

# Packaging Zainab Al-Ghazali: The Gendered Politics of Translation and the Production of “Moderate” Muslim Sister and Islamism

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This paper deals with translation and knowledge production of both an exemplar mould for Islamic woman identity and a cosmetic “moderate” veneer for Islamism. The paper particularly tackles the question of the visibility of Islamic women in the translational narrative sphere and its implication with respect to both the co-optation of “Muslim Sisterhood” within the dominant Islamist gender politics and selling political Islam to international politics. Utilizing Baker’s thesis of translation as re-narration, especially narrative framing strategies, the paper reads Mokrane Guezzou’s translation of Zainab al-Ghazali’s autobiography *Return of the Pharaoh: Memoir in Nasir’s Prison* (2006) to examine the framing of al-Ghazali’s personal narrative and its implications for furthering the Middle Eastern democratization march (in response to Bush’s “Freedom Agenda”), while keeping the Muslim Brothers’ gender politics intact. The paper’s argument is the gendered politics of Guezzou’s translation and their influence on the transnational and international spheres. Firstly, in tune with the expectation of the transnational constituency of Muslim Brothers’ readership, al-Ghazali’s personal and self-aggrandizing narrative is packaged and re-framed within the public narrative of the Muslim Brothers’ gender/gendered ethos to co-opt her politicized inscription of “Muslim Sisterhood” within the Muslim Brothers’ male-ranked organizational structure and thereby reproduce the mould of a “moderate” Muslim sister. The individualistic leaning of the narrative is transposed onto the meta-narratives of the Exodus in ancient times and Holocaust in modern times. The female imprint of the narrative is suppressed onto the conflict between militant masculinities with Nasir centerstaged in the title, referenced as the pharaoh, and semantically associated with Hitler and fascism in the translator’s note. Her gender agency is de-framed and her visibility and access to organizational rank is harnessed to her social identity in marriage and her subscription to and fulfillment of the masculine constructed and assessed criteria of “virtue, piety and modesty” (Guezzou, 2006, p. ix). Secondly, in line with the changing dynamics of geo-strategic realities, the translational renarration contributes to configuring the race-based underpinning of Arab exceptionalism onto the compatibility of (the “purely political” and hence “moderate”) Islamism with democracy through projecting the Muslim Brotherhood’s anti-fascist, democratic, modern/moderate and gender inclusive image. After all, Islamic women’s visibility is a testament of feminism capable of redeeming Islamism and selling “moderate” political Islam to international politics/readership.

**Keywords:** gender politics of translation, knowledge production, Muslim Sisters, Islamism, Arab exceptionalism, political Islam, Freedom Agenda

### Introduction

Access to the narrative and political sphere is regulated by ideas of masculinity that set the parameters for tuning women's voices and molding their visibility in accordance with power politics. The latter is played out through the complicit interests of militant masculinities vying for power over the acquisition of women's charted spaces, co-optation of their discursive struggle, packaging of their personal/identity narratives and producing knowledge about women domesticated within the master plan and meta-narrative of East/West patriarchal identity politics—configured in accordance to the changing dynamics of neo-liberal globalized policies. In that respect, as Sharoni (1996) cautions, women's voice and visibility, or lack thereof, are not to be automatically translated and celebrated in feminist terms of empowerment, acknowledgement and enfranchisement of equal rights and equitable gender order; they may indicate,

Nothing more substantive than a contingent strategy of using women to “sell” international politics... it is almost always men who decide when women's visibility or invisibility is likely to benefit their national or international agenda... in most cases... not treated as integral part of international politics. (Sharoni, 1996, p. 110)

For Arab “Muslim Sisters”, the question of access and visibility in the translational narrative sphere (and hence international politics) is further confounded by a number of issues: firstly, the conflicting terrain in which translation is currently re-located—away from the positivist understanding of the bridge-builder metaphor—into the realm of cultural encounter that conditions the politics of re-narration (Baker, 2005), especially in light of the direction of translation and the power asymmetry of the source and target texts' languages; secondly, the power-conflict between patriarchal fundamentalism and neo-liberal capitalist patriarchy and its theoretical framing in terms of a civilizational clash between Western and alien cultures that furnishes the exceptionalism thesis of Western civilizational values in face of its less cultured other(s) and the cultural warfare narrative between democracy and Islamism; thirdly, the “Sisters” subsumed and circumscribed ideological positioning within the movement's male ranked order—premised on an androcentric public narrative of Brotherhood played out through the Brothers' exclusive right to membership status and leadership positions. Islamic women are exempted from membership fees and hence not entitled to suffrage, leadership and representation within the Muslim Brotherhood's organizational structure<sup>1</sup>. Thus, Muslim Sisters' visibility does not just pose as a contingent strategy for selling international politics. It rather figures as the terrain on which the (sometimes conflicting and at other times converging) masculine power stakes and agendas are structured, negotiated and fought. More specifically, their translational re-narration, or rather re-narration through translation, becomes the territory on which the oppositional clash between civilizations is simultaneously played out and tactically resolved to accommodate and become accommodating of “alien civilization” when necessity arises (Huntington, 1996, p. 27). After all, the clash of civilization has been redefined in terms of “sexual clash of civilization” (Inglehart & Norris, 2003, p. 65). The exceptionalism thesis, originally prefaced by the qualifier “American” to designate the latter's sui generis experience of averting a

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<sup>1</sup> According to Ibrahim al-Za'afarani, a former member of the group's Shura Council, “The statute does not grant women a full membership status... and this is why women do not pay membership fees, do not vote or run for internal elections and do not assume the same responsibilities as men” (El-Hennawy, 2011, par. 13). Voicing similar insight, Hossam Tamam, an expert on Muslim Brotherhood's politics, asserts that the Brotherhood's move to support women candidacy for the parliament in 2000, 2005 and 2010 elections was meant to “enhance the group's image... challenge stereotypes about its animosity to women... yet, it was a paradoxical move because that same female candidate that they fielded did not have the right to run or vote for internal offices” (El-Hennawy, 2011, par. 7).

class warfare (Marby 2015), has been transposed onto the cultural realm with the qualifiers configured (from Islamic to Arab) to tap into the changing dynamics of geo-politics and geo-strategic realities. Its attendant production of a new world order and hence alternative knowledge about the hitherto demonized Islamist Other is attendant on extensive re-packaging of political islam for global consumption, in which Islamic women's packaging and re-narration is capacitated to substantiate the precariously drawn distinction between "good" Muslims from "bad" Muslims (Mamdani, 2002, p. 766) and produce knowledge of the moderation, modernity and hence compatibility of Islamism with democracy and the iconic "Muslim Sister". At the end of the day, Muslim Sister's visibility in narrative is a testament of feminism, which through circumscribed by the qualifier Islamic, is likely to add a veneer to Islamic qualified citizenship with its attendant qualified democracy.

This paper deals with translation and knowledge production of both an exemplar mould for Islamic woman identity and a cosmetic "moderate" veneer for Islamism. The paper particularly tackles the question of the visibility of Zainab al-Ghazali, the Islamist "icon representing the Muslim Sisters [though] never a member of the Muslim Sisters division at the time of Hassan El Banna" (Tadros, 2011, p. 115), in the translational narrative sphere and its implication with respect to both the co-optation of "Muslim Sisterhood" within the dominant Islamist gender politics and selling political Islam to international politics. Utilizing Baker's thesis of translation as re-narration, especially narrative framing strategies, the paper reads Mokrane Guezzou's translation of Zeinab al-Ghazali's autobiography *Ayyam min Hayati* (*back translated Days from my Life*) into *Return of the Pharaoh: Memoir in Nasir's Prison* (2006) to examine the framing of al-Ghazali's personal narrative in accordance to "masculine presumption" and its functioning with respect to furthering both Bush's "Freedom Agenda" and Obama's doctrine<sup>2</sup>. The paper argues for the gendered re-narration of al-Ghazali's autobiographical narrative. This gendered re-narration or rather reframing operates through depersonalizing and toning down the self-centered overture of al-Ghazali's personal narrative, and transposing its individualistic leanings onto the meta-narratives of the Exodus in ancient times and Holocaust in modern times; the title is

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<sup>2</sup> In his second inaugural address (2005), Bush pledged America to the worldwide spread of democracy and freedom as an antidote to tyranny and radicalism. Bush's agenda in Egypt brought about democratic reforms that resulted in release of Ayman Nour in June 2005 (especially after Rice's cancellation of a trip to Cairo due to the latter imprisonment), a multi-candidate presidential election in September 2005 where, Ayman Nour and Numan Goma were opponents to Egypt's long entrenched autocrat Hosni Mubarak, and a parliamentary election in November-December where independent candidates affiliated with the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood won 20% of seats (88 of total 454 seat parliament)—the remaining 80% was taken by the National Democratic (ruling) party. Though reported as strikingly different from the strategy of his predecessor, the Obama's doctrine, a catch-all term frequently used to describe American foreign policy under Obama's administration, figures as the culmination of the Bush's doctrine with adjusted rhetoric and reformulated tactic designed to audaciously reclaim the American dream (Obama's campaign manifesto) through accommodating the only organized alternative to Arab autocracy—moderate Muslim Brothers. In his 2009 speech at Cairo University "New Beginnings", considered by some parties as the opening salvo of the Arab Spring, Obama's administration invited 10 leading members of the Muslim Brotherhood ensuring their seating arrangement at the front rows of the auditorium and thereby sending a clear message to his official host—the Muslim Brotherhood has been accorded a world power's recognition as "a legitimate player in Egyptian politics" (Reilly, 2013, par. 1). In a televised statement on the situation in Egypt in the aftermath of the 2011 uprising, Obama applauds the "passion and dignity... the people of Egypt, the young people of Egypt" sending a message of assurance of the US support and partnership through "an orderly transition [which must be] meaningful... peaceful, and... must include a broad spectrum of Egyptian voices and opposition parties" (The White House Office of the Press Secretary Feb 1, 2011). At a House Intelligence Committee hearing on February 10, 2011, Obama's Director of National Intelligence is reported to have described the Muslim Brotherhood in the case of Egypt as "largely secular, which has eschewed violence and has decried Al Qaeda as a perversion of Islam... They have pursued social ends, a betterment of the political order... [with] no overarching agenda, particularly in pursuit of violence, at least internationally" (Karl, 2011, par. 2). That is to say, they fit in the category of good moderate Islamism with whom we can bring new partnership—especially in light of the failure of autocratic regime to safeguard American interests and ward off the threat of transnational terrorism trafficking inside the West.

changed to suppress the female imprint of the narrative onto the conflict between militant masculinities with Nasir center staged in the title, referenced as the pharaoh, and semantically associated with Hitler and fascism in the translator's note. The result is de-framing gender agency, and harnessing Islamic women's access to organizational rank and their visibility on their subscription to and fulfillment of the masculine constructed and assessed criteria of "virtue, piety and modesty" (Guezou 2006, p. ix). This gender de-framing not just packages al-Ghazali's personal and self-centered (in many respects self-aggrandizing) account within the official public narrative of the Muslim Brothers' gender/gendered ethos. It simultaneously co-opts her politicized inscription of Muslim Sisters' order—comparable to and in many instances morally superior to the Brothers' ranks (Cooke, 1995)—and produces the iconic mould of bounded Muslim Sisters' identity. It more importantly taps into "the cultural theory of politics" with its turning of "religious experience into a political category, differentiating 'good Muslims' from 'bad Muslims'", its cultural explanation of the politics of encounter "outside of the history of that encounter" and its dehistoricized "construction of political identities" (Mamdani, 2002, p. 767). The latter not just brought the overtly simplistic and extremely popularized (especially among the world leaders of anti-terrorism alliance) categorization of "good" versus "bad" Muslims with the implication that "Islam must be quarantined and the devil must be exorcized from it by a civil war between good Muslims and bad Muslims" (Mamdani, 2002, p. 767). It brought about a reductive culturally relativist re-visioning of the democracy parameters manufactured to accommodate the "good Muslim" or rather good Islamist through double (interdependent) adjustments: adjusting the scale of democracy to sketchy procedural criteria (an upheld legacy of Huntington's "two turnover test"<sup>3</sup>) and entrenching the politics of feminism to "culturalist relativist and post modern persuasion [that does not] acknowledge the failure of the Islamic project [with respect to women issues]... overlooks gender oppressive relations in non-Western societies and endorses the fragmentation of women's world into religious, national, ethnic, racial and culturalist entities with a particularistic agendas" (Mojab, 2001, p. 125). Such entrenchment brings forth the qualified feminist redemption and salvation for political Islam and hence tolls the death knell for the long entrenched political orthodoxy of Islamic incompatibility with democracy shifting the gear to Arab, instead of, Islamic exceptionalism. After all, as Coffman<sup>4</sup> (2008) argues, "America's own exceptionalism" is tied to the end of Arab exceptionalism administered through adopting new strategies to the execution of Bush's "Freedom Agenda", sorting out the ambivalence of American foreign policy of Middle East democracy promotion especially with respect to the "costs associated with the promotion of democracy—costs vividly on display in the Hamas victory and the gains by Islamists in Egypt and militants in Lebanon", and taking up "the challenge of integrating Islamist movements successfully into democratic Arab politic... [to discern] which groups to condone, to associate with, or to support in the context of broader democratization" (Coffman, 2008,

<sup>3</sup> In *Third Wave: Democratization in Late 20th century*, Huntington (1993) predicates the satisfactory consolidation of new democracy on "its two turnovers of power" (p. 267). This confuses procedure with the substance of democracy and reduces democracy assessment with what Chomsky (1992) pinpoints as "popular participation... ritual voting" (p. 146). It reduces pluralistic democracy with what Huntington establishes as the bench mark of a successful democratic transition—"two turnover test". If a new democracy survives two turnovers of power, then it has consolidated satisfactorily. For Huntington, echoing Bush's doctrine, democracy is the solution to tyranny, but not anything else.

<sup>4</sup> Tamara Coffman is a senior fellow and the director of the Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings. Wittes served as deputy assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs from November of 2009 to January 2012, coordinating U.S. policy on democracy and human rights in the Middle East for the State Department. Wittes also oversaw the Middle East Partnership Initiative and served as deputy special coordinator for Middle East transitions. She was central to organizing the U.S. government's response to the Arab awakening.

p. 13). In place of the popular but crudely drawn dichotomies of moderate and radical, Coffman develops a tripartite typology of Islamist movements—Jihadist, nationalist or local militant Islamist groups and purely political movements (the chief among which is the Muslim Brotherhood) with the latter deemed the most tolerant on basis of its stance on women and minorities, political pluralism and religious authority. What better litmus test for their liability to democratic conversion than a personal narrative authored by a woman? Thus, al-Ghazali's translation was repositioned in an environment and tuned to the transnational context of reception with a political and social function, whose outcome is trifold: firstly, producing knowledge about Islamic women's identity that would not shake masculine assumption, co-opt the nascent construct of "Muslim Sisterhood" and hence women's capacity to assume leadership roles; secondly, projecting the Muslim Brotherhood's anti-fascist, democratic, modern/moderate and gender inclusive image; thirdly, selling political Islam to international readership and politics. The latter had not only been burdened by the failure of Third World's nationalist projects and hence made receptive to consume the tune-up of the race-based underpinning of Arab exceptionalism onto the compatibility of "moderate" Islamism with democracy, their prospects have also been made to tie into translating the "living and thriving and forward looking stance" of "purely" political Islamist movement (Guezzou, 2006, p. viii)

### **Translation and/as Narration: The Terrain of Negotiated Conflictual Encounter**

Countering the long entrenched orthodoxy of norm translation theory with its underlying power-laden fidelity discourse and professionally drawn dual code of neutrality and accuracy, Baker shies away from the overtly simplistic and positivistic metaphor of "translation as bridge and the translator as bridge builder" (Baker 2005, p. 9)—where conflict arises from the innocuous and unintended misunderstanding—to reposition translation within the terrain of cultural encounter with its oscillating conflictual politics/poetics. This terrain not only necessitates the tactful negotiation of the power/resistance continuum, it reviews the translator as an inhabitant of multiple and variegated narrative locations, that structure their translational choice to construct their narration and re-narration of the world order. More importantly, it ascribes to the translator a complex and compounded agential capacity that contests and challenges power while adhering to power politics/poetics in accordance to the narrative location to which s/he subscribes. In rectification of the descriptive and un-self-reflexive orientation of the manipulation school, norm theory's focus on "repeated, abstract, systematic behavior" and Venuti's streamlined dichotomies of foreignization/domestication, Baker shifts the focus of translational behavior analysis to the "intricate patterns of interplay... between dominance and resistance... the political and social conditions that give rise to such patterns of dominance and resistance" and hence "the shifting positions of translators within the same text... the intricate means by which a translator negotiates his or her way around various aspects of a text" (Baker, 2007, p. 152). Baker's narrative account is a revisionist conception of translation as a socio-political activity, whose communicative potential depends on the negotiation of the narrative reservoir in the social and political context in which translators and translations are relocated. This negotiation is designed to contribute to an influence with a specified outcome, and "[to serve] a purpose in the real world... neither random nor irrational" (Baker, 2007, p. 152). More specifically, inherent to her account is a constructivist conception of narrative—derived from the postmodern paradigm with its critique of the modernist/positivist concept of social representation and its argument for the narrative legitimization of

the truth-claim of scientific knowledge (Lyotard, 1984)<sup>5</sup>—as the sole strategy for navigating and decoding experience—the “only means of making sense of the world and our place in it... [without which] we have no direct, unmediated access to reality... [through which] our access to reality is filtered... to mediate... [and] participate in configuring that reality” (Baker, 2014, pp. 158-159).

### **Legitimizing Knowledge Claims: Socio-Narrative Approach to Translation**

To that end, in pursuit of “a more engaged and committed translation practice and translation scholarship” (Baker & Chesterman, 2008, p. 12), Baker employs the notion of “socio-narrative”, also referenced as the sociological narrative approach, to develop a model whereby the “ontological status of narrativity” is revised and reconfigured into the epistemological status of knowledge apprehension and production—“the only means by which we experience the world and hence the shape of knowledge as we first apprehend it” (Baker, 2016, p. 247). Translation is envisioned “as a form of (re) narration that constructs rather than represents the events and characters it re-narrates in another language” (Baker, 2014, p. 159). Translated narratives are used by various powers to “legitimize their versions of events” (Baker, 2006, p. 1). Translators and interpreters do not just “mediate cultural encounters that exist outside the act of translation” (Baker, 2014, p. 159). Rather, as social agents, they “participate in configuring these encounters... contribute to the elaboration, mutation, transformation and dissemination of these narratives through their translation choices”—shaped in accordance to their embeddedness “in the narratives that circulate in the context in which they produce a translation” (Baker, 2014, p. 159). Translation choices simultaneously arise from and give rise to the interplay and the negotiation of the four types of narratives making up the narrative account and framing reality for both the translators and target reader/hearer.

### **Narrative Typology**

Baker’s model distinguishes between four types of narratives—ontological, public, conceptual, and meta-narrative. Firstly, ontological narratives or narratives of the self are the “personal stories that we tell ourselves about our place in the world and our own personal history... [stories] on the self and its immediate world... [as] ‘a situated, located self’” in a web of social and interpersonal relation with a specified linguistic and narrative parlance—the source of which is the collective stories that a community owns and repeats to specify its unique borders and boundaries (Baker, 2006, p. 28). The second are the public narratives, which are the “shared [collective] stories that are elaborated and circulate among a group as small as the family or potentially as large as the whole world” (Baker, 2014, p. 161). Despite their apparent convergence, unlike public narratives, collective or shared stories “are loose terms that tend to be used outside any specific model... [referring] vaguely to any type of narrative that has currency in a given community” (Baker, 2006, p. 33). The third are the conceptual or disciplinary narratives, which are “the stories and explanations that scholars in any field elaborate for themselves and others about their object of inquiry” (Baker 2006, p. 39)—“the theoretical and historical accounts that circulate in any field of knowledge” (Baker, 2016, p. 248). The last type is the

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<sup>5</sup> In *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1974, 1984), Jean-Francois Lyotard argues for the retreat of critical knowledge for the advancement of functional knowledge propelled by the highly computerized age of postmodernity. This primacy of functional over critical knowledge leads to atomization of human knowledge into separate discipline as much as the atomization and prepectiviation of truth. Thus, he develops the concept of language game to qualify the truth-claims to knowledge, which is reduced to nothing more than a context dependent language game. Narrative and narrative knowledge serves as a means of legitimizing and authenticating the highly fragmented scientific knowledge which functionalists’ uphold. Narrative constructs the fragmented reality and not just reflects it.

meta-narrative, which are the “‘epic drama of our time’... in which we are embedded as contemporary actors in history... progress, decadence, industrialization, enlightenment” (Baker, 2016, p. 248)—the “highly influential and resilient narrative with a high degree of geographical and temporal reach... so pervasive over a long period of time” (Baker, 2014, p. 162). These four types do not just make up the typography of the narrative account. They more importantly furnish both the epistemological typography within which the translator and the reader/hearer are framed and contribute to the framing of reality around them, and the legitimization terrain for the construction of authenticated data with truth-claims to knowledge production. In an age of highly atomized and fragmented scheme of functional knowledge production, narrativity becomes the legitimizing ground for the production and consumption of scientific knowledge that constitutes and constructs the variegated realities of the post-modern condition—packaged and consumed as the ultimate truth(s) (Lyotard, 1984). This legitimate thrust and incentive of narrative is concomitant of what Baker identifies as the features of narrativity.

### **Narrative Features**

For a story to have a communicative effect and function, i.e. make sense, it should possess four core interdependent features (selective appropriation, temporality, relationality and causal emplotment) and another set of features, particularity genericness, normativeness and narrative accrual. The first set, derived from social theorists Sommers and Gibson, highlights the mechanism by which narratives are structured to construct their imparted truth and hence fulfill their designed communicative function in a specific social order.

Selective appropriation, the first core feature of narrativity “inherent in all story-telling”, involves the intentional decision on part of the narrator (writer or translator) to appropriate the material narrated through a conscious design to select and deselect aspects of the narrative in accordance to the “evaluative criteria that reflects the narrative location of the individual, group or institution elaborating the narrative” (Baker, 2014, p. 167). The latter sets the tone for what:

To include or exclude, and to background or foreground, any narrative elements, including events, details within events and the way in which a protagonist is identified by particular attributes rather than others... with a consequences for the way in which the overall narrative is configured and received. (Baker, 2014, p. 167)

Temporality refers to the situation of narrative and narrators with time and space scheme that transcend the “linear progression of time onto a past/present and future trajectory” and hence “accommodates complex types of embeddedness in time and space” (Baker, 2016, p. 249), i.e. “the way in which time sequence and spatial setting are used to construct a narrative [as] meaningful in its own right” through projecting the past onto the present and future (Baker, 2014, p. 167).

Relationally is the way that the individual elements of the narrative (characters, events, linguistic items and image) derive their meaning from the overall narrative in which they are configured. As building blocks, these elements assume their meaning from their emplotment within a narrative environment. Hence, their transposition to another narrative environment requires their modification that would accommodate their meaningful presence or else a loss of meaning would ensue.

Causal emplotment references the re-placement of individual narrative elements within a morally charged schematic pattern that gives a narrative meaning through “the crucial process of weighting them and signaling what links... between them... relationships such as cause and effect, praise and blame, who or what is responsible for certain events unfolding” (Baker, 2014, p. 169). The choice of source and target language and the direction of translation are among the mechanism through which re-narrations are reweighed and are

re-emploted, i.e. replaced within the binary grid of oppositional identity politics in tune with the militant agenda of clashing civilizational order (Baker, 2010).

The second set, derived from the work of cognitive psychologist Bruner, focuses on the communicative effect of narrative and re-narratives, i.e. the tellability of the story that makes it intelligible to the target audience. This tellability or rather intelligible form of telling is effected through the features of genericness, particularity, normativeness and narrative accrual. Genericness, derived from genre, refers to the containment of the story within “established framework of narration” that sets a structure of anticipation on the part of the receiver and in so doing “contributes to developing the narrative in a subtle way” (Baker, 2014, p. 170). Particularity is the skeletal story line within which the particular narrative is embedded to “communicate more than what it formally encodes” and hence assume wider signification that it would otherwise impart, especially in light of the strong hold skeletal stories have on the audience mind. Normativeness references the norms from which the narrative should depart to “breach the conventional expectation” and hence tantalize the receptor to consume the narrative elaborated. This tactical breach has nevertheless to “be effected within circumscribed, normative plot if the narratives are to be intelligible at all” (Baker, 2006, p. 98). Last is the narrative accrual, which refers to the way that audiences link stories together in larger narratives in tune to the location from which they come and to which they subscribe—how “the myriad individual stories... contribute to a specific narrative of terrorism, Islamic extremism, or resistance to western aggression, depending on the [narrator’s] location” (Baker, 2014, p. 171).

### **Framing Sites and Strategies**

The interplay between narrative types and features gives rise to re-narration, whose discursive work is embodied in the framing process by which reality is reconstructed, repackaged and circumscribed within a grid that constructs a structure of anticipation to guide and channel interpretation in accordance to the circulated narratives in the context of reception. For Baker, framing figures as both the “tool of analysis” (Baker & Chesterman, 2008, p. 22) and the site for the “discursive work” enable the core interdependent features of narrativity (temporality, relationality, selective appropriation and causal emplotment) to become operative structuring “a set of events... as a narrative with a specific pattern of causal emplotment” (Baker, 2007, p. 155). Deploying the more active notion of frame from the literature on social movement, her socio-narrative approach uses framing to designate “an active process of signification... set up structures of anticipation that guide others’ interpretation of events” where translational choices figure an “index that activates a narrative” designed to “set up an interpretive context for the reader or hearer” (Baker, 2007, p. 156, p. 158) in Cunningham and Browning’s words “a mechanism through which individuals can ideologically connect with movement goals and become potential participants in movement actions” (Baker, 2006, p. 106).

Framing tactics ranges from linguistic to non-linguistic resources including tense shift, code switching, euphemism as much as paralinguistic devices of textual typology, layout and images. Its site in book translation is the paratext—the cover image, title, book blurb, introduction, preface and footnotes. Though not part of the translators’ work or choice, cover images, and blurbs (the publisher’s note similarly qualifies) furnish the “points in and around the text/at which (re)framing may be achieved” (Baker, 2007, p. 151). These paratextual devices not only frame and set up structures of anticipation directing readers’ interpretation of the constructed social world, they more importantly connect “the immediate narrative elaborated in the text being translated... [to] the larger narratives in which the text is embedded... contributing directly to the narratives that shape our



social world” (Baker, 2007, p. 156). Another important site for framing is the extratext, i.e. what literary critics and theorist have hitherto treated as the background information about the “history of the text” as a product implicated in “several complex relations of production and power... an integral part of any book’s textuality” (Mehrez, 1994, p. 39). Indeed, Baker distinguishes between four framing strategies, the last of which draws attention to the significance of the extra text as a site for crystallizing the embeddedness of the text within its wider narrative context.

The first is the frame space<sup>6</sup> (Baker, 2006). Though not a fully articulated strategy, space frame or framing by space allocation is a strategy concomitant to selective appropriation, Baker’s cited framing strategy, since the extension or shrinking of the space allocated to different narrative participants is administered through omission or addition and results in changes to the overall scheme of the narrative imparted. The second is repositioning of participants. Like with space frame, changes in “the way in which participants in any interaction are positioned, or position themselves, in relation to each other and to those outside the immediate event... [lead to] change in the configuration of these positions... [and hence] alter the dynamics of the immediate as well as wider narratives in which they are woven” (Baker, 2006, p. 132). The third is framing by labeling, which refers to the “any type of label used for pointing to or identifying a key element or participant in a narrative” that ultimately “provides an interpretive frame that guides and constrains our response to the narrative in question” (Baker, 2006, p. 122). The last is temporal and spatial framing, which involves “selecting a particular text and embedding it in a temporal and spatial context that accentuates the narrative it depicts and... [establishes] links between it and current narratives... though the events of the source narrative may be set within a very different temporal and spatial framework” (Baker, 2006, p. 112). Touching on the notion of extratext, Baker argues that the embeddedness resulting from temporal or spatial framing requires no intervention in the text, though the possibility of intervention is not totally ruled out.

### **Narrative Theory and Translation Phenomena**

Utilizing a broad spectrum approach, Baker exemplifies the relevance and applicability of narrative theory to translation studies through tackling a number of translation phenomena and issues of relevance to the current study, the first of which is the choice of source and target languages and the direction of translation. In “Narrative of Terrorism and Security: Accurate Translations, Suspicious Frames” (2010), Baker demonstrates how patterns of causal emplotment are singled out by the choice of the source and target language and how the direction of translation becomes an index for repositioning participants in conflictual identity/security politics through a narrative of a world divided in two camps: the good/evil or the “progressive, democratic societies” versus their antithesis (those who pose a threat in need of monitoring through translation). The second is the interesting interplay between the personal and public in the context of translation and their impact and implication with respect to the issues of non-translation and re-translation. The former, arising from the subversive potential of personal narrative, is instituted by powerful agents (state, groups, religious institutions) to marginalize and suppress the instances of dissent that threaten to undermine shared public narratives and the power status quo they back—“the range of symbols and formulations... the blueprint for social roles and space” (Baker, 2014, p. 162). The latter occurs when the hitherto suppressed personal narrative makes its entrance into

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<sup>6</sup> For Baker, frame space is not so much a strategy. It figures more as the parameter that sets the movement of translator and dictates his subscription to or deviation from the set of professional code and obligation that restrict or rather circumscribe their position, while allowing for their agential capacity to subvert or challenge their restrictive positioning through their intervention.

the cultural space and hence the orientation for suppression and marginalization is configured into reframing and repackaging. Personal narratives are then retranslated to be allowed “into cultural space but translated and framed in ways that ridicule or undermine them... done in the service of powerful institution... or a domestic audience whose narratives are at odds with those promoted by other agents in the target culture” (Baker, 2014, p. 163).

In al-Ghazali’s case, not only the direction of translation pinpoints to a breach of normativity in the shared public narrative in which her personal account inhabits (a breach that becomes all the more tantalizing in the context of translation, especially with respect to the group identity narrative sought elaboration and projection), but also the movement of her personal narrative from non-translation to translation and retranslation poses as an index for both the configured parameter of group identity-narrative, and the configuring and configured premise of international geo-strategic politics. In 1977, al-Ghazali published her autobiography *Ayyam Min Hayati (Days from My Life)*. It was not translated until 1989, under the same name *Days from My Life* by A. R. Kidawi. This translation was published by Hindustan Publication in Delhi. In 1994, Mokrane Guezzou retranslated al-Ghazali’s narrative under the title *Return of the Pharaoh: Memoir in Nasir’s Prison*. The retranslation was not issued for publication except in 2006 by the Islamic Foundation—UK based publishing house. In the first translation (1989), the paratext is absent—save from the publisher’s note (one paragraph) where al-Ghazali is labeled as “the famous Ikhwan leader” (Kidwai, 1989). Unlike the first translation, Guezzou’s text makes an extensive use of paratext. *Return of the Pharaoh* contains a publisher’s “Forward” and “Translator’s Introduction”. Each undertakes the task of re-narrating Egyptian history, and repositioning both the story of Muslim Brothers within the struggle against colonialism and nationalist fascism/communism and al-Ghazali’s personal account within Muslim Brother’s narrative in terms of “the story of a Muslim woman and the torture she was subjected to in the dungeon of Jamal Abd al-Nasir, the ‘champion of Arab nationalism’” (Guezzou, 2006, p. xi)—the “helpless lady... defenseless and virtuous lady” (Forward), whose torture and suffering becomes a glaring testament of Arab nationalists’ uncivilized and “undemocratic regimes [with] no regard for law and human rights” (Guezzou, 2006, p. xi). Such capitalization on the paratext not just contextualizes the text within the group public narrative of the Brotherhood’s suffering, it more importantly sets the tone for the reception of the translated narrative as an appendage of the latter and an appendix to the global narrative of the battle of democracy against fascism/communism, nationalism and the forces of evil posited by Nasser’s reign of terror. More specifically, together with the title’s stark modification, it mythologizes, dehistoricizes and recontextualizes the narrative to deframe al-Ghazali’s personal account to the dual effect of packaging her identity-narrative within the blue print of the social role of a Muslim sister, and repackaging Muslim Brothers and political Islam within the mould of democratic (due to), anti-fascist/communist and anti-nationalist.

#### **“Memoirs of a Muslim Sister”<sup>7</sup>: Al-Ghazali’s Non-Translation and Re-Translation**

In *Ayam Min Hayati (Days of My Life 1977)*, al-Ghazali records days from her life under Nasser’s regime to write her ontological narrative, the trials and tribulation she passed through and overcome, and her earned

<sup>7</sup> This subtitle takes its inspiration from the title of Mariam Cooke’s paper on al-Ghazali “Ayam Min Hayati: The Prison Memoirs of a Muslim Sister” and takes issue with that title on two account. Firstly, Cooke argues for envisioning al-Ghazali’s text as a self-validation narrative, where al-Ghazali comes to the text as a full rounded self that does not need the learning outcome of experience. This aspect intersects with the politics of autobiography where the self writes its story not so much to learn as to teach and preach others. Secondly, al-Ghazali’s narrative does not just recount her prison experience, rather her role and feats outside prison, especially in connection to keeping the organization intact in times of its trials. Hence, the generic shift posed by such labeling “prison memoir” is reductive of al-Ghazali’s endeavourer.

role in upholding the banner of “the Islamic cause... Islamic daw’a... against the forces of atheism and falsehood in the East and West... adamant on wiping out the word of truth” (al-Ghazali, 1977, p. 2, p. 3). Notwithstanding what Tamam<sup>8</sup> terms as “exaggeration, mystification, excessive dramatization and monopolization of suffering” (Tamam, 2011, p. 9), Al-Ghazali’s personal account consciously undertakes a number of tasks. Firstly, it exalts her chosen ontological pursuit of seeking the world of truth. This is done to simultaneously position her personal narrative within the public (for transnational global Islamist network meta-) narrative of Islamic *Ummah*, and hence claim her rightful place within the history of Islamic “Jihad”. Secondly, it positions her personal story and input within Muslim Brothers’ public narrative and andocentric order. Thirdly, its center stages her role as an Islamic woman *mugnada* “a female soldier in the service of the Islamic cause” (al-Ghazali, 1977, p. 15), who has earned her self-designated epithet through physical trials and conscious negotiation of gender identity, and whose input and role was indispensable for the re-construction, consolidation and survival of Muslim Brother’s movement during its hardship period. Cooke (1995) asserts that *Days from My Life* is to be read as “a political text written by a woman who understands what it means for a woman to write her life”, since from the start al Ghazali “compares herself with men, put herself on par with them, often even place herself above them” (Cooke, 1995, p. 148).

As a political text, al-Ghazali writes her personal narrative to negotiate the re-writing of the Islamist narrative of gender roles and the configuration of its androcentric gender politics. Her means, according to Cooke, is the *jihad* against the new *jahiliyah*, the new age of ignorance, which provides for a poetic license “to contravene peacetime norms” and hence a sanctioned negotiating ground for the reversal (albeit temporarily) of normative gender roles<sup>9</sup> (Cooke, 1995, p. 150). She also writes to validate the presence and enactment of Muslim Sisterhood order against its suppression in the hegemonic narrative of brotherhood<sup>10</sup> and its elision in the Brothers’ organizational ranks. Al-Ghazali’s narrative not only provides a record for the instance of dissent and courageous confrontation of the women in Muslim Ladies’ Association (her organization) in face of the repressive actions of the nationalist regime, the narrative also abounds in women-populated revelations. These revelations, a standard characteristic of Sufis’ self-writing fashioned after the journey quest narrative of *mi’raj* (Prophet Mohamed’s ascension to meet Allah), depict women in the presence of prophet Mohamed, with al-Ghazali’s knowledge and wisdom exceeding that of al-Hudiybi—the spiritual guide of Muslim Brother’s organization. Al-Hudiyabi, the only man whom she meets after Prophet Mohamed, looks at a group of naked women and instructs al-Ghazali not to concern her with them, to which she answers that it is her obligation to convert them to the word of truth as befitting of a devout strong Muslim adamant on upholding the word of Allah. This setting of her superior suffering-earned knowledge, along with her relatedness to other women inscribes and enacts what Cooke argues as “a model for Islamic womanism” in distinction from the north and race ridden paradigm of Islamic feminism, that pursues the establishment of Muslim Sisterhood, equivalent with and equal to, yet deliberately independent from the Muslim Brothers’ leadership.

<sup>8</sup> Hossam Tamam is a researcher in transnational Islamist movements.

<sup>9</sup> Leila Ahmed (1993) and Saba Maahmood (2005) find al-Ghazali an equivocal Islamist figure, especially as Ahmed puts it “her life flagrantly undercuts her statement on the role of women in Islamic society”.

<sup>10</sup> According to Mariz Tadros, Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Brotherhood, did not concede the construction of the sisterhood rank, which was a point of contention between him and al-Ghazali. Al-Ghazali refused to submerge her association within Muslim Brotherhood movement, because al-Banna did not accept to grant women a rank in the organizational structure of the movement. Muslim sisters are accorded the title of lovers, never full members. Cooke (1995) similarly argues that al-Ghazali conceived of the “Muslim Ladies Association as being equal and equivalent with, yet deliberately separate from that of the Muslim Brothers” (p. 150).

In that respect, al-Ghazali's personal narrative exemplifies what Baker qualifies as the constrained and constraining imperative of personal narration where "the scope for elaborating personal narrative is constrained by... the blue print for social roles and spaces that the public narratives... allow... to inhabit... At the same time, personal narratives feed into and can undermine the elaboration and maintenance of shared public narratives" (Baker, 2014, p. 162). This aspect resonates with what Cooke discern as al-Ghazali's discursive endeavor to trace a path that "reconciles apparently contradictory prescription for Muslim women" through couching "her argument in conservative terms: a plea for the politicization of women... through domestic roles... women gain access to the world of politics, of men" (Cooke, 1995, p. 150, p. 152). No wonder then that al-Ghazali's narrative passes through a period of non-translation until its translation and retranslation. Kidwai's translation (1989), described by the Director General of Islamic Foundation M. Manazir Ahsan as in need of "many revisions and improvement" (Forward, p. x), subscribes to the equivalence norms with minimal intervention on the translator's part and adequate faithfulness to the Source Text's view point to the effect of reproducing al-Ghazali's womanist paradigm for gender equality and tacit subversion of the blue print of social gender roles of Muslim Brothers' public narrative. Kidwai translates al-Ghazali's confrontation with her husband as "Frank Talk with My Husband"—a translation that despite toning down the confrontational overtures of the Arabic version وقفه مع زوجي retains al-Ghazali's subject position with the possessive modifier positioning her at the center of the of the talking action—in distinction from Guezzou's de-subjectified "Righteous Husband". Thus, the need arises for a retranslation to reinstate al-Ghazali to the blue print of Islamist social roles against its posited subversion in translation, reframe Islamist gender ideology according to the horizon of expectation of international readership and re-package political Islam in tune with the changing dynamics of global geo-political interests.

#### **Al-Ghazali in Re-translation: Reinstatement of Islamic Social Roles's Blueprint**

Against al-Ghazali's discursive endeavor and Kidwai's near to "faithful" translation, Guezzou's retranslation reinstates the blueprint of Muslim Sisters' social role and space through packaging al-Ghazali, back grounding the female and individualistic imprint of her ontological narrative, and de-framing her gender agency. This not only re-inscribes the submersion of Muslim Sisterhood negotiated narrative, it also tactfully co-opts the tacitly charted space for Islamic womanism through positioning the female self/selves at the margin of the narrative, as the backdrop of warring masculinities—the Brothers' story against the forces of nationalist evil. The result is Islamist public narrative of women's roles, inputs and self-effacing identities as befitting of the masculine interpreted dictates of Islamic cosmology. The title *Return of the Pharaoh: Memoir in Nasir's Prison* omits the possessive pronoun in the Source Text's title, "My Life". This omission singles the submersion of the individualistic leaning of the narrative to define al-Ghazali's subjectivity in relation to clashing masculinities—"the Pharaoh" and "Nasir" of the Target Text's title *vis-a-vis* his foes. It also transposes the personal narrative onto the public narrative of unique suffering, with "the Pharaoh" equated with "Nasir" and positioned within the semantic domain of discrimination, incarceration and oppression evoked by the word "Prison". More importantly, such omission foils the possessive apostrophe in Nasir's with the implication of ascription of the agential capacity of possession to masculinity and its parallel denial or rather innate absence in femininity. Replicating the 19th century Anglo-American culturally specific cult of domesticity (Welter, 1966), an ideal Islamic woman is likely to possess the attribute of piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity, but never the claim for an individual identity, independent struggles and

discursive act to enunciate the parameter of her struggle. At best, she is an appendage or rather a territory on whose ground the fight of warring masculinities is enacted.

This construction or rather configuration is given a further impetus by the “Prison Memoir” of the Target Text’s title. The latter signals a generic shift indexed by what Baker (2006) terms as a lexical signaling device (contextualization cues) that alters the text’s genre from autobiography to prison memoir. This alteration “encodes participant role and power relation” (Baker, 2006, p. 86) with the weaker and marginalized party destined to prison experience. It also effaces the developmental and self-centered dimension of autobiography with the implication of framing the effeminate overture of the participant role in the power relations of the text and context. Unlike autobiography masculinized attributes (autonomous and separate self “the deepest fiction of masculine truth” as Miller (1992, p. 13) argues, memoirs, diaries and journals are constructed as more of a feminine genre with their dependence on memory, recollection and fragmentation hence their ineptitude to present “a coherent articulation of a politicized self in relationship with a society in which it may then play a transformative role” (Cooke, 1995, p. 147). Ultimately, this alteration furthers the depersonalizing thrust of re-narration through positioning the personal narrative within the metanarrative of the chosen people’s suffering, Exodus and subsequent Exile/Diaspora. The word “Pharaoh”, syntactically structured as Nasser’s epithet and alter ego, invokes the biblical narrative of Moses’ struggle against tyranny and the subsequent affliction incurred on the chosen people, whose destiny is continual suffering at the hands of the “instruments of evil” or a “cult of evil” in Bush’s phraseology<sup>11</sup>, and “infidels” in fundamentalist phrasing.

### **The Depersonalized Thrust of Re-narration: The Exodus and the Holocaust Frames**

The title’s initial depersonalizing and mystifying thrust is further developed through the publisher’s “Forward” and “Translator’s Introduction”. Together, they transpose the preliminary religious framing of the text onto the language of modernity, democracy and anti-communism/fascism. Through the interdependent features of selective appropriation and causal emplotment, Egyptian history is Islamized, and al-Ghazali’s subjectivity and potential leadership are circumscribed within the androcentric discourses of Muslim *Ummah* and Brotherhood’s gender politics. The “Forward” sketches out Egypt’s Islamic history with the “cradle of civilization” from time immemorial “enhanced when Islam came to this land” (Guezzou, 2006, p. vii). The forward then moves to give a lengthy overview of Muslim Brothers’ top male leadership—“Abdel-Qadir Awadah, Mohamed Farghali, and later on Sayed Qutab and Yusuf Hawash” (Guezzou, 2006, p. vii). Framed as fighters for the “liberation of the people of Egypt”, those men had endured “[elimination] by imprisonment, torture, assassination and exile... humiliation, torture and persecution... [hanging] and [incarceration] in Nasir’s prisons” (Guezzou, 2006, p. vii). Though not directly referenced, the Holocaust and Fascism frame is invoked by the semantic domain constructed around Nasser with the Pharaoh in the title substantiated with the lexical items of “savagery”, “brutality”, “elimination”, “imprisonment”, “torture”, “persecution”, “assassination”... etc. The “Translator’s Introduction” adds “undemocratic and selfish regimes having no regard for law and human rights” to this lengthy list of human atrocities (Guezzou, 2006, p. xii). These lexical items not only take on the analogy with the Jewish Holocaust, they also activate and substantiate the facets of Jewish narrative of suffering evoked in the title—a framing strategy that further promotes, propagates, and implicitly legitimizes Muslim Brotherhood’s stance for Western readership. More specifically, they

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11 President (George W. Bush) Pays Tribute at Pentagon Memorial. Remarks by the President at the Department of Defense Service of Remembrance. Retrieved from <http://remember911.albertarose.org/Bush10-11.htm>

inter-temporality project the far onto the near future evoking the communist frame to repackage Muslim Brotherhood, borrowing Coffman's qualification, as a purely political movement, whose political interests intersects with, fosters, and poses a zero-threat potential to international political agenda. At the end of the day, Muslim Brothers' struggle is against autocratic nationalist regimes. Its translation is couched in human rights discourse and the language of dissent against hegemonic state-power. Their battle with Arab nationalism is intra-Islamic fight "against the so-called Muslim governments bent on eradicating Islam and foisting a foreign ideology, whose demise in recent years in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union has been witnessed by the world at large" (Guezzou, 2006, p. x).

### **Packaging al-Ghazali: Circumscribed Bracketed Leadership... Frame Space and Label**

Al-Ghazali is then inducted into the narrative space and introduced in shorter and fragments of paragraphs as:

A *victim* of this savagery and inhuman persecution... a *helpless lady*... humiliated, persecuted and physically assaulted by the soldiers, investigators and prison officials of President Nasir... the type of savagery and brutality... unashamedly unleashed on this *defenseless and virtuous lady*... on a *lady* who is by all account an embodiment of *virtue, piety and modesty*. Can any member of the civilized world imagine such despicable behavior from government officials being perpetuated on their own civilians? (Guezzou, 2006, p. viii-ix)

In distinction from Muslim Brotherhood's top male leaders (whose masculine stoicism is affirmed through the endurance of the militarized vocabulary of assassination, elimination, torture... etc), al-Ghazali is described as "helpless" and "defenseless". Her identity is defined through the epithet "lady"—a label that keeps recurring in the course of the narrative as a referencing strategy to both al-Ghazali and the women in her association. The word "lady" (13) and "ladies" (76) occur 89 times in contrast to "woman" (26) and "women" (21), which appears 47 times. In a prior introduction, Ghazali has been introduced as the "embodiment of virtue, modesty and piety" in the publisher's "Forward" (Guezzou, 2006, p. x). Her order of appearance in the "Translator's Introduction" comes after a lengthy overview of the history of the Muslim Brotherhood organization and "the political and social conditions during which this important organization was founded" (Guezzou, 2006, p. xii). The lengthy overview of the "the context of the tragedy of Zainab al-Ghazali", nine-page long, is squealed by al-Ghazali's entry linguistically signaled by the prepositional phrase "as for Zainab al-Ghazali", and followed by both "her pious husband... a rich and influential husband, with acquaintances and friends from a wide range of political conventions and tendencies", and her "own family... politically active and respected by large sections of the Egyptian establishment and opposition alike" (Guezzou, 2006, p. xxi).

Such frame space and label is not just intended to augment the criminalization of the regime, whose atrocious discrimination targets the weaker party of the Islamic *Ummah*—women. It is more importantly structured to construct al-Ghazali as an adjunct to the Brothers' movement, whose function is to enunciate the meaning of virtue, piety and modesty. The latter is semantically defined in terms of her helplessness and defencelessness as befitting of a virtuous, pious and modest Muslim Sister. More specifically, this framing simultaneously circumscribes al-Ghazali within the cult of an ideal Islamic women and set up the parameter or rather the frame through and within which women access visibility, recognition and iconization within the Islamic cosmology. The latter is structured through the re-positioning of participants and the supplementary position al-Ghazali is allowed to access and inhabit. Al-Ghazali is introduced as an appendage to the Brothers' organizational ranks. Her out-of-norm and equivocal stature is lexically indexed by "as for al-Ghazali". Her

subjectivity is defined in relation to first her husband and then her family, whose connections were indispensable for her rise in stature. Her highly individual identity and self-exalting personal account are eclipsed and overshadowed in face of the execution (constructed as martyrdom) of male leadership—Abd al-Qadir Awadah, Sheikh Mohamed Farghali and later on Sayed Qutab—through giving full sway to the initial depersonalization posited in the title. Echoing the title's modification, the subtitles are modulated to de-center the individualized and personal overture of the narrative. Chapter one, entitled (عبد الناصر يكرهني شخصياً), is translated as “Nasir: Hatred and Vengeance” against its literal translation “Abdel Nasser Hates Me personally”. Kidwai translation is “Jamaal Abdel Nasser Hated Me”. In fourth subsection in chapter two, the subtitle (وقفه مع زوج), literally translated as “Confronting My Husband” or “Standing Up to My Husband”, is altered into “A Righteous Husband” simultaneously toning down the self and inter-marriage conflict—unbefitting of a virtuous lady.

The implication is multi-fold. Al-Ghazali is constructed in terms of her feminine identity in need of protection and hence not fully equipped and qualified to vie for leadership. Her relation to the imagined community of Muslim Ummah is constructed as indirect—mediated first through marriage and second through familial affiliation—with her citizenship secondary predicated on her marital status. Her potential leadership stature is hence bracketed and predicated on her marital status and affiliation, without which she would not have been “one of the dignitaries of Egyptian society” (Guezzou, 2006, p. xxi). Her leadership aspiration is channeled through the selfless motherhood motif realized through decentering the female self's imprint, rendering the narrative self-less and depersonalized, and qualifying her activism as “social” in distinction from the more important political realm of male leadership. Her visibility and recognition in the organizational ranks are contingent on straitjacketing her subjectivity within the boundaries of Islamist gender discourse and Islamic women representativeness and represent ability. The result is packaging al-Ghazali within what McClintock (1997), Nira-Yuval Davis and Gita Sahgal (2000) respectively qualify as the gendered discourse of nationalist and fundamentalist discourse where women's “citizenship in the nation... mediated by the marriage relation within the family” with a consequence for “uneven gendering of the national citizen” (McClintock, 1997, p. 91); the control of women's roles and the packaging of their identities within the “strict confines of womanhood” becomes the precondition for the survival of a fundamentalist agenda geared towards “maintaining and reproducing the fundamentalist version of society” (Sahgal & Davis, 2000, p. 7). The end-result is politicized deployment of al-Ghazali's personal narrative to project the Muslim Brotherhood's anti-fascist, democratic, modern, and moderate gender inclusive position, while keeping intact the strict confines of womanhood through which women secure an entrance into the public narrative space and fundamentalism garners credibility and disciples. The ultimate outcome is the production of knowledge tuned and toned to the consumption needs of both international (Western and trans-national network of global Islamists) readership and globalized strategic political interests. The latter has been made receptive to the threatening failure of Third World nationalist ideologies and nation-states, and thence the end of the threat of an Islamic exceptionalism to international politics.

### **Repackaging “purely” Political Islamism: Temporal and Spatial Framing**

Despite their objective truth-claims to knowledge and the limited remit of their influence, conceptual narrative are temporally and spatially produced to be used as a ground for temporal and spatial framing and substantiation of official public narratives that not necessarily fall within its designed scope of interests and

influence. Similar to the interesting interplay between personal and public narrative, examination of the reciprocity of public and conceptual narrative is apt to illuminate the movement of conceptual narrative from academia to politics and their intersection with the framing and reframing of personal narratives in translation. As such, the critical examination and investigation of the link between the three types (personal, public and conceptual) has the potential to provide a tool for critical contextualization and hence constraint to the uncritical consumption and belief in the truth-claims to knowledge produced in academia, politics and translation. A sequel to the 19th century “culture knowledge”<sup>12</sup> production about the orient (India and Biblical Lands), and the modern scientific study of others’ culture and politics (Raphael Pati’s *The Arab Mind* (1973) and Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of the World Order* (1996)), Islamic exceptionalism is a disciplinary metaphor and narrative designed to produce academic knowledge and political verdict about Islamic culture and societies, especially in light of their discovered exceptional rejection and noncompliance to the third wave of democratization (Huntington, 1993). The producers and propagators of the exceptionalism thesis, chief among whom is Samuel Huntington, ascribed the democracy gap in Arab Muslim majority countries to the incompatibility of Islam with democracy due to its intrinsic lacking of “the separation of spiritual and temporal authority” with their immeasurable contribution to “the development of freedom in the west” (Huntington, 1996, p. 70). This essentialist view to Islam’s incompatibility with democracy retained its hold on academia and politics until the September 11 attacks. The latter not only awakened western powers to the pitfalls of their adopted post-cold war tactic with Arab autocratic regimes (condoning autocracy in exchange for stability and security), it also augured an academic re-visitation and revision of Islamic exceptionalism. In 2003 in the *Journal of Democracy*—“the magazine of the quasigovernmental National Endowment for Democracy” (Small, 1992, p. 81), Alfred Stephen and Graeme B. Robertson (2003) co-authored an article entitled “An ‘Arab’ More than a ‘Muslim’ Democracy Gap”. In 2004, they wrote “Arab, Not Muslim, Exceptionalism” upon the journal editor’s request to “publish a debate featuring responses to our July 2003... clear the way for efforts to explain them... [against the] two responses at hand [which] either fail to address our findings or misrepresent them” (Stephen & Robertson, 2004, p. 140). Thenceforth, their findings were to “survive essentially intact” (Stephen & Robertson, 2004, p. 140) and Islamic was metamorphosed into Arab exceptionalism. In 2005, George Bush announced his “Freedom Agenda”, which not only declared that the US would no longer condone autocracy, even among her allies, but also herald the official inauguration of the end of Islamic exceptionalism. In a book published during Bush’s second term and in vindication of his agenda, *Freedom’s Unsteady March: America’s Role in Building Arab Democracy*, Coffman (2008) has one of the book chapters entitled “The End of Arab Exceptionalism, and of America’s Own” syntactically constructing an inversely proportional relation between the end of the former and the retention of the latter. Thus, the secular leaning of democracy was down played, democracy is reduced to procedural electoral formula, and moderate Islamism was poised as the key to launching political reform in the Arab world. Hamzawy’s “The Key to Arab Reform: Moderate Islamists” (2005) is symptomatic of this disciplinary narrative turn.

Against this backdrop and through its temporal and spatial, al-Ghazali’s re-translation (2006) was set in a receptive readerly environment pressing for an alternative to Arab exceptionalism, a means of containing the transnational threat of Islamist resurgence and the synchronization of Islamism with democracy. Its setting was

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<sup>12</sup> The phrase “culture knowledge” is taken from Hasso S. Frances “‘Culture Knowledge’ and the Violence of Imperialism: the Arab Mind Revisited” (2007).



strategically deployed to produce the moderation of Muslim Brotherhood, the gender inclusiveness of its politics (without alienating the movement's gender-difference bound constituency), and package the "purely" political overture of the movement. At the end of the day, it is the failure of Arab nationalism that has brought about Islamic resurgence, whose toll and effect has been maximized by the failure of Arab autocratic regimes to control their constituencies. Hence, the need arises for a narrative turn and viable alternative. As Guezzou (2006) puts it:

Islamic resurgence has been branded as the West's first enemy by Westerner after the demise of Communism and the disintegration of the Eastern bloc... In Muslim countries the threat of Islamic resurgence has been used as an excuse by these countries regimes to hold on to their seats. (p. xxv)

The implication is that giving political Islam a chance would safeguard western interests. It is the means to avoid Islamic resurgence and annul the pretext of the current undemocratic regime of holding onto their power, especially in light of the former's failure to pay their dues and Muslim Brothers' "purely political" handing of women's presence, political inclusion and hence the production of democracy despite its qualification has "a human face"<sup>13</sup>.

### **Towards Functional Truth Claims: Translation and Politicized Knowledge Production**

In *The Post Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979), Lyotard declares that ascendancy of the narrative turn of postmodern knowledge production (narrative knowledge) over scientific knowledge arguing against the modernist tenability of objective truth-claims to knowledge. For Lyotard, the criteria regulating the truth-claims of knowledge derive its thrust from context-dependent language games. As such, despite the scientific disdain to narrative, narrative knowledge functions to provide the ground for legitimization for scientific and political argumentation in the postmodern machinery of knowledge production. The latter, driven by the end of absolute truth and narrative, is not just honed to production of functional truth and knowledge. It also keeps critical formation on a tight leash through giving supremacy to language games tailored to the context of production and reception to mediate and construct reality in accordance to the changing dynamics of power interests and politics. Part and parcel of the language games incentivizing postmodern knowledge production, translational re-narration purports a truth-claim that mediates and constructs reality tailored to its functionality in given contexts. As such, translation as re-narration becomes a means and mechanism to produce functional truth-claims and knowledge that meets the politics of knowledge production and consumption and survives particularly due to its multi-task service and functioning within the mesh of political power interests it is deployed to serve. Al-Ghazali's translational re-narration is a case in point. A personal narrative of Islamic woman's discursive struggle for alternative gender order, al-Ghazali is re-translated to become packaged within the domestic public narrative of a "Muslim Sister" as designed and framed by the

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<sup>13</sup> In a review of Huntington's *Third Wave: Democratization in Late 20th Century*, Small (1992) reads Huntington's argument for democratization in light of the latter's position as The Trilateral Commission ideologue. The Trilateral commission, formed in 1973 by private citizens of the world to discuss the crisis of democracy, sought to renew belief in the governability of democracy. Their tactics, published in *The Crisis of Democracy* (1975), was consolidation of its administrative basis and creation of what the Trilateral Commission dubbed as administrative "fascism with human face" (Small, 1992, p. 57). This administrative fascism constitutes the thrust of Huntington's argument in *The Third Wave* (1993) where democratic transition is accessed by "procedural definition of democracy", not the classical sense. The latter holds democracy's chief purpose is to provide for the general good and legitimacy of rule through people's will. For Huntington, procedural democracy is an end itself not a means to economic development or meeting people's will. This definition furnished the criteria of democracy for the scholars empirically testing the exceptionalism thesis.

androcentric ethos of the Brotherhood order to the co-optation of her discursive pursuit of an independent and equal sisterhood order. The publication of the translation (2006) comes to position her personal narrative within the context of the global public narrative of War on Terror (turned meta through the language play on “terror” instead of terrorism) with its reductive resort to dichotomized clashing identity-politics, out of which emerged Bush’s “Freedom Agenda”. The latter not only tactfully deployed the mounting disciplinary narrative of third wave of democratization with its re-modulation of democracy to procedural functioning, it also purported the solution to the trafficking of transnational terrorism/Islamism through the end of Islamic exceptionalism. The latter functioned through re-narration of the different brands of Islamism to discover or rather uncover the political version most prone to democratization especially in light of the failure of Arab exceptionalism to serve western powers’ purposes. Re-branding Islamism was attendant on redeeming its gender politics for the least packaging condition of its “purely” political incentives and potential towards democratization. Al-Ghazali’s re-translation was thus issued to repackage Muslim Brothers’ politicized movement and seal the schism between Islamism and democracy—now reframed to meet the agenda of functional freedom. The result is politicized knowledge production of democracy, Islamic and Arab exceptionalism, and qualified feminism. The outcome is a translation that contributes to the re-narration of the new world order to produce functional truth knowledge claims about the democratizing potential and redemption of political Islam through the visibility of Islamist women—a qualified knowledge that is framed and tailored in accordance to the changing dynamics of geo-strategic interests and the metamorphous narrative stakes of international politics.

### Conclusion

This paper tackles the interface between translation, knowledge production and international politics through investigating the gendered politics of the translational re-narration of Zainab al-Ghazali’s autobiography. Utilizing the socio-narrative paradigm in translation studies, the paper examines the framing strategies in the re-translation of al-Ghazali’s personal narrative and their implication for the question of Islamic women’s visibility and access to the narrative and political sphere. The paper’s findings are as follows: firstly, visibility of al-Ghazali in the narrative has been circumscribed within the parameter of the Muslim Brothers’ dominant gender politics to produce her docile agency and bracketed citizenship; secondly, her visibility in narrative has been rendered invisible through her figuration as the terrain between the conflicting masculinities of nationalism and Islamism; thirdly, as such, her visibility, tuned up to the masculine presumptions and stakes, does not translate into access to politics. Rather, it figures as a contingent strategy that strategically constructs and deploys her bracketed citizenship and leadership status (predicated on her familial and marital relation) to further the victimhood thesis of the chosen people and sell political Islam to transnational and international politics. Ultimately, al-Ghazali’s retranslation (1994) and re-induction (publication date 2006) into the narrative-cum-political sphere give a testament of feminism and moderation to Muslim Brothers and thus a ground for their liability to democratic conversion. As such, it provides for a functional truth-claim and a politically-correct narrative legitimization of the configuration of Islamic onto Arab exceptionalism and Anglo-American geo-strategic stakes onto the “Freedom Agendas”.

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