إنزله، قالت.
صبار عندها خمسة، وكادت تموت مع الأصغر (جورج)
The difference between Saqqāl (1996) and Lu’lu’ah (1980) is that, while Saqqāl (1996) categorically refuses any use of the dialect, Lu’lu’ah is more lenient towards its use in the dialogue. Lu’lu’ah (1980) believes that the technique of using the common speech in the pub is an important aspect of the poem that should be reflected in the translation. His solution, however, was to devise an artificial language that is somewhere between the fuṣḥā and the ʿāmmiyā. He writes, “I use standard Arabic, not the dialect. I found difficulty in the pub passage in the speech of the common people [...] Here I tried to concoct a spoken Arabic language permissive a little in the grammatical rules” (72, translation mine). It is surprising to find Saqqāl (1996) criticizing Lu’lu’ah (1980) for this technique because one can hardly notice the deviation from Standard Arabic where the latter intended to do so. The pub scene is basically a collage from drama, something akin to what Stetkevych (1975) calls the “two levels of speech”: 
the difference between the literary, which is to say the written word, and the spoken or conversationally used word is less immediately one of grammar properties, of correctness or incorrectness, as it is one of level of meaning and of style in the broadest sense of mode, manner, and level of being. In other words, a person who uses one language or another, means and becomes what that language imposes on him. The existence of these two levels of speech in Arabic thus still chains Arabic literature to some extent [...] to that antiquated mentality of a division of styles into higher and lower. (p. 155)

Conclusion
This article has found that most of the Arabic translations of _The Waste Land_ are “complementary versions, with each version approaching the original from a different perspective” (Trahan, 1988, p. 4; emphasis in the original). A common problem in most of the translations is that the translators, unfortunately, missed the opportunity to correct the literary disdain of dialectical Arabic which, as has been noted earlier, has to do with the act of viewing the target language recipient as a passive reader. Admittedly, when it comes to accuracy, Lu’lu’ah (1980) and Saqqāl (1996) have a far better grasp of some aspects of the literal level of the poem than Adūnīs and al-Khāl (1958). However, one has to remember that Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958) translation was the first and that, at the time of its publication in the 1950s, there were no much of the criticism of the poem in Arabic. The purpose of Adūnīs and al-Khāl’s (1958) translation was accuracy but rather opening new direction for Arabic poetry and make it new. Nevertheless, the translation bears witness to some of their sound decisions as well as their higher aesthetic understanding—being professional poets in their own rights—of the source text in communicating its artistic essence. This is in line with Eliot’s declaration that one does not necessarily need to grasp the literal meaning of a
poem to be able to understand its deeper level of communication (Eliot, 1975, p. 117).

**Works Cited**


