

Tracing the Online Translations of Syrian “Poetry of Witness”: 2011-2016

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Abstract

With the rise of “the sociological turn” in translation studies and its emphasis on translation agency, a good deal of research over the past two decades has focused on the translator’s involvement in ethical questions relating to human rights, political engagement, and the future of humanity (Inghilleri, 2008; Pym, 2001; Tymoczko, 2000; Wolf, 2014). However, little attention has been paid to the role poetry translation might play in shaping translation agents’ engagement in times of conflict. Given the view that poetry translation may serve as an ethical action (Meschonnic, 1999/2011), this research study has attempted to probe translation agents’ responses to the Syrian crisis by examining a set of online translations of the poetry coming out of it. For this purpose, a collection of poetic texts translated from Arabic into English was analyzed to reveal the various modes of suffering of civilians who were caught up in the lines of fire, the dynamics of dissemination of poetry translations on the Internet, and translation agents’ ethical responses to the victims of the Syrian crisis. A special focus was placed on the communicative effects associated with the selected poetic texts, the strategies used to communicate the suffering of victimized agents, the websites featuring online translations of poetry from Syria, and the motivations underpinning translation agents’ responses to the Syrian crisis events.

The results of this study yield insights into the value of poetry in interpreting sociopolitical crises, the ways poetry translations circulate on the Internet, the ethical role of translation in responding to conflict events around the world, questions that still need further research in translation studies. The results also have implications that highlight the potential role of translation in raising awareness about the suffering of humanity in dire situations.

Keywords: Syrian crisis, poetry of witness, online translation, dissemination of poetry of witness on the Internet, ethical engagement of translation, translation of witness.

Resumé

Avec la montée du «Tournant sociologique» dans les études de traduction et l'accent mis sur les agences de traduction, de nombreuses recherches au cours des deux dernières décennies se sont concentrées sur l'implication du traducteur dans les questions éthiques relatives aux droits de l'homme, à l'engagement politique et à l'avenir de l'humanité (Inghilleri, 2008; Pym, 2001; Tymoczko, 2000; Wolf, 2014). Cependant, peu d'attention a été accordée au rôle que pourrait jouer la traduction de poésie dans la détermination de l'engagement des agents de traduction en temps de conflit. Considérant que la traduction de poésie peut servir d'action éthique (Meschonnic, 1999/2011), cette étude a tenté de sonder les réactions des agents de traduction à la crise syrienne en examinant un ensemble de traductions en ligne de la poésie qui en sortait. Dans ce but, un recueil de textes poétiques traduits de l'arabe en anglais a été analysé pour révéler les différents modes de souffrance des civils pris dans les lignes de feu, la dynamique de propagation des traductions de poésie sur Internet, et les réponses éthiques des agents de traduction aux victimes de la crise syrienne. Un accent particulier a été mis sur les effets communicatifs associés aux textes poétiques sélectionnés, les stratégies utilisées pour communiquer la souffrance des agents victimes, les sites Web présentant des traductions en ligne de poèmes de la Syrie, et les motivations qui sous-tendent les réactions des agents de traduction aux événements de la crise syrienne.

Les résultats de cette étude donnent un aperçu de la valeur de la poésie pour interpréter les crises sociopolitiques, les façons dont les traductions de poésie circulent sur Internet, le rôle éthique de la traduction dans face aux conflits survenus dans le monde, questions qui nécessitent encore des recherches plus poussées dans les études de traduction. Les résultats ont également des implications pédagogiques pour la formation de traducteurs aux tâches impliquant, par exemple, sensibiliser à la souffrance des êtres humains dans des situations pénibles et au potentiel de traduction pour faire face aux catastrophes humanitaires.

Mots clés : Crise syrienne, poésie de témoin, traduction en ligne, diffusion de poésie de témoin sur Internet, engagement éthique de la traduction, traduction de témoin.

I dedicate this work to...

My Mom, Dad, Lina, Ayan, and Imar, *with love*.

And to...

Every individual who falls victim to human-made atrocities. May humanity evolve and find a cure soon!

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments.....	v
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	viii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Contextual Considerations and Review of Literature.....	7
2.1. Overview: From a Crisis into a Humanitarian Catastrophe	7
2.2. Literature Review 1: The Syrian Crisis in two Modes of Communication	9
2.2.1. The Syrian Crisis and Journalistic Practices	10
2.2.2. Poetry and the Syrian Crisis.....	16
2.2.3. Poetry Emerging from the Syrian Crisis	24
2.2.4. The Importance of Translating Syrian Poetry of Witness	30
2.3. Literature Review 2: Online Translation and Syrian Poetry of Witness	32
2.3.1. Defining an Online Translation	33
2.3.2. Dynamics of Dissemination.....	33
2.3.3. Agency	37
2.3.4. Motivations and Ideologies	42
Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework	55
3.1. Setting the Scene: Sociology of Translation	55
3.2. Bourdieu's Sociology.....	57
3.3. Bourdieu's Sociology in Translation Studies	59
3.3.1. Field	60
3.3.2. Habitus	63
3.4. Habermas's Notion of Communicative Action.....	68
3.4.1. Overview of Habermas's Theory of Communicative Action	68
3.4.2. Communicative Action and Speech Act Theory	71
3.4.3. Communicative Action in Light of Translation Studies	73
Chapter Four: Methods.....	76
4.1. Data Collection	76
4.1.1. Compiling Data	76
4.1.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.....	77
4.1.3. Unit of Analysis	79
4.2. Data Analysis	80
4.2.1. Content Analysis	81
4.2.2. Nord's Model (1988/2005) of Analysis.....	82
4.2.3. The Process of Analysis.....	83
4.3. Reliability.....	86
Chapter Five: Results	88
5.1. Poetic texts on Suffering and Strategies of Communication	88
5.1.1. Recurrent Themes: What Gets Translated?	88
5.1.2. Strategies of Communication in Poetry of Witness.....	116

5.2. Websites and Agents.....	133
5.2.1. Websites: Locations, Types, and Dissemination	134
5.2.2. Agents	162
5.3. Ethical Impulses and Translations of Poetry of Witness	172
5.3.1. Cyber-Motivations	173
5.3.2. Personal Motivations	184
Chapter Six: Discussion.....	197
6.1. Poetry of Witness as a Form of Interpretation	197
6.1.1. A Reliable Source of Information.....	197
6.1.2. Communicative Action in the Translations of Poetry of Witness	201
6.1.3. Creative Strategies of Communication	206
6.2. A Habitat for Literary Translation	210
6.2.1. Diversity and Openness	210
6.2.2. Agency	214
6.2.2.1. Featuring Agency.....	215
6.2.2.2. Textual Agency	216
6.2.2.3. Introductory Agency	217
6.2.2.4. Promotional Agency	219
6.3. Translation of Witness and Ethical Responses to the Syrian Crisis	220
Chapter Seven: Conclusion.....	226
7.1. Objective and Results: Summary.....	226
7.2. Implications: Humanitarian Responses and Promotion of Poetry	228
7.2.1. Humanitarian Initiatives.....	228
7.2.2. Promoting Poetry	229
7.3. Limitations	229
7.4. Suggestions for Future Research	231
7.5. Conclusion	232
References.....	234
Appendix A: Search Procedures	249
Appendix B: List of Websites.....	251
Appendix C: Sample Worksheets	259
Appendix D: Results of the Inter-rater Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha).....	263
Appendix E: Projects per Country	264

List of Tables

Table 1: Poetry Projects	78
Table 2: The unifying themes in the collected projects	89
Table 3: The sub-themes of the Arab Spring Sentiments	91
Table 4: The sub-themes of Modes of Suffering	100

List of Figures

Figure 1. Website locations.....	134
Figure 2. Website types and project distribution.	136
Figure 3. A screenshot from the Words without Borders website.	138
Figure 4. A screenshot from the Lyrikline website.....	140
Figure 5. A postcard on the PEN International website.....	142
Figure 6. A screenshot from the Aljazeera website.	144
Figure 7. A screenshot of a documentary program on the BBC.....	146
Figure 8. An excerpt from the New York Daily News.	147
Figure 9. A screenshot of an article on the Atlantic website.	148
Figure 10. An excerpt from Cuen's article on the Aljazeera website.	154
Figure 11. An excerpt from Abdulsamad's poem "If" on the PBS website.	158
Figure 12. Sample of Mohammad's poetry on the Writing without Paper website.	163
Figure 13. The "about" section on Yassin-Kassab's personal website.....	164
Figure 14. A screenshot from the Arabic Literature website.....	166
Figure 15. Pictures of a displaced child on the Oxfam website.....	180

Chapter One: Introduction

The events that broke out in Syria in mid-March 2011 in the form of demonstrations and confrontations between groups of protestors and police forces developed into conflicts between different parties and later opened the door for international military intervention (Howard & Hussain, 2011; Khashanah, 2014; Pantti, 2013). These events (henceforward referred to as the Syrian crisis or the crisis) created a humanitarian catastrophe which impacted not only Syrian people but also countries that had to deal with the flux of refugees escaping from zones of conflict in Syria (Souaiby, Kazour, Zoghbi, Richa, 2016). From the very beginning, the Syrian crisis events caught the attention of both regional and international news outlets, which, however, placed more attention on the conflicting parties in Syria and the forms of international intervention than on the victims of the crisis (Khashanah, 2014; Pantti, 2013; Robertson, 2013).

A different version of the Syrian crisis is provided by another form of text production, that is, poetry. In 2012, Aljazeera English launched a program called “Artscape: Poets of Protest,” which is concerned with the reaction of a group of Arab poets to the uprisings that were taking place in some Arab countries. A year later, Aljazeera English published an article that talked about a new form of poetry emerging from Syria, poetry that was coming out of the rubble of Syria’s upheavals and was more focused on the tragedy of Syrian citizens (Cuen, 2013; Sakr, 2013; Watt, 2016). More of this poetry (henceforth referred to as the Syrian poetry of witness or poetry of witness) began to appear on other websites in translations from Arabic into English, posing questions about (a) the ways of its dissemination, (b) the agents involved in its production and circulation on the Internet, (c) its significance in interpreting the Syrian crisis, and (d) its potential for ethical engagement of translation in times of conflict. Such questions have been of special interest to translation scholars who are influenced by the rise of the “sociological turn” in

translations studies (e.g. Bielsa & Bassnett, 2009; Gouanvic, 2005; Inghilleri, 2008; Mossop, 2014).

Over the last two decades, the “sociological turn” in translation studies has placed emphasis on the social surroundings of translation products and activities as well as on the role of individuals participating in carrying a text from one language into another (Wolf, 2011). Translation scholars influenced by the “sociological turn” have focused on such issues as the role of translation agents involved in a translation activity, the mechanism of production, the dissemination of translation products across geographical borders, the social forces influencing a translation activity, and so forth (e.g. Baker, 2016; Buzelin, 2005; Inghilleri, 2005, 2008; Susam-Sarajeva, 2006; Wolf, 2011, 2014).

Issues of interest in sociology-driven studies have also included the ethical engagement of translation and translators’ involvement in questions relating to human rights and the future of humanity in general (Gouanvic, 2005; Inghilleri, 2008; Pym, 2001; Tymoczko, 2000; Venuti, 1995, 1998; Wolf, 2014). Views about ethics in translation studies have ranged from calls for faithfulness to the source text (e.g. Venuti, 1995, 1998, 2000) to views that encourage a manipulation of the target text for ethical purposes (e.g. Tymoczko, 2000). Although a variety of ideal, and sometimes contradicting, views about the translators’ ethical engagement have been proposed (e.g. Tymoczko, 2000; Venuti, 1995), little attention has been paid to the role poetry translation might play in shaping translation agents’ activities during political upheavals.

Given the view that poetry translation can serve as an ethical action (Meschonnic, 1999/2011), I have conducted a qualitative research study on translations of Syrian poetry of witness into English in order to (a) examine the content of this poetry and the information it provides about the suffering of the victims of the Syrian crisis events; (b) identify strategies that

are effective in communicating the forms of suffering presented in poetic texts; (c) highlight translation practices associated with the dissemination of online translations of poetry of witness; (d) explore the networks of agents involved in the dissemination of translations of poetry of witness on the Internet and the motivations underpinning their translation activities; and (e) demonstrate the ways in which poetry translation contributes to research on agency and ethical engagement during conflict situations. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do poetic texts in online translations of Syrian poetry of witness communicate the impact of the Syrian crisis on its victims?
2. How are translations of poetry of witness disseminated on the Internet? Where do they disseminate? What types of networks of translation agents are involved in the process of dissemination?
3. What ethical impulses are driving translation agents' responses to the Syrian crisis?

To answer these questions, qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis were used to collect and analyze online translations of Syrian poetry of witness from Arabic into English. The textual data were collected from the Internet by using a key word search technique (Jones, 2010) in order to retrieve online translations that feature poetic accounts about Syria over five years, from March 15, 2011 to March 14, 2016. Following this technique, the term “poetry Syria” was used and helped collect 133 translation projects. A descriptive approach based on qualitative content analysis (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014) and Nord's (1988/2005) model of analysis was used to analyze the content of the collected data, the websites featuring them, and the agents involved in their dissemination. Meaningful chunks of words were used as the unit of analysis. The analysis was carried out in two phases: the first phase dealt with the research

questions pertinent to the textual properties associated with translations of poetry of witness while the second was focused on the context-related research questions.

The content analysis technique was applied to the textual data in order to identify the recurrent themes featured in the collected translations. Nord's (1988/2005) model of analysis was, in turn, used to identify the communicative effect associated with each theme resulting from the content analysis. Both the content analysis and Nord's (1988/2005) model of analysis were also used in order to highlight translation agents' textual responses to the Syrian crisis events and to reveal the effectiveness of poetic strategies communicating the suffering of the victims of these events. The websites featuring translations of poetry of witness were also examined in order to identify their locations and the dynamics of dissemination. Networks of translation agents were examined in order to identify the types of agents involved in the production and dissemination of online translations of Syrian poetry of witness as well as the types of motivations driving their responses to the Syrian crisis. A special focus was placed on the forms of suffering associated with the victims of the Syrian crisis.

The dissertation is divided into seven chapters. It opens with the Introduction Chapter, the current chapter that presents a summary of the literature informing the study, research gap, research questions, and research methods. The second chapter, the Contextual Considerations and Review of Literature Chapter, provides contextual information and a theoretical background against which the questions guiding this research study were formed. It is divided into two sections. The first section compares the coverage provided by news outlets of the Syrian crisis events with the role that poetry plays as another important source of information about the crisis; it includes views about the dynamics of coverage in news reports as well as a description of poetry as an alternative source of information and concludes with an account of the Syrian poetry

of witness and the importance of its translation into English. The second section focuses on the mechanism of dissemination associated with online translations and offers theoretical views about the notions of agency and ethics in translations studies.

The third chapter, the Theoretical Framework Chapter, presents a theoretical framework that informs the analyses conducted in this study. This framework is based on Bourdieu's (1983) concepts of field and habitus, Habermas's (1981/1987) notion of communicative action, and relevant sociological views provided by scholars in translation studies (e.g. Gouanvic 2005; Inghilleri, 2008). Chapter four, the Methods Chapter, is concerned with the research methods used in collecting and analyzing the poetry translations examined in this study.

Chapter five, the Results Chapter, presents the results derived from the textual data and answers the research questions guiding this study. This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section examines the recurrent themes in the collected translations and highlights a number of communicative strategies employed to communicate the suffering of the victims of the Syrian crisis. The second section offers a descriptive analysis of the types of websites featuring online translations of Syrian poetry of witness, the mechanism of the dissemination of the collected translations, and the types of networks of translation agents involved in the process of dissemination. The third section deals with an analysis of the types of motivations and ethical impulses underpinning translation agents' responses to the Syrian crisis events.

Chapter six, the Discussions Chapter, provides discussions that link the study results to the theoretical views provided in the second and third chapters and addresses the existing gap in literature. The study is wrapped up with the Conclusion Chapter, which summarizes the research objectives, the questions addressed in this study, its results, and its contributions to research in

translation studies. It also shows the implications and limitations of this study and provides some suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two: Contextual Considerations and Review of Literature

Starting with a description of the Syrian crisis events and their consequences for Syrian citizens, this chapter provides contextual information about the Syrian crisis and views that serve as a theoretical background for the analyses conducted in this study. It is divided into two main sections. The first section presents theoretical information about the dynamics of coverage in both news reports and poetry as two sources of information about the Syrian crisis events. It also sheds light on Syrian poetry of witness and the importance of its translation into English. The second section focuses on the mechanism of dissemination associated with online translations and offers theoretical views about the notions of agency and ethics in translation studies.

2.1. Overview: From a Crisis into a Humanitarian Catastrophe

The Arab Spring uprisings started out in Tunisia in 2010 and soon spread to other Arab countries, including Libya, Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, and Syria. These uprisings were triggered by such factors as unemployment, social injustice, human rights abuses, dissatisfaction with governments, and a quest for change in political systems (Alvarez-Ossorio, 2012; Badran, 2013; Robertson, 2013; Sakr, 2013; Salameh, 2012). Motivated by the spirit of the Arab Spring, groups of protestors in Syria took to the streets to express their political grievances and dissent at the performance of the government, and soon demonstrations spread all over the country.

Although the demonstrations were meant to bring about a situation that “might very well be the charter of a new resurrected emergent Middle East” (Salameh, 2012, p. 58), the confrontations between police forces and protestors escalated and the situation developed into a military conflict that brought destruction to Syrian cities, towns and villages. This situation has been referred to with different terms, including the Syrian crisis (Khashanah, 2014; Pantti, 2013),

humanitarian and public health catastrophe (Souaiby, Kazour, Zoghbi, & Richa, 2016), Syria's civil war (Watt, 2016), and the Syrian conflict (Smit, Heinrich, & Broersma, 2017). In my study, I use the expressions "the Syrian crisis," "the Syrian crisis events," or "the crisis" to refer to the uprising events, the military conflicts in Syria, and the humanitarian catastrophe inflicted on Syrian people.

The Syrian crisis events broke out in Syria in mid-March 2011 in the form of demonstrations and confrontations between groups of protestors and the government's police forces, creating a crisis in the Syrian political scene (Howard & Hussain, 2011; Pantti, 2013). With the absence of a solution to the crisis in its early stages, these confrontations developed into a situation that opened the door to the appearance of military groups that engaged in a bloody struggle with Syria's government forces and later to an international military intervention that brought more destruction to Syria.

Regardless of the term used to refer to the Syrian crisis events, the military conflicts in Syria resulted in the destruction of Syrian homes and infrastructures, mass deaths, health problems, tortures, and lack of basic life needs and brought about a horrible humanitarian catastrophe (Howard & Hussain, 2011; Pantti, 2013; Souaiby et al., 2016). The crisis events have forced many Syrians to flee their homes seeking safe havens beyond the Syrian borders. The United Nation's High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has explained that, since the beginning of the events in 2011, millions of Syrians have been forced to leave their homes in search of safer places in Syria's neighboring countries or in other places inside Syria. The UNHCR's annual report of 2017 shows that over 5.2 million Syrians were registered as refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq, not to mention Syrian refugees in other countries (Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2017-2018 in Response to the Syrian Crisis, 2017). The

UNHCR's website also explains that internally displaced Syrians are estimated to be around 7 million people (Syrian Emergency, n.d.).

Lots of refugees have arrived in Syria's neighboring countries with health problems pertinent to "trauma and substandard living conditions including physical and mental health problems" (Souaiby, et al., 2016, p. 85). Besides such forms of suffering as disruption, "the experiences of violence and torture, loss and grief," the living conditions in the new places have brought "another set of psychological challenges, such as unfamiliar surroundings, shared living and unemployment" (Souaiby, et al., 2016, p. 85). The lack of basic needs like shelter, food, and schools for children has exacerbated the suffering of Syrians in their new displacement (Souaiby, et al., 2016).

News reports about the Syrian crisis and its impact on Syrians have been dominating the headlines of news outlets, shaping the perception of both regional and international audiences reading about or watching the developments of these events on news media channels of communication.

2.2. Literature Review 1: The Syrian Crisis in two Modes of Communication

This section is concerned with two modes of communication and their coverage of the Syrian crisis events: journalistic forms of communication (i.e., news reports) and poetry. It explains the coverage of the events of the Syrian crisis by news outlets; provides a description of poetry as a medium of knowing; sheds light on Arabic poetry, its importance in Arabic Culture, and the new poetry emerging from the Syrian crisis; and discusses the importance of translating this new poetry as another source of information that bears witness to the events of the Syrian crisis.

2.2.1. The Syrian Crisis and Journalistic Practices

With the revolution in communication technologies in our globalizing world, news media, both mainstream and social media, have opened “communicative spaces” through which people are able to exchange their views on global issues and share their concerns about, for example, the suffering of humans in any place around the world (Robertson, 2013; Silverstone, 2007; Tomlinson, 2011). Through such global spaces, “people learn to think of themselves as members of a global community” (Robertson, 2013, p. 328), in which we, as audiences, are invited to develop “a sense of there being an elsewhere; a sense of that elsewhere being in some way relevant to me; a sense of my being there” (Silverstone, 2007, p. 10). Accordingly, what is happening in one country becomes the business of individuals in other countries (Robertson, 2013).

From the very beginning, the Syrian crisis events caught the attention of both regional and international news outlets and became a major source of news for local and international audiences. News outlets provided contradicting views about the situation in Syria, creating polarized narratives about its events. In narratives that are in line with Syrian dissident voices, for instance, Syrian people took to the streets to express their discontent with the political system in Syria but they became victims of violent police practices, while the Syrian government’s narrative blames the violent practices on terrorist groups and uprisings on a conspiracy initiated by foreign countries for hidden agendas (Howard & Hussain, 2011; Pantti, 2013).

With this in mind, several research studies have tackled the role of news outlets in covering the Syrian crisis events and have shown various, and sometimes contradicting, views on the mechanisms of coverage. For example, Khashanah (2014) explains that both global and regional news outlets played a destructive role in their coverage of the Syrian crisis in that “any

form of event must be consumed in any way possible to incite more violence and division among Syrians” (p. 17). According to Khashanah (2014), news reports participated in the Syrian crisis events and served as a pretext that paved the way for Syria’s self-destruction and later for the direct intervention of foreign powers. Such an intervention “advances the interests of ... [some] states at the expense of the destruction of other sovereign states regardless of claims to achieve justice, peace or better human conditions, with absolute lack of accountability” (Khashanah, 2014, p. 18).

News outlets relied heavily on the digital content provided by social media platforms, such as Facebook and YouTube. Reports appearing on Western news media, for instance, were filled with images, videos, and stories collected from Facebook and YouTube (Pantti, 2013; Wolfsfeld, Segev, & Sheaffer, 2013). Although these platforms enabled individuals to publicize their captured evidence of violence, their role was questionable (Khashanah, 2014). As Khashanah (2014) points out, the featuring of gore and bloodshed scenes on social media was intended to demonize the Syrian official authorities, create a public stance against the Syrian government, and set the stage for international intervention. For example, YouTube “had to add a special waiver to its usual no-gore policy in order to allow shocking user content such as a mobile-phone video of unarmed Syrian civilians—including children—being shot by” government forces (Howard & Hussain, 2011, p. 43). Another view suggests that cellphones equipped with built-in cameras, which captured confrontations between protesters and police forces, functioned “as accelerators for increasing the speed and intensity of protests” (Wolfsfeld, et al., 2013, p. 120).

Social media platforms and news outlets may have, thus, played a significant role in propelling the uprisings in Syria and in the development of the situation from a political crisis

into a conflict that caused the destruction of “all Syrian infrastructure systems such as those of the military, security services, finance, the economy, transportation, industry, agriculture, oil production, the electrical grid, aviation, telecommunications and healthcare” (Khashanah, 2014, p. 18). Although global news outlets have publicized social media’s first-hand depictions of the Syrian crisis events, “it has already been noted that questions are frequently raised about their role in supporting the foreign policy interests and agendas of the states in which they are based” (Robertson, 2013, p. 330).

Research has demonstrated that social media platforms and their digital content not only provided a major source of information about places that were inaccessible to professional journalists but also increased the visibility of victimized agents in news media (Howard & Hussain, 2011; Robertson, 2013; Wolfsfeld, et al., 2013). In an Arab Spring context, social media platforms were viewed as handy tools for dissident voices, through which protestors called for collective action, organized meetings, distributed information, and publicized their confrontations with police forces (Pantti, 2013; Robertson, 2013). Images and videos capturing the deaths of Syrian civilians were taken by citizen witnesses with the intention that they be “used to persuade publics to act, either morally or politically” (Smit, et al., p. 302).

At a time when the act of witnessing is “something one does with a camera (phone) in hand” (Smit et al, 2017, p. 290), digital cameras “have taken eyewitness images and furnished empirical evidence of the ... violence, and thus arguably ensured the conflict’s continued visibility in the mainstream media,” particularly in Western news media whose coverage demonstrated sympathy for the victims of conflicts in Syria (Pantti, 2013, p. 1).

The Syrian crisis, together with other Arab Spring events, has demonstrated that witnesses have replaced “professional journalists as credible providers of up-close and

immediate reports” that quickly find their way to regional and global news outlets (Smit et al., 2017, p. 292). Reports that are enhanced with the help of video-enabled cellphones have brought attention to the significant role digital media platforms, citizen journalists, and new communication technologies play in covering events in the absence of professional journalism (e.g. Howard & Hussain, 2011; Pantti, 2013; Smit, et al., 2017).

The contradicting news reports about the Syrian crisis can be ascribed to the ways news media are structured. In other words, the appearance of stories about political struggles in these news media spaces is structured through such techniques as selection, framing, and priming certain aspects of conflicts (Hackett, 2006; Pantti, 2013; Reese, 2007; Robertson, 2013). Mainstream media institutions, for instance, seem to be subject to internal and external factors that determine their performance at different levels, ranging from the level of the individual working for a news media institution to the level of the political system prevailing in a given society (Bourdieu, 1996/1998; Hackett, 2006; Shoemaker & Reese, 2014).

The performance of news media workers might be controlled by their ideologies as well as the daily routines of their profession (Entman, 2010; Shoemaker & Reese, 2014; Smith, 1999; Teo, 2000). Ideologies—defined as “a system of values and beliefs that governs what audiences, journalists and other players see as natural or obvious and that furthermore serves in part to maintain prevailing relations of power” (Hackett, 2006, p. 4)—are likely to affect the work of news workers and their reports about the Syrian crisis.

Although the social ethical codes existing in a society may encourage journalists to sympathize with the victims of violent struggles elsewhere and to resort to information “from activists committed to peacebuilding processes, and/or from social justice movements marginalized by current patterns of national or global communication” (Hackett, 2006, p. 11),

work routines—defined as “patterned practices that work to organize how we perceive and function within the social world” (Reese, 2001, p. 180)—may have dictated the coverage of the victims suffering from the Syrian crisis conflicts. Besides, news workers might be driven by an inclination for scoops and exclusive coverage of stories, a tendency that may promote hostility between cultures (Bourdieu, 1996/1998).

Bourdieu (1996/1998) makes a distinction between the internal and external power relations that determine the function of agents working in the field of journalism. According to Bourdieu (1996/1998), journalism can be viewed as a field in which news workers tend to compete for different types of capital, including economic gain, social status, or symbolic power. External pressures may also come from the economic and political fields and can affect the performance of news workers. Such pressures may promote fears and anxiety about national security (Powell, 2011); fuel racist and ethnocentric sentiments (Baker, 2006); and negatively impact the relationship between the political elite and the public (Bourdieu, 1996/1998). For example, Herman and Chomsky (2002) view the dominant American media as comprising a single propaganda system that highlights “the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public” (p. 2).

News reports about Syria have placed more emphasis on stories relating to the conflicting parties and the international political efforts made to find a solution to the problematic situation in Syria (Syrian Crisis, n.d., para. 1). Given that, news outlets seem to work within the framework of the government, electoral politics, powerful institutions, policy makers, but not the framework of individuals or social workers who care about the welfare of the public (Smith, 1999), a fact that makes reporters pay more attention to the attractiveness of the stories they

cover than the realities surrounding them (Hackett, 2006; Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). As such, depending on the news source we follow, “we may or may not be invited to feel” what civilians have been experiencing in a dire situation like the Syrian crisis (Robertson, 2013, p. 328).

In a nutshell, the general aspects of news outlets seem to have determined their journalistic depictions of the Syrian crisis in that they have placed more focus on the conflicting parties in Syria as well as the international efforts to find a solution for the crisis. As such, these journalistic practices raise questions about the credibility of the news reports featuring stories about the Syrian crisis.

Another form of text production (i.e., poetic discourse) has provided personal poetic accounts about the Syrian crisis, which are different from the stories produced by news reports. This type of poetry, or what I label Syrian poetry of witness or simply poetry of witness, has emerged from the rubble of the Syrian crisis. Unlike news reports that tend to place more emphasis on stories relating to the conflicting parties and the international political efforts made to find a solution to the crisis, this type of poetry is concerned with people caught up in war zones and with the multiple forms of suffering they have to endure, including destruction of their homes, mass deaths, displacement, imprisonment, disappearance, lack of basic life needs.

In response to these forms of suffering, many Syrian individuals have turned to poetry to share their personal accounts and depictions of the Syrian crisis and its consequences on Syrian citizens. These depictions have been circulating on the Internet through translations into English and some other languages, providing another source of information about what has been happening in Syria and calling for a thorough study of how individuals use poetry to reflect on their experiences of the plight that hit their country, the ways this poetry travels from local to global spaces on the Internet, and the networks of agents involved in its dissemination in

translations from Arabic into English. In what follows, I draw on poetry as a mode of knowing, highlight its status in Arabic culture, and discuss the importance of translating poetry that describes the realities as well as the circumstances surrounding its production.

2.2.2. Poetry and the Syrian Crisis

Through translation and what I referred to earlier as shared global spaces, Syrian poetry of witness has been introduced to audiences in other parts of the world, providing another important source of information about the Syrian crisis events. To show the role of poetry in the Syrian crisis, this section provides a general description of poetry as a mode of knowing, a synopsis of the importance of poetry in Arabic culture, and a brief description of the Syrian poetry emerging from the events of the Syrian crisis. The section also explains why it is important to translate this poetry into English.

2.2.2.1. Poetry as a Mode of Knowing

Many individuals use poetry—defined as “a way of being in the world, and making meaning of it” (Folkart, 2007, p. 418)—as a medium for portraying reality or a tool of description free from “opportunistic agendas” (Folkart, 2007, p. xvi). Although it involves a play with words and an often decorative use of language, poetic discourse can be viewed as a mode of knowing similar to the cognitive mechanism that exists in any branch of pure sciences (LeDoux, 1996; van Peer, 1995; Furman, 2004). As a genre distinct from other speech genres, poetry, thus, tells stories or reiterates what has already been said in a different style so as “to force its way through the wall of language and to put us into more or less unmediated contact with fragments of world” (Folkart, 2007, pp. 1-2).

This poetic function may involve the target reader in a process of constructing meaning out of and building a relationship with a foreign poem, a process in which poetic discourse is capable of transforming the alterity presented in the poem into the identity of the target reader (Meschonnic, 1999/2011). Such a process is likely to engage the reader in a “ceaseless shift from I to you, including the absent, he” (Meschonnic, 1999/2011, p. 46).

Bakhtin (1979/1986), who distinguishes between poetry and other genres of everyday language, explains that the diversity of speech genres reflects the diversity of human actions. For him, any literary genre, although it contains artistic features that distinguish it from other everyday speech genres, constitutes a specific type of language that communicates a message to its audiences. Based on Bakhtin’s (1979/1986) classification of speech genres into simple (primary) genres, which refer to language use in everyday communication, and secondary (complex) genres, including novels, drama, and scientific styles of writing that are “highly organized cultural communication” (p. 62), poetry is regarded as a sophisticated type of communication and the poem as an utterance or unit of communication that has its own “thematic content, [linguistic] style, and compositional structure” (p. 60). These three components of a poem or unit of communication are determined by the nature of communication that takes place in a specific situation and point in time (Bakhtin, 1979/1986).

The communicative function of poetry is typically carried out through juxtaposition rather than linear modes of expression and works by evoking the emotions of its readers (Folkart, 1999, 2007; Picchione, 1999). Poetic discourse, thus, yields insights into how individuals perceive and view the world around them (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997; Shapiro, 2004), providing textual material that “has the capability to create useful, credible, and trustworthy

truths” (Shapiro, 2004, p. 147). These poetic features are particularly important in Arabic poetry, which enjoys an elevated status in Arabic culture.

2.2.2.2. *The Status of Poetry in Arabic Culture*

Poetry occupies a central position in Arabic culture and is regarded by many Arab critics as “proof of the Arabs’ eloquence, a trait by which, in their view, the Arabs were exalted over the other peoples of the earth” (Farrin, 2011, p. xiii). Some researchers agree with the view that “[n]o other people in the world, perhaps, have given more information in their poetry on their cultural and social life than have the Arabs over the centuries” (Loya, 1975, p. 481). For example, the body of poetry composed roughly between the sixth and thirteen centuries is seen as the historical record (*diwan*) of the Arabs, through which details about war incidents, political rows, important social life events, and critical historical moments in Arabic history were recorded (Al-Mallah, 2012; Al-Musawi, 2006; Holes & Abu Athera, 2009). Other critics argue that Arabic poetry describing battles and conflict situations, for instance, can provide more accurate accounts than do historians who might exaggerate, ignore some details for different reasons, or simply not have access to detailed descriptions of events that happened in the history of Arabs in its different phases—the pre-Islamic era, the Umayyad times, the Abbasid era, and modern times (e.g. Al-Tunji, 1975; Farrin, 2011; Nahr, 1979).

People in Arab societies take pride in the poetry composed in pre-Islamic centuries as well as the Umayyad and Abbasid eras (Farrin, 2011). The poetry of the pre-Islamic era, referred to as classical Arabic poetry, is known for the skills of its poets in creating vivid descriptions of their surroundings and “takes central place in the Arabic poetic canon” (Al-Ghadeer, 2009, p. 4). For example, *Muallaqat*, poems with unique artistic values, received generous prizes and were hung on the walls of the sacred place of pre-Islamic Kabba, a practice that reflects the prestigious

status of poetry during that time and celebrates the literary achievement of poets with outstanding poetic skills (Farrin, 2011; Holes & Abu Athera, 2009).

In the Umayyad and Abbasid times, roughly from 750 to 1400 AD, poetic discourse was used as a powerful tool to, for instance, emphasize “political legitimacy for newly emerging powers” (Al-Mallah, 2012, p. 1), to communicate a ruler’s messages to his people, to encourage people to fight and conquer new lands, especially in split Arab communities in the late Abbasid era, and to spread certain political agendas to the public (Al-Musawi, 2006; Holes & Abu Athera, 2009; Qutbuddin, 2011). People from ancient times are still remembered not only for their deeds and their influential roles at times of war, but also because their actions were recorded by renowned poets of their time (Al-Mallah, 2012; Holes & Abu Athera, 2009).

Obviously, ancient poetry had an influential role within the community, and the poet’s authority was dependent on the significant position of poetry in Arabic culture, a position that contributed to the power of the poem and enabled poetic discourse to “do certain things in the context of the surrounding political, religious, and historical circumstances” (Al-Mallah, 2012, p. 13). With such a position in society, poems in the past had their obligations on both the poet and the patron to the extent that the ruler who failed to recognize a poem’s authority within its community would lose the respect of the community members. For example, the failure of Almansur ibn Amer, one of the Emirs in Andalusia, to generously reward a poet for a panegyric poem was perceived as a disgraceful act that became a proverb in Andalusia and people “joked about it until the end of the Muslim presence in the country” (Al-Mallah, 2012, p. 96). Al-Humaydi (1966) mentions that there were governmental departments in Andalusia that provided poets with monthly stipends for their poetic expertise and according to their poetic rank. This

practice shows the significant political position of both poetry and poets within Arab communities in ancient times.

In modern times, poetry continues to occupy a central position in Arabic culture. Although Arabic poetry nowadays is not as influential as it was in ancient times, it continues to function as “a means of expressing the opinions, often dissenting, of the people who compose it, a people increasingly marginalized from mainstream Arab society” (Holes & Abu Athera, 2009, p. x). Modern Arabic literature is replete with examples in which individuals have recourse to poetry or literary works to talk about such issues as poverty, injustice, freedom, and human rights abuses (Al-Ghadeer, 2009; Munif, 2001; Sakr, 2013). For instance, Munif (2001) acknowledges the role of literature in raising the public’s awareness about human rights abuses in modern Arab societies and in creating generations that have the courage to resist oppression and fight for better life conditions. Similarly, Al-Ghadeer (2009) demonstrates how Bedouin women use poetry to express their feelings and declare their longing for a lover in a conservative and patriarchal society dominated by men. The narratives attached to an Arabic poem provide an inside view into the poet’s circumstances in a certain situation and are likely to have an impact on readers in a way that makes them identify with the feelings of the poem’s producer (Farrin, 2011). Contemporary Arabic poetry can, thus, be viewed as a medium that conveys important information about the realities surrounding a poet and may serve as a tool that helps poets give vent to their repressed emotions.

Modern Syrian poets, like their other Arab counterparts, capitalize on writing poetry to convey their feelings about and attitudes towards social and political problems affecting their society. While believing in a role for poetry in rebuilding a nation and provoking revolutionary change, several Syrian modern poets place an emphasis on reality, revealing the weaknesses of

their society and highlighting the various social and political aspects that have provoked discontent among the Syrian general public toward political leaders and the circumstances of life (Frangieh, 2000; Loya, 1975; Mansour, 2005).

Modern Syrian poets have been translated into other languages including English. Among the poets whose poetry appeared frequently on the Internet in the years preceding the Syrian crisis are Adonis (1930 – present) and Nizar Qabbani (1923-1998), two poets whose innovative ways of writing poetry have influenced not only new Syrian generations of poetry writers but also other poets around the Arab world (Frangieh, 2000).

Both Adonis and Qabbani have utilized poetry to address political and social issues related to Syrian society since 1946, the year Syria proclaimed its full independence from French rule, and they have provided information about the changes following that important moment in the history of Syria. Their poetry reflects the rapid developments in the Syrian social and political arena and the sentiments dominating the general public of modern Syria (Frangieh, 2000). Adonis and Qabbani, like other modern Arab poets, abandoned the “constraints of classical poetic forms, traditional rhyme schemes, and the conventional metric patterns, which had prevailed for more than fifteen centuries ... in favor of free verse poetry with no restrictions” (Frangieh, 2000, p. 224). This free verse poetry helped poets to convey their political stances to the members of their society and urge them to revolt against corruption, poverty, social injustices, and traditions that hindered the development of the country (Loya, 1975; Mansour, 2005).

Adonis, a constant contender for the Nobel Prize, is known for his prose poetry, a writing style which has inspired later generations of Arab modern poets. With an immense knowledge of the history of Arabs and of western culture, Adonis spares no criticism of the Arabic culture for

its inability to participate in building today's world or achieve changes similar to the ones that took place in developed western countries (Antoon, 2011). In criticizing his society's weaknesses, Adonis, for example, reveals the state of illusion created by Syria's political leaders who were defeated in 1948 and 1967 and the stagnation in sociopolitical life in twentieth century Syria:

I have said

This broken jar is a defeated nation!

I see the shadow of a crow

Upon the face of my country.

I name this book a shroud,

I name this city a corpse.

Madness!

Only madness remains! (Translated by Frangieh, 2000, p. 230).

Despite his belief in a revolutionary spirit that rejects the traditions and religious interpretations permeating Arabic culture, Adonis has, from the very beginning, expressed concerns about the Arab Spring uprisings fearing that they would produce more destructive powers (Antoon, 2011).

Qabbani, in turn, is known for poetry which advocates for social and political change that would turn Syria into a better country. For example, in his criticism of Arab leaders and Arab people, following the 1967 defeat, Qabbani highlights that oppression and injustice were the two main reasons behind the defeat and weakness of his nation. In "Marginal Notes on the Book of Defeat," he writes:

O Sultan, O my lord,

I was beaten with shoes,

Your soldiers forced me to eat out of my shoes.

Twice you have lost the war

Because you cut out the tongues of half your people.

What use are a people who can't speak? (Translated by Frangieh, 2000, p. 231).

In addition to his criticism of the social and political practices of his society, Qabbani kept fighting for the rights and liberation of Arab women from the forms of exploitation and oppression of their society. His poems advocating for Arab women uncover the patriarchal practices against women to the extent that he was called the women's poet (Loya, 1975). In his poems devoted to the problem of Arab women, Qabbani adopts a woman's voice that "reflects not only her problem, but also the mood, experience and agony which Arab" women have experienced in their relations with the dominating mindset of Arab males (Loya, 1975, p. 281).

Although Qabbani was harshly criticized and boycotted by the old generations of his time for his attitudes towards traditional values, the young generations "found in him a subversive voice that rails at what is held sacred and often taboo by their conventional societies, and they began to recite his poetry and sing it" (Mansour, 2005, p. 480). Qabbani's poems not only embody an indictment of the oppression, corruption, and absence of democracy in his society (Mansour, 2005), but they also "remain documents which, above all, reflect the social problems of Arab youth" in the twentieth century (Loya. 1975, p. 494).

Following in the steps of Adonis, Qabbani, and other modern poets, several Syrian poets have responded to the events of the Syrian crisis and have produced poetry that bears witness to the suffering of its victims. Their poetry has been circulating on the Internet in the Arabic language and in translations from Arabic into English, along with accounts of a new poetry

emerging out of the plight of the Syrian people. In what follows, I draw on some views describing this type of poetry.

2.2.3. Poetry Emerging from the Syrian Crisis

Many Syrian individuals have benefited from the spirit of the Arab Spring to connect with each other and share information on the suffering of civilians stuck in conflict zones in Syria. Among these individuals are poets who have used their poetic talent to express their opinions on and provide personal accounts of the atrocities committed against the victims of the Syrian crisis.

It is worth noting here that the themes of this poetry seem to be in line with the fresh change the Arab Spring spirit has brought to the literary system in the Arab world (Sakr, 2013). This change in literature has transformed the Arab writer into “a public intellectual who diagnoses and challenges states of oppression and silence” (Sakr, 2013, p. 5). The new system of poetry brings more attention to individualism and acknowledges the suffering of human beings (Cuen, 2013).

In dealing with the events of the Syrian crisis, Syria’s new poetry relies on the use of plain and visceral language that helps poets describe the new realities that have arisen from the crisis (Cuen, 2013; Hakimi, 2013). It is the content of the poem rather than the beauty of metaphor or floweriness of words that is of special importance to poetry writers (Cuen, 2013; Hakimi, 2013).

The themes around which the new Syrian poetry is composed include poems of protest (i.e., poems sung in demonstrations) and poetic texts that depicts many forms of suffering facing Syrians over the past few years (Cuen, 2013; Fleishman, 2015; Hakimi, 2013; Watt, 2016). The new Syrian poetry shows the motivations driving the wave of uprisings, conveys a desire for

change to a better Syria, and displays how Syrians cope with the horrors of war (Fleishman, 2015; Watt, 2016). Syrian poets are using poetry as an effective tool to communicate stories and provoke narratives about such modes of suffering as displacement, destruction of homes, killings, loss of family members, and lack of basic life needs. Poetry here serves to reflect people's thoughts and is a significant source of information about individuals' experiences in times of conflict, as poets during violent times compose poetry "to speak in the name of the victims of atrocity" (Gana, 2010, p. 34).

Content is not the only important aspect defining the new poetry emerging from the Syrian crisis. Nor is the style of writing. The mode of dissemination is as important. Syrian poetry of witness is mainly circulating in Arabic through social media networks (Beesley, 2013; Hakimi, 2013). Platforms like Facebook and YouTube have played a significant role in connecting individuals with each other, creating spaces for "people to share unfolding events in real time" (Robertson, 2013, p. 326), and in allowing individuals to exchange views and communicate concerns about the events happening around them (Howard & Hussain, 2011; Robertson, 2013; Tomlinson, 2011). For example, Nadir Abishalish, in his poem "A Message to my Home," which appears in several short videos on YouTube, draws attention to the suffering of people who were forced to leave their homes. In this poem, the displaced poet expresses his concerns about his home describing it as a life companion that has feelings and is yearning to see its residents again:

A Message to my Home¹

I dispatched my soul to check on my home when we were unable to meet,

To see if it still remembers us or if it forgets its children when they are gone,

¹ The poet uses the classical Arabic word *dar* (abode) to refer to his place of living.

To see if the roof is still presiding over the walls despite what has been done,

Or if it fell to its knees, complaining in pain to the absentees,

To see if the dates on the palm-tree have ripened,

And to check on the fig and olive trees.

To see if the grapes are now dangling like diamonds over the bosoms of beautiful ladies

To see if the mulberries on their branches are ready to please. (My translation)

This poem, circulated widely on social media in Arabic, draws attention not only to the literary style or aesthetic values of the poem, but also to the stress under which many displaced people are living and the role of communication technology in sharing moments of pain with wider audiences.

Another example of the role of technology in disseminating poetry is a website designed by Iram, a poet and translator who posts to her website poetry that speaks out on war atrocities. Through her website, Iram shares poetry in both Arabic and English. The following poem, “Bread and Blood” speaks of people who die while trying to secure bread for their families:

Bread and Blood²

There is life

In our holy daily bread

And there is a longing

The longing of flour for water

The dough for fire

The loaf for air

And the mouths for the mouthful.....

² Both the source and target texts are produced by Iram. The texts can be accessed at <https://alisariram.wordpress.com/2012/12/26/in-memory-of-halafaya-the-bread-massacre/>.

This loaf my friends
 Glows with the red blood
 Of the innocents
 Holy Holy Holy

This poem has an Arabic version and is posted to Iram's website along with its translation into English. Iram (2014) explains that her poems are not intended to shock, sadden, or beg audiences to take sides; they are rather an attempt to raise their awareness to the fact that if the world's political systems had developed in the same way technologies did, those atrocities would not have been committed. In other words, poetry is used as a call for building a just world, in which all people can live in peace and harmony.

Some of the poetry emerging from the Syrian crisis has been transferred through translation to global spaces on the Internet. In such a translation activity, individuals rely on English as "a key factor in making one's voice heard" (Susam-Sarajeva, 2002, p. 194) and on communication technologies that allow them to reach out to international audiences (Tomlinson, 2011).

Through poetry translation, international readers come to know about the feelings of poets, the conditions of life in their societies, and the horrible experiences they go through in times of violence (Forché, 1993a; Watt, 2016). For example, Fouad Mohammad Fouad is a poet from Aleppo, who uses poetry to describe in detail the daily modes of suffering of Aleppo inhabitants. Some of his poems have been translated into English under the title *Aleppo Diary* and appeared on the website of the poetry translation center³. This center translates leading poets from different cultures and introduces them to new readers with the aim of inspiring poets

³ Fouad's poems can be found at <http://www.poetrytranslation.org/poets/from/syria>.

writing in English. In one of these poems, Fouad talks about the harsh circumstances people in Aleppo have to endure in everyday situations—people venturing out to earn a living for their families may get killed in any moment. He also inscribes in his poems the melancholic mood that has dominated the scene in Aleppo and compares it to the days preceding the Syrian crisis. Those days were full of music and joy:

I sit on the balcony. Aleppo spread before me black and deserted. The clatter of crockery in the dark means life goes on. No sound save sporadic gunfire from somewhere, then a single shell preceded by a peculiar whistle. Someone is leaving this planet with a dry throat. Aleppo before me black and still. These huge shadows might be trees or childhood goblins or black vapours exhaled by women waiting for children who are already numbers in a news report.

Aleppo. No oud⁴ plucked. No 'Swaying Silhouette'. No drinks in The Nightingale⁵. No drinkers. No song.

One by one
they awaken
the beasts of darkness.

Many other poems that focus on the suffering of Syrian citizens have been translated into English and appeared in projects outside mainstream media. Such projects indicate that poetry may be used as a means of venting and as a psychological therapy that helps the victims of abuse cope with stress and endure the horrors they have faced in zones of conflict (Yurtsever, 2014). While speaking of feelings about war and multiple forms of suffering, children's poetry, for

⁴ Oud is a musical instrument.

⁵ The Nightingale is a name of a café and restaurant in the city center.

example, is viewed as a space through which they find peace, freedom, and hope for a better future (Watt, 2016; Yurtsever, 2014). The following poem, written by a 9-year-old girl, Alma, is a good example that reveals children's attachment to their country, the sadness associated with displacement, and the longing feelings for the happy moments shared with community friends:

Syria, you are so beautiful in the white dress,
 You are so beautiful in the green dress.
 When I see you, I see myself inside a garden.
 When I see your trees, I see them big and beautiful...
 And when it rains on the trees,
 I can see them shining.
 When I play with my friends, we laugh and enjoy.
 When we are sharing together, I am always happy.
 And when I left you, I was so sad⁶.

The interest of translation agents in Syrian poetry of witness may be triggered by its literalness, information-rich content, visceral response to the new circumstances of living, and perhaps by, as Beesley (2013) explains, an inclination to do justice to the victims, voicing their grievances and suffering through poetry. Its focus on the victims of the Syrian crisis creates a need for further examination of this phenomenon in order to explore, among other aspects, its possible association with the ethical engagement of translation during times of conflict. This association brings into attention the importance of translating this poetry from Arabic into other languages including English.

⁶ The poem, along with other poems written by Syrian children, is featured on the website of Save the Children Organization. These poems appear in translations only, without references to the translators or the source texts.

2.2.4. The Importance of Translating Syrian Poetry of Witness

As a form of expression with perspectives different from those provided by news reports, poetry, especially the type of poetry that arises from tragedies associated with conflict zones, “offers insight, comfort, encourages empathy and gives voice to the voiceless” (Norie, 2015). Through poetry, the audiences seem to be invited to directly listen to the victim’s experiences, encounter realities without interference of news media that may portray victims as mere numbers and war as a game, learn more about the devastating effects of warfare from the perspectives of the victims of conflicts in remote places, and feel the tragic repressions of war on human beings (Forché, 1993a; Norie, 2015). Since we live in an age where “empathy, compassion and offline human connection” seem to be getting lost amidst the anonymity of technology (Norie, 2015), it is important to have the opportunity to listen to poetry that raises awareness about the tragic effects of human-made catastrophes, enhances feelings of sympathy with other humans, and promotes understanding of the suffering of war victims. Such an opportunity is provided by Syrian poetry of witness which offers more insights on the suffering of the victims of the Syrian crisis. As pointed out earlier, Syrian poetry of witness relies on a visceral language that is effective in raising awareness about war atrocities and in provoking sympathy for its victims.

The effectiveness of poetic language resides not only in its capacity to record the suffering of civilians, which might contribute in one way or another to remedy their injuries, but also in the role it plays to raise the target reader’s awareness of atrocities against humanity and in provoking protective measures to fend off such practices when they occur (Forché, 1993a, 1993b; Ilesanmi, 2011; Orlando, 2010).

Several studies have explored the function of poetry in documenting human rights abuses (e.g. Forché, 1993a, 1993b; Orlando, 2010; van Peer, 1995). For instance, Carolyn Forché’s

(1993a) *Against Forgetting: Twentieth Century Poetry of Witness* uses poetry translation as a documenting record of atrocities against humanity. In this anthology, Forché (1993a) presents the works of more than 140 poets from different parts of the world. This collection is a valuable source of knowledge about the tough circumstances and life conditions under which these poets have lived. The translations presented in this anthology tell stories about such issues as state censorship, oppression, torture, and incarceration, to name a few. As Forché (1993a) points out, these translations bear witness to the ‘dark times’ in which human rights are abused in almost all parts of the world, including Latin America, Europe, China, the Middle East, and Africa. The significance of the selected poems, thus, lies in their ability to document human rights violations and give voice to the victims who strove to stand against them.

Speaking of the role of poetry in reporting human rights abuses, Orlando (2010) translates and analyzes a set of poems written by Moroccan women who were incarcerated for being involved in activist socialist movements. These translated poems reveal the harsh treatment imposed on female prisoners. Orlando (2010) remarks that those females wrote poems to their families as testimonials that bore witness to the suffering of prisoners and the amount of torture they had to endure. Such poetry, as Orlando (2010) explains, is utilized as a means to break the silence around the suffering of women in prison and, thus, to draw attention to the need to protect human rights.

In addition to its function as a mode of knowing, poetry translation may be used to raise the target reader’s awareness about the dangers associated with human rights abuses. By introducing the reader through translation to the suffering of humanity and by provoking his/her sympathy for the victims of atrocities, poetry “purifies us of megalomania (hubris), safeguarding democratic government and protecting us from unrestrained tyranny” (van Peer, 1995, p. 277).

Forché (1993a) stipulates that entering the realms of poetry translations and sympathizing with the victims of abuse can encourage us to take action in order to build a world for all human beings and develop immunity against injustice, prejudice, tyranny, and exploitation. It is worth mentioning here that the sympathetic response evoked by a translated poem is not a mere influence of the decorative use of language; it is rather a response to the credibility of the poem in its depiction of reality (Folkart, 1999, 2007). Listening to the voices of these victims through poetry and translation is likely to “give balance to what we hear on the news and [help us] start forming healthier and more compassionate views of regions and people we are unfamiliar with” (Norie, 2015).

The artistic features, the intensive emotions of talented poets, and the credibility of the poem’s content are all features that qualify Syrian poetry of witness as an effective tool for interpreting the Syrian crisis and empowering the translator’s ethical responses to its events. However, the mechanism determining the circulation of Syrian poetry of witness on the Internet is likely to affect translators’ ethical engagement and their attempt to reach to wider audiences. Such a mechanism is likely to be subject to other issues that are associated with the platforms featuring online translations of the Syrian poetry of witness, including agency and ideological orientations.

2.3. Literature Review 2: Online Translation and Syrian Poetry of Witness

This section provides a definition of an online translation and reviews the literature around such issues as the dynamics of dissemination, agency, motivations and ideology, and ethical responsibilities, issues that have bearing on the production and circulation of translations of Syrian poetry of witness on the Internet.

2.3.1. Defining an Online Translation

As explained earlier, the technological advances in communication tools have resulted in the emergence of websites or digital platforms that feature stories for audiences all around the world and offer spaces for sharing and exchanging information across the Internet. These digital platforms offer “increasingly sophisticated and efficient mechanisms for communicating both historical and current events, disseminating ideological agendas ... and manipulating ideas in translation” that circulate online (McLaughlin & Muñoz-Basols, 2016, p. 2). An online translation, in this study, refers to any electronic translated text posted on a digital platform or site on the Internet. Unlike traditional translations in textbooks or print forms, online translations enjoy different modes of dissemination that are likely to influence their travels and circulation on the Internet.

2.3.2. Dynamics of Dissemination

Given the diversity of world languages and the need to reach wider audiences, translation plays a significant role in disseminating information on the Internet as it “facilitates the worldwide circulation of information ... in the context of ever increasing global information flows” (Cronin 2003, p. 49). With the high-speed access to information on the worldwide web, “translation remains the key vehicle for disseminating, sifting and understanding cultural and social phenomena that come to us from foreign countries and languages” (McLaughlin & Muñoz-Basols, 2016, p. 2).

To reach out to audiences worldwide, websites use translation as a communicative strategy “to transmit certain content ... that allow[s] them to gain access to different cultural spheres and assure[s] the loyalty of new audiences” (Hernández Guerrero, 2017, p. 305). In so

doing, these websites play a significant role in creating an international community of readers that appreciates and gathers around such transmitted materials (Baker, 2013).

The dissemination of online translations of Syrian poetry of witness is concerned with the process of transforming this poetry from local to global spaces. Whereas a local space in this research study is pertinent to the source poet's productions in Arabic, regardless of the geographical place in which the poet is based, a global space refers to the situation in which a translation of a poetic production appears on a website that can be accessed by readers from different places in the world. In other words, a global space refers to any site on the Internet that features Syrian poetry in translations from Arabic into English.

Online translations of Syrian poetry of witness are expected to circulate according to the dynamics of dissemination in global spaces. Of particular importance are journalistic practices or journalistic translations, a term used to describe the flow of news stories (Hernández Guerrero, 2017), which can be seen on both mainstream and alternative news sources. In such journalistic translations, the source author is likely to be overlooked in a translation product that is "adapted to suit the needs of the news outlet at any time" (Valdeón, 2015, p. 642).

In addition to the websites initiated by mainstream news media, independent digital platforms like blogs and the websites of collective action movements are also driven by the need to reach out to wider audiences (Baker, 2013). Websites here are used as resources that allow translation groups "to create spaces where translation and interpreting can function as emancipatory, empowering tools of resistance," through which translators can disseminate their translation productions, articulate their vision, and protect "the group itself as a locus of collective action" (Baker, 2013, p. 41). These groups of translators rely heavily on both the Internet technology and their linguistic knowledge of the source and target languages in order to

circulate their translations and advocate for voices that lack the power to make themselves heard at the global level (Baker, 2013, 2016).

In disseminating their content, blogs and other forms of independent digital platforms recognize the diversification of the international linguistic landscape and may set out to create a certain impact not only on local audiences but also on audiences worldwide (Hernández Guerrero, 2017). They are, thus, characterized by their openness to a wide range of viewers, an aspect that encourages the participation of individuals from different geographical places and, consequently, promotes the circulation of products from different languages.

An online translation may result in a change of meaning due to the use of a variety of translation strategies, including deletion, substitution, addition, reorganization, summarization, and explication (Bielsa & Bassnett, 2009; Hernández Guerrero, 2017; Scammell, 2018; Valdeón, 2015). These strategies, being common aspects of online or journalistic translations, may create intra-lingual transformations even within the same language, as they are used as a means for preparing stories for publication (Bielsa & Bassnett, 2009; Scammell, 2018). For example, in the dissemination of news stories shared online, a translation agent (i.e., editor, journalist, reporter) may translate into the target language the parts of a source text that are considered newsworthy and may then polish the draft report before preparing it for publication (Scammell, 2018). Online translations of Syrian poetry are not an exception and may go through the same process as translated news stories.

In addition to the strategies mentioned above, the movement of an online literary translation is also achieved through retranslation, a strategy through which a text is given the chance to appear online more than once or for a number of times because online media tend to feature different coverage versions of the same event (Hernández Guerrero, 2017; Valdeón,

2015). By virtue of this practice, translation does not only “reproduce texts but constructs cultural realities, and it does so by intervening in the processes of narration and renarration that constitute all encounters, and that essentially construct the world for us” (Baker, 2013, p. 24). In a retranslation, an electronic text may appear as a whole or in part or might be used in an article that tackles a situation related to a news story, or as a quote used to support the opinion of the author of the article.

Another feature that propels the dissemination of an online translation is the electronic nature of the text, a significant feature distinguishing online translations from print forms of texts. The advantage of an electronic text lies in the fact “that it can be updated fairly” easily, in “its capacity to reach wider audiences,” and in its ability to participate in an initiative “regardless of physical location” (Susam-Sarajeva, 2010, p. 233). On top of that, electronic texts may be disseminated as fragments, quotations, or selections from the source text, another aspect that facilitates their dissemination from one online source to another (Bielsa & Bassnett, 2009; Susam-Sarajeva, 2010).

Although the dynamics associated with online translations is likely to influence the selection and dissemination of translations of Syrian poetry of witness, the content of the Syrian poetry of witness, like any other form of literary production, is another factor that may determine its dissemination online. In other words, the dissemination of a poetry of witness text can be ascribed to certain values attached to it. Generally speaking, literary works are considered for translation if they offer a value that is of interest to the translation agent or a publisher (Gouanvic, 2005; Steiner, 1975/2000). In parsing a source text for a certain message, theme or an artistic value, a translator starts the process of translation “with an act of trust” that may develop, depending on the values or meanings found in it, into a decision to transfer these meanings to the

target language (Steiner, 1975/2000, p. 186).

The value of a literary text is also established in terms of a need to reach out to international audiences for reasons that include, among other things, making profits, expanding scope of coverage, and increasing a website's visibility in the international arena (Gouanvic, 2005; Hernández Guerrero, 2017). The content of a literary work may appeal to translation agents who view it as a vehicle of information that meet their needs (Baker, 2016).

The dissemination of online translations, thus, draws attention to the role of agents involved in disseminating a literary work or the notion of agency in translation studies. The following section sheds light on this notion and its relevance to the dissemination of online translations of Syrian poetry of witness. An online translation not only influences the circulation of translation products but also the way the source text is rendered in the target language (Baker, 2006, 2013).

2.3.3. Agency

Agency in translation studies refers to the “willingness and ability to act” (Koskinen & Kinnunen, 2010, p. 6), “the degree of freedom of translators when they have to make certain translation choices” (Tcaciuc & Mackevic, 2017, p. 419), or the influence an agent may create as a result of his/her translation production (Baker, 2006; Koskinen & Kinnunen, 2010). Agency is also concerned with the presence of the translator in an online translation, the multiple roles he or she may play in carrying out a translation task (Baker, 2006, 2013; Koskinen & Kinnunen, 2010) and with the circumstances encouraging or constraining a translation activity (Schäffner, Tcaciuc, & Tesseur, 2014).

The question of agency in online translation deals with the various networks of agents who may take part in the process of translation and may, thus, contribute to the production and

dissemination of a translation on a website. This type of agency focuses attention on the practices of networks of translation agents that range from stand-alone translators to collective networks of translators (Koskinen & Kinnunen, 2010).

As for the translators involved in collective actions, agency is characterized by its openness to collaborative work through which both professional and non-professional translators are invited to take part in disseminating a translation product (Baker, 2013; Susam-Sarajeva, 2010). Here, online media encourage “novel forms of crossing borders” by offering their users the opportunity “not only to access content in their native language but also to use it to express themselves and participate” in a translation initiative (Hernández Guerrero, 2017, p. 305). For example, volunteer translators “tend to rely heavily on Internet technology, both to communicate among themselves and coordinate their work, and in some cases to circulate their translations” (Baker, 2013, p. 25). These translators are invited to contribute to the content of online media through collaborative work which opens the door to questions that go beyond who should take part in a translation activity or how a text should be translated (Susam-Sarajeva, 2010). Collaborative activities “also encourage us to locate translation squarely where it belongs—as part and parcel of people’s daily lives and struggles” (Susam-Sarajeva, 2010, p. 243).

Collaborative translation activities are also seen in institutional settings. In these settings, translation is done collectively, where the agency of the individual translator seems to be controlled by the institution and its function in a given society (Koskinen, 2008). For example, Schäffner et al. (2014), in their study of the settings and translation practices at three different institutions (i.e., European Central Bank, the German Foreign Office, and Amnesty International), show that the differences in organization structures, scope of work, and sources of funding lead to different translation strategies that may impact the agency of translators in

different ways. Such differences in translation practices may exist even within the same institution and may result in variations in translation strategies that depend, to a large extent, on “the genre, the language and the translation purpose” (Schäffner et al., 2014, p. 507). Schäffner et al. (2014) also explain that the agency of the individual working in an institution, be it political or non-governmental, is limited as the translator’s “voice is totally subjected to the voice of the institution” (p. 508).

In institutional settings, as Koskinen (2008) points out, the translator’s choices are regulated by the rules of the workplace because “the voice that is to be heard is that of the translating institution” (p. 22). For example, Tcaciuc and Mackevic (2017), in their analysis of a corpus of translated texts from the European Central Bank, have found that the rules of this institution influenced the choices of translators who were required to consider the institutional regulations when rendering the text in the target language.

Translation within news agencies is another example that shows the influence of institutional norms on translation practices. The importance of translation here lies in the fact that news institutions seek to circulate news products in different languages and, thus, open the scope of their work to international audiences from multiple cultures (Bielsa & Bassnett, 2009). In other words, translation in news agencies is influenced by the journalistic practices that are associated with the production of news reports (e.g. Bielsa, 2007; Bielsa & Bassnett, 2009). The practice of translation within a news agency is thus “subject to the same requirements of genre and style that govern journalistic production in general” (Bielsa, 2007, p. 136). As Bielsa (2007) puts it, translators work like journalists who are required to “rewrite texts to make them suitable for their new context according to the rules and practices of the medium ... through which news reports are checked, corrected, modified, polished up and prepared for publication” (Bielsa,

2007, p. 142). In a nutshell, the translator's ability and willingness to carry out a certain translation task can be determined by the expectations of the institution within which he/she operates and the advice received from other networks of agents. Collaborative translation activities, therefore, project the translator as a social agent "whose actions are neither entirely free nor predetermined" (Hermans, 1999, p. 80).

On the other hand, the individual translator's agency doesn't only lie in his/her ability to participate in collaborative translation projects, but also in the individual's capacity to work independently of other networks of translators and in his/her ability to build online platforms or blogs that enable him/her to publish his/her own translations or share translations of others (Baker, 2013; McDonough Dolmaya, 2011). Personal websites or blogs "represent a new way for translators to interact with one another online," connect with agents outside the profession of translation, and influence the decisions of other professional and non-professional individuals (McDonough Dolmaya, 2011, p. 78).

An individual translator may practice agency of a sociopolitical nature that aims at revealing corruption in a society. For instance, in his examination of agency in "*The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*," Moghaddam (2011) focuses on the sociopolitical factors that influence the translator, who, through translation, attempts to pass on political progress messages even if his work results in "a series of alterations, additions and omissions" (p. 217). Translation agency here is a risk-taking practice exercised by an exiled translator who used translation as a method "that allowed him to amplify the meaning, intensify the corruption of the ruling class, and the rampant poverty and religious demagoguery of the time in Persia" (Moghaddam, 2011, p. 225).

Agency for both individual translators and collaborative networks of translation agents may also refer to the translation agent's ability to breathe a certain voice into a literary translation. Such a voice can be expressed in both translated texts and paratexts (e.g. Greenall, 2015; Jones, 2010). While the textual voices are present in translated literary texts through, for example, the voices of the characters, the author's persona, or the translator's voice (Folkart, 1991), contextual voices are pertinent to the sociological surroundings of a translation activity and "hence to the multiple agents that produce, promote and write about translations" (Alvstad & Rosa, 2015, p. 4). In textual agency, however, the translation agent capitalizes on the voice of a character to pass certain communicative messages to the intended readership (Alvstad & Rosa, 2015; Hermans, 1999). In a translation of a literary work, for instance, various voices can be detected in the translated text, with each voice telling a story about a social background, a particular situation, a living condition, and so forth.

Contextual voices can also take multiple forms as they manifest themselves in a paratext introducing a translation or a source author. For a poetry translator, for instance, the task of translation often involves introducing the source poet to new audiences and "a special desire ... to actively project ... [the translator's] voice through the material" (Greenall, 2015, p. 41). This can be done through the annotations and comments written about a translated text (Alvstad & Rosa, 2015; Hermans, 1999). In both textual and contextual forms of voices, the translator's voice is always present in conjunction with the voice of the source author which is reproduced in the words of the target text (Folkart, 1991, 2007; Hermans, 1999). Poetry translation thus reveals the influence of the voice of both the translation agent and the source poet (Greenall, 2015, Paloposki & Koskinen, 2004).

In collaborative projects or activities carried out by individual translators, agency in this study refers to the translator's ability to translate a text from Arabic into English or disseminate a translation on a website. It is also associated with the circumstances that may constrain or encourage online translations of Syrian poetry of witness as well as with the translator's ideological orientations or motivations to carry out a certain task.

2.3.4. Motivations and Ideologies

Although the translation agent's ability to translate (e.g. the linguistic knowledge of both the source and target languages) is a key factor in determining the shape of the translation product, online translations of Syrian poetry of witness may also be influenced by personal motivations and ideologies; these are two additional factors that may inform the translator's decisions and linguistic choices, especially when the text lends itself to various options.

Motivation refers to the inclination that prompts individuals to take on a translation task (McDonough Dolmaya, 2011; Mossop, 2014). Sources of motivation vary from one translator to another. Among these sources are financial rewards and benefits; self-esteem; tools and resources available for carrying out a translation task; pleasant surroundings; the type of translation activity, interpersonal relationships with other individuals involved in a translation task; the type of text the translator is assigned to translate; and other expected outcomes of a translation project (McDonough Dolmaya, 2011; Mossop, 2014; Olohan, 2014). Given these multiple motivating forces, translators typically get motivated by translation projects that make them realize their "potential, as well as events that give [them] a sense of enjoyment or intellectual accomplishment" (Mossop, 2014, p. 581).

Besides boosting their translation skills and gaining new learning experiences, translators may also be motivated by the opportunity to practice their social values of altruism and

sympathy towards victimized agents, through which they show concerns about the misfortunes of other humans (McDonough Dolmaya, 2011; Olohan, 2014). Translation here can be seen as a medium for telling and retelling stories that enable translators to “negotiate the conditions of history in which [they] find [themselves], whether as lay members of society, as professionals in a particular domain or as activists who consciously exploit their professional skills to effect change at a local or global level” (Baker, 2013, p. 24). For example, a translator may be motivated by a noble cause or “a sense of identification with a ‘story’ or set of ‘stories’ that provide a focal point for their political activity,” stories that resonate with “narratives of global justice, rather than narratives of nationalist aspirations, for instance, or religious belief” (Baker, 2013, p. 24). Such universal narratives may instigate translators to get involved in a translation activity at the individual level or to work in collaboration with other translators.

While motivation inclines a translator to embark on a translation task, ideologies are likely to influence the translator’s choices when rendering a text in the target language. Ideology—defined as “a set of suppositions which indicate the ideas and benefits of a person, group, social institution, etc. which is finally presented in the form of language (Hatim & Mason, 1997, p. 218)—is likely to affect the process of placing more emphasis on the agents involved in a translation activity, the purpose of their translation and the circumstances under which they work (McLaughlin & Muñoz-Basols, 2016).

The ideologies inscribed in a translation may result from the translator’s attitudes towards a given situation. These attitudes may determine the translator’s linguistic choices and may, in some cases, result in a manipulation of or change in information transmitted from one language to another (Jones, 2010; McLaughlin & Muñoz-Basols, 2016). A translator, who is driven by certain ideologies or political agendas, may intentionally change the message intended by a

source poet and replace it with another message that corresponds to the translator's purposes (Jones, 2010). For example, translation groups devoted to a peace agenda tend to "focus on promoting anti-war narratives ... by translating and disseminating texts that elaborate these anti-war narratives for members of their immediate community" (Baker, 2013, P. 27). For the groups with similar ideologies, poetry of witness constitutes an important site for exercising one's ideological orientations as it is expected to "highlight the socio-cultural and political attitudes underlying the actions of translation agents" (Jones, 2010, p. 226).

Given the view that translation "is not an innocent act of disinterested mediation" (Baker, 2013, p. 24), the translator's ideological orientations can be traced not only in the translated text but also in the "stance of the translator, and in its relevance to the receiving audience" (Tymoczko, 2003, p. 183).

In the case of translating Syrian poetry of witness, these stances are likely to determine the translator's decisions in taking on a translation task, the linguistic choices made in the target text, and, in general, the final shape of the translation product. An analysis of the ideology of translation agents yields insights into the role of individual translators and their potential impact in disseminating information or even distorting it, the force that drives translators to have access to unheard stories and voices, and the process of constructing ideological stances at the receiving end (Jones, 2010; McLaughlin & Muñoz-Basols, 2016; Tymoczko, 2003).

Ideology is also associated with translation institutions (e.g. news agencies, publishing companies, national/non-governmental institutions, and commercial industries). The institution within which a translation occurs can be described as "a form of uniform action governed by role expectations, norms, values and belief systems" (Koskinen, 2008, p. 17), and institutional translation can be defined as "any translation that occurs in an institutional setting" (Schäffner et

al., 2014, p. 493) or a “translation carried out in the name of, on behalf of, and for the benefit of institutions” (Gouadec, 2010, p. 38).

Translation institutions function as gatekeepers whose policies, professional procedures, and guidelines may reflect on both translation products and the translator who in turn is expected to produce translations that align with institutional expectations (Koskinen, 2008; Schäffner et al., 2014). The choices and decisions made throughout the process of translation are indicative of the translator’s position in the institution, his/her relations to the institutional setting, the relationship between institutions and modes of translation, institutional expectations, as well as the policies of the institution within which translations are produced (Hermans, 1995; Kang, 2014; Koskinen, 2000, 2008). Such choices may be determined by the institution within which the translator operates. The institutional constraints imposed on the translator vary from one institution to another, and the “variety of regulations and guidelines that are used in specific institutions result in a whole range of translation strategies and routines” (Schäffner et al., 2014, p. 494).

In institutional settings, translation is “language mediation that enables communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries, but more importantly, translation enables the delivery of institutional values, goals and agendas” (Kang, 2014, p. 470). For example, ideology in translating news reports refers to the ways a “translation modifies the message of the original text in order to emphasize the editorial line of the news medium where the final text is published” (Valdeón, 2015, p. 648). Among the objectives institutional translation may serve are the “promotion of linguistic equality and diversity; the implementation of national development; the facilitation of cultural transformation; and the production, dissemination, and reception of global information and media content...” (Kang, 2014, p. 470).

In a nutshell, an ideology-driven act of translation may result in a significant change in meaning, a change that might be ascribed to the individual translator, to the ideologies pervading a translation institution, or simply to the context surrounding a translation activity. As explained earlier, translation agents may inscribe their ideologies in the translated text by using multiple strategies that include, but are not limited to, explication, summarizing, paraphrasing, addition, deletion of information, domestication, and adaptation to the needs of the receiving society (Baker, 2013; Bassnett, 2005; Bielsa & Bassnett, 2009; McLaughlin & Muñoz-Basols, 2016). An analysis of the possible ideologies associated with online translations of Syrian poetry of witness has its implications in the discipline of translation studies, particularly the ethical commitments underpinning the activities of translators who wish to advocate for underrepresented groups of people or victimized agents. Ethics is another issue that has been of interest to researchers in translation studies and also has implications in online translations of Syrian poetry of witness.

2.3.5. Translation and Ethical Engagement

As explained at the outset, the translator's ethical engagement highlighted in this study includes aspects of activism, political engagement, ethical commitment to the future of humanity, and a moral loyalty to both the source and target situations (Chesterman, 2001; Nord, 1988/2005; Tymoczko, 2000; Wolf, 2011, 2014). The topic of ethics is a many-sided notion that has engaged translation theorists and practitioners in explicit or implicit discussions about the translator's ethical tasks oriented toward the selection of the source text (Venuti, 1995, 1998), the production of the target text (Toury, 1995; Venuti, 1998), the representation of the "Other" (Bachmann-Medick, 2006; Spivak, 2005; Sturge, 2007), professional ethics (Chesterman, 1997, 2001; Nord, 1997, 2001), and political engagement and activism (Baker, 2010; Cronin, 2003; Inghilleri, 2008; Tymoczko, 2000, 2007; Wolf, 2011, 2014). To define a term that will be

referred to throughout this study, I will draw on some theoretical views on the notion of ethics from different translation studies perspectives.

2.3.5.1. Ethics Oriented towards the Source Text

The question of ethics oriented to the source text appears forcefully in Venuti (1992, 1995, 1998, 2000) whose description of the translator's ethical responsibilities involves a variety of concepts, including the concepts of foreignizing and minoritizing in translation. Foreignizing and minoritizing refer to translation strategies developed to resist the hegemony of the target language and focus attention on understanding the source culture in order to transfer its foreignness/difference to the audience of the target (dominating) culture. Venuti (1995, 1998) calls for a translator's role to be visible to retain the foreignness of the translated text and to challenge fluent translation, another term Venuti (1992) uses to describe the kind of translation favored by the market or the dominant norms of the target language. This radical role works by "disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language... in the interests of democratic geopolitical relations" (Venuti, 1995, p. 20).

Venuti (1995, 1998) goes so far as to claim that translating source texts occupying peripheral positions in their literary field is an ethical activity that helps the translator downplay the prevailing forms of the dominant language. According to Venuti (1998), the translator should select texts that are appropriate for his/her ethical goals and should make efforts to develop strategies that aim to "redress patterns of unequal cultural exchange and to restore foreign literatures excluded by the standard dialect, by literary canons, or by ethnic stereotypes in the United States (or in the other major English speaking country, the United Kingdom)" (pp. 10-11).

2.3.5.2 Ethics Oriented Towards the Target Text

As for the ethics directed towards the target language, Venuti (1998) as well suggests that the translator bears an ethical responsibility to the target reader and explains that if the translator has to domesticate the source text, he/she should make the reader aware of the act of domestication. Such domestication shouldn't be directed towards the dominant linguistic style or discourse in the target language; it should rather involve a release of its remainder, a concept that refers to the non-prevalent linguistic forms, which take a marginal position in the target language itself (Venuti, 1998).

Toury (1995) proposes a much less radical view of the translator's ethical responsibilities to the target reader, a view situated within the social norms of the target language. Toury (1995) implicitly links the translator's ethical choices to the social values prevailing in the receptor culture and points out that the acceptability of a translation is contingent on its adherence to the target social norms. Similarly, Nord (2001) argues that the translator's ethical behavior should respect the target social values and not surprise or shock the target readership. It is worth noting that this ethical stance contradicts the ethical stance advocated by Venuti (1995), in which the translator is encouraged to shock the target audience in order to make them aware of the dominating linguistic concepts in their own language and culture.

2.3.5.3. Ethics of Representation

Ethics of representation is also a key issue in translation studies, especially in a postcolonial context. This ethics focuses on how the foreign culture and its subjects are represented in the target culture (Spivak, 2005; Sturge, 2007). Spivak (2005), for instance, advocates a translator's ethical role that places a focus on the contextual meaning of the source

text and persuades the translator to pay attention to the historical, social, and cultural surroundings of the foreign text, especially in situations when translation is viewed as a site of conflict rather than reconciliation. Spivak (2005) insists that the translator's main concern should involve "thinking of trace rather than of achieved translation: a trace of the other, a trace of history, even cultural traces" (p. 105).

Likewise, Sturge (2007) implicitly refers to the ethical practices of a group of translators who were tasked with a mission, at the beginning of the twentieth century, to preserve the oral literature of Native American groups in the US. Before embarking on this task, they received proper training and were taught to direct their attention to recording the behavior and tradition of those groups by translating their oral literary productions. Such a tendency to represent the source culture as adequately as possible is in line with Bachmann-Medick's (2006) suggestion that translation practices should transcend the concept of dichotomy and move towards a commitment to the source culture. For Bachmann-Medick (2006), translators should make efforts to understand the source culture and be aware that translation has the potential to contribute to the establishment of new relations between cultures, as "cultures constitute themselves in translation and as translation" (p. 37).

2.3.5.4. Professional Ethics

Professional ethics takes a significant position in the area of translation as a profession and translators as practitioners. According to Chesterman's (2001) accountability principle, a translator's ethical task involves a commitment to such professional values as "clarity" and "truth," an understanding of the client's needs, an understanding of the source text, and an understanding of "what the readers can be expected to understand" (p. 152). Chesterman (2001) compares the translator's ethical responsibilities to those stated in the oaths taken by doctors and

engineers, indicating that translation codes of conduct, by which certified translators have to abide, imply “an explicit appeal to the virtue of striving for excellence” (p. 151).

Pym (1992), in turn, suggests that translators should adhere to a professional ethics that is loyal neither to the source text nor to the target text. For him, questions of ideology should lie outside the realm of such a professional ethics. To explain the ethical position of the translator, Pym (1992) claims that, translators as professionals should be, like lawyers, committed to a set of rules and procedures developed for their profession. Nevertheless, their translation activities based on ideological stances should be separated or detached from the ethics of their profession (Pym, 1992). Unlike lawyers whose decisions can be assessed by court officials or by their senior colleagues who share the same knowledge of professional rules, translators as mediators between at least two cultural groups seem to be the assessors of their own work (Pym, 1992), a fact that places more ethical responsibilities on translators.

Nord (1997) pays attention to the translator’s commitment to the communicative aspects of a translation and considers the translator a mediator who manages communication between social individuals, especially when there is a gap between the source and the target culture. As far as communicative interaction is concerned, Nord (1997) makes a distinction between two kinds of translation the translator is expected to produce: “instrumental translation” and “documentary translation.” While instrumental translation encourages the mediator to bridge a gap that might exist between two linguistic systems or cultures and produce a text that involves participants in an interaction similar to the one that takes place between the source text and its readers, the documentary translation explicitly shows participants communicating through a third party who mediates between the individuals involved in the communicative action (Nord, 1997, 2001). The ethical task of the translator here is to make efforts to ensure that the target reader, as

a participant in the communicative interaction, is prepared to “use the signals or clues present in the text and/or the situation in order to interpret the other interactants’ communicative intentions as correctly as possible” (Nord, 2001, pp. 187-188).

2.3.5.5. Ethics in Geopolitical Situations and Ethics of Activism

This type of ethics focuses on the role of translators as influential agents in political situations. Inghilleri (2008) examines the translator’s ethical role in war zones and draws on the relationship between Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus (i.e., the translator’s personal background and intentions) and field (i.e., the structure of circumstances in which the translator is situated). Although translators working in conflict zones are subject to external powers that control their activities, they might be able to perform ethical tasks that involve, for instance, a commitment to human rights jeopardized by military interests. Drawing on the context of Guantanamo and the American war on terrorism, Inghilleri (2008) points out that any ethics of translation should take into consideration the situation in which the translator is working. In exceptional situations of conflict, the translator might have to mediate between a soldier and a prisoner and might, as well, be required to pass on verbal insults and humiliating words (Inghilleri, 2008). In such a critical situation, the translator is faced with subjective ethics that may determine his/her translations and choice of words. Given the graveness of this task, Inghilleri (2008) points out that the translator’s ethical or ideal choices can’t be “calculated or predetermined, but can only ever be decided in the event itself” (p. 222).

Believing in translation potential to change and counter petrified images, readings, or misrepresentations of a culture, Tymoczko (2000) proposes a set of instructions for translators to shatter such images. Translation here is regarded as a means for political engagement that has “illocutionary and perlocutionary dimensions, that actually participates in social movements, that

is effective in the world at achieving demonstrable social and political change” (Tymoczko, 2000, p. 26). Tymoczko (2000) explains that political engagement has an activist dimension that encourages translators to select texts that serve their objectives by using either domesticating or foreignizing strategies in their translations. In such ethically motivated practices, “there must be a willingness to manipulate the texts in translation, so as to adapt and subordinate the texts to political aims and agendas” (Tymoczko, 2000, pp. 41-42). Tymoczko (2007) stipulates that a deeper understanding of the potential role of translation in situations of political struggle and unequal distribution of power will result in an expanded view of translation and translators’ empowerment. For Tymoczko (2007), “the radical manipulation of texts and the radical subordination of texts to ideology apparent in many activist translation movements are inimical to translators whose primary orientation is to the integrity of texts themselves” (p. 216).

Equally important arguments about the translator’s activist responsibilities are expressed by feminist translation scholars. Several feminist researchers in the field of translation studies have advocated ethical responsibilities toward gender and developed translation strategies to reveal social and cultural practices of bias in which women are subordinated to men (Flotow, 1991, 2011; Godard, 1990; Simon, 1996). Flotow (1991), for instance, lists some strategies employed by feminist translators to criticize the patriarchal language used in the source text, including supplementing, that is, the adaptation of the message of the source text to parody its sexist aspects, and prefacing and footnoting, two strategies that can be utilized by the translator to add feminist viewpoints or, as Godard points out, “to flaunt her signature ... deliberately womenhandling the text and actively participating in the creation of meaning” (as quoted in Flotow, 1991, p. 76). Hijacking is another strategy that describes the translator’s radical intervention in the source text and the process of feminizing the target text: an intervention that

goes “beyond the author’s original intention” (Flotow, 1991, p. 79).

In her account of the translator’s ethical responsibilities, Wolf (2011) remarks that translators’ practices are, to a large extent, controlled by the demands of the institutional agency or the existing social and political norms. She encourages the translator to abandon the traditional role of neutrality in order to take on ethical responsibilities for his/her translational activities. In this respect, Wolf (2011) calls for an ethical role in which the translator is required to take part in building a new world that has space for diverse cultures and philosophical views, a role that enables translation not only to reconcile cultures at the global level but also to reveal “translation’s potential to construct culture” (p. 23).

To sum up, research in the field of translation studies shows multifaceted, and sometimes, contradicting views about translators’ ethical responsibilities; more data and research studies are needed to shed more light into the ethical engagement of translation during war times and stressful situations. In my study, the ethical engagement of translation is concerned with translational practices that focus on the people’s struggle for civil rights, the repercussions of a conflict on ordinary people, and the suffering of vulnerable individuals.

Having defined the type of ethical engagement that concerns my study, there remains the question about the tools available for the translator to play such an ethical role during conflict situations. I propose that Syrian poetry of witness can be used as an effective medium of communication, which translators with ethical purposes may utilize in, for instance, giving voice to the victims of atrocities and in raising awareness about the suffering of humanity. I also suggest that there is a need to analyze (i) Syrian poetry of witness in translation because it constitutes a valuable source of information that is expected to help translators interpret the Syrian crisis for their intended audiences; (ii) the role of global spaces in disseminating

translations of Syrian poetry on the Internet and in enabling translators to transform voices from the Syrian crisis to audiences in other countries; and (iii) the translation agents involved in the process of dissemination, who, out of ethical motivations, may seek to select and convey the truth-values in the content of poems and transform them for certain ethical purposes to their intended audiences. These are the ultimate goals of this proposed research study.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

To help address the research questions listed in the introductory chapter, I have designed a theoretical framework that guides the analyses of the poetry translations selected for this study, the websites featuring these translations, the ways they move from one space to another, the agents involved in their production and dissemination. This framework combines theoretical concepts from sociology (e.g. Bourdieu's (1983) concepts of field and habitus and Habermas's (1981/1987) notion of communicative action) and theories of language (e.g. speech act theory) with theoretical views from translation studies. I will first provide an overview of translation sociology and then shed light on the theoretical concepts and views used in my research project. I will also explain how these views inform my analyses of the textual data.

3.1. Setting the Scene: Sociology of Translation

Over the last few decades, translation studies has witnessed a shift from text-focused perspectives to cultural considerations that go beyond comparisons of source and target texts, placing more emphasis on questions of a multidisciplinary nature that include, but are not limited to, translation as a site of tension, resistance, and reconciliation between a source and target culture (e.g. Bachmann-Medick, 2006; Sturge, 2007; Wolf, 2002). The interest in the contextual dimensions of translation has developed into what has been referred to as a sociological turn focusing on such issues as the role of translation agents involved in the process of translation (e.g. Chesterman, 2001; Wolf & Fukari, 2007), the dissemination of translation products across borders (Casanova, 1999/2004, 2009; Susam-Sarajeva, 2006), the social forces surrounding translation practices (Inghilleri, 2005), and the mechanisms of production (Buzelin, 2005).

Out of these new interests have emerged sociological approaches that look at translation as a social practice, providing methods of inquiry and theoretical frameworks that guide translation studies dealing with translation as a social phenomenon and translators as translation agents. Among the sociologists who have influenced methods of inquiry in translation studies are Luhmann, Latour, and Bourdieu, with Bourdieu playing an important role as his theoretical views have been out to wide use, particularly his concepts of field and habitus.

Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus have been applied to studies that attempt to address, for example, the role of translation agents in translation activities, the dissemination of translation products across borders, and imbalances in power relations between countries from/to which translations are moving, among other issues of sociological nature. Although some translation scholars suggest that Bourdieu's work serves to address issues pertinent to translation as a social practice (e.g. Buzelin, 2005; Gouanvic, 2005; Inghilleri, 2009), it often appears that the use of sociological methods of inquiry overlooks the textual properties of the product of translation.

For this reason and in light of the nature of the objectives and research questions guiding this study, I have developed a theoretical framework that combines sociological views and theories of language with translation theoretical perspectives. I will draw on Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus and Habermas's notion of communicative action, along with its connection to speech act theory, and link them to views proposed by some prominent figures in translation studies.

In what follows, I discuss the sociological concepts that guide the contextual and textual analyses performed in my study. In the process, I will also provide a rationale for the selection of each of these concepts and show how they are going to inform my examination of the

phenomenon in question: Syrian poetry of witness in online translations from Arabic into English.

3.2. Bourdieu's Sociology

Bourdieu's sociology views society as a social space that is comprised of relatively autonomous fields (e.g. cultural, economic, and political fields) and its members as social agents whose actions are oriented according to their social dispositions or what Bourdieu refers to as *habitus*. Both the concepts of field and *habitus* are related to a third one, capital, which calls attention to the economic and symbolic assets social agents strive to accumulate in their social world.

To begin with, the concept of field can be defined as a social space within which a social agent operates, a structure of multiple positions individuals seek to occupy, and a site of forces that shape the individual's decisions and strategies when performing a social action (Bourdieu, 1983). In other words, the field functions as a structuring element that determines the social trajectories of its agents and a structured element in that it is shaped by the actions of those agents (Bourdieu, 2000).

According to Bourdieu (1983), literary works are produced within a literary or artistic field that is also a field of positions or a space of forces in which agents are involved in a competition to improve their positions and, at the same time, build their commercial or symbolic capital. In other words, the literary field is a site for struggles that may take place “between the established figures and newcomers, i.e. between *artistic generations*, ... between the ‘young’ and the ‘old,’ the ‘neo’ and the ‘paleo’, the ‘new’ and the ‘outmoded’, etc.” (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 333). The competition between social agents (e.g. writers, translators, publishers) can be ascribed to economic gains or such symbolic aspects as prestige, consecration, celebrity, honor, or

recognition (Bourdieu, 1972/1977). An analysis of a literary work, thus, involves the examination of not only its artistic features and the circumstances of its creation but also the habitus of the agent or network of agents contributing to its production and dissemination (Bourdieu, 1983).

Bourdieu (1972/1977) defines his concept of habitus as a system of “durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures” that regulate and guide the individual’s unconscious and conscious actions in a given field (p. 72). The habitus is established in early childhood and continuous to develop throughout the individual’s lifetime (Bourdieu, 1972/1977). When an agent occupies a weak position in a certain field or when a gap exists between the agent’s experiences and expectations, he/she relies on his/her habitus to reevaluate his/her position, identify strategies for action, and either corrects his/her practices or adapts to the situation in his/her social world (Bourdieu, 2000). The habitus, thus, connects the individual’s personal experiences to his/her social world and regulates his/her interactions with and reactions to the established norms of a field.

Both field and habitus are linked to the notion of capital that can be economic or symbolic. Diverse and multiple forms of capital are likely to bring prestige to their owners, contribute to the ways they occupy positions in a certain field, and bestow legitimacy on their actions (Bourdieu, 2000). To explain the notion of capital, Bourdieu (2000) compares the concept of field to a market in which products, whether cultural, symbolic, or commercial, are produced and disseminated according to the value of the capital attached to them; like a game whose rules regulate the dispositions of its players (i.e., social agents), the field presents multiple forms of capital for which players compete to win or accumulate. Literary works acquire their commercial or symbolic value “only if they are known and recognized, i.e. socially instituted as

works of art and received by spectators capable of knowing and recognizing them as such” (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 318). It is worth noting that the value or meaning of a literary work “changes automatically with each change in the field within which it is situated...” (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 313).

As Bourdieu (1983) puts it, any attempts to understand a work of art should focus not only on the author producing it or the circumstances of its production but also on other networks of agents (e.g. critics, publishers, educators, gallery directors, etc.) who contribute to the process of building a literary value by shaping the consumer’s or reader’s perceptions of that work. An analysis of the producers of a literary work should also include other sets of institutional agents (e.g. museums, schools, universities, galleries) “whose combined efforts produce consumers capable of knowing and recognizing the work of art ... [and] help to define and produce the value of works of art” (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 319).

Bourdieu’s sociology has been used extensively in translation studies to address questions pertinent to the context of translation and the role of translation agents in producing and circulating translation products. The following section sheds light on a variety of translation theoretical views that are based on Bourdieu’s sociology.

3.3. Bourdieu’s Sociology in Translation Studies

Bourdieu’s concepts of field and habitus have been of special interest to translation researchers to address questions that go beyond the source and target texts and that present translation as a social practice and translators as mediating social agents (e.g. Casanova, 1999/2004, 2009; Gouanvic, 2005; Hanna, 2016; Heilbron & Sapiro, 2007; Inghilleri, 2005, 2009; Simeoni, 1998). As mentioned earlier, Bourdieu’s concepts of field and habitus are used in my study to address the questions pertinent to an analysis of how online translations of poetry of

witness circulate in global spaces and how translation agents' motivations underpin the production and circulation of this poetry. In what follows I explain how the concepts of field and habitus have been used in translation studies to account for the process of translation, the dissemination of translation products, and the role of translation agents in this process.

3.3.1. Field

Bourdieu's concept of field has been used extensively to describe the social conditions surrounding products of translations and the ways translations move from one geographical space to another. Casanova (1999/2004, 2009), for instance, talks about an international field of literature within which literary translations circulate from one national field into another.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, the international literary field can be described as "an entity formed of the entire group of national fields, which are ... situated differently (and hierarchically) in the world structure according to the relative weight which the international pole and the national (and nationalistic) pole hold in each field" (Casanova, 2009, p. 87). This field is characterized by imbalances of translations from international languages and underrepresentation of non-Western literary works, reflecting the domination of "commercial, governmental powers of contemporary (Western, globalizing) culture" (Tymoczko, 2005, p. 1086).

Given the hierarchical nature of the international field of literature, each language has a linguistic-literary capital that can be "measured, not only by the number of writers or readers of the language, but by the number of literary polyglots who use it, and by the number of literary translators who are instrumental in the circulation of texts from or towards the literary language" (Casanova, 2009, p. 88). While the center of the international field of literature is a space for the power of legitimate authorities functioning as "the guardians, guarantors, and creators of value,"

the peripheral spaces are typically occupied by translations from languages with fewer power relations (Casanova, 1999/2004, p. 127). As Casanova (2009) puts it, the inequality in language statuses in the international literary field implies that the weight of a literary text is highly contingent “on the language in which it is written” (p. 95).

It is worth noting that dominated languages are likely to import, through translation, literary assets from the center to enrich their literary capital, while dominating languages tend to bring in literary works from dominated languages to annex them to their large stocks of literature (Casanova, 1999/2004). For authors outside the center of the international literary field, translation is a form of recognition and a major tool of access that helps these writers pass from a state of “literary inexistence to existence, from invisibility to the condition of literature” (Casanova, 1999/2004, p. 127). Bourdieu’s sociology, thus, provides translation researchers with the conceptual tools to look at translations not only from a linguistic perspective but also from a social standpoint that highlights the possible impact of social surroundings or external forces on the creation and dissemination of translation products.

The movement of literary works from one national field to another is, therefore, subject to multiple determinants that include, but are not limited to, the status of the literary language from which a literary product is imported, the demands of the receptor field, the forces of other fields of power like economic and political fields, and the orientations of the translation agents involved in the process of production and dissemination (Brisset, 2010; Susam-Sarajeva, 2006, Wolf & Fukari, 2007). For example, Brisset (2010) explains that the majority of translated books in 2009 were translated from three languages (i.e., English, French and German) and that 50 percent of these books were “translated into only five languages (German, Spanish, French, English and Japanese)” (p. 74). This indicates that the majority of translations circulate from a

central to another central field or from a central field to a peripheral one, where the terms center and periphery refer to the position a language occupies in the international field of literature (Casanova, 2009; Susam-Sarajeva, 2006). For example, the Arabic language, despite its importance in terms of the number of its speakers and geography, is among the languages that “have a share of less than one percent of the international market, and thus might be considered as peripheral” (Heilbron & Sapiro, 2007, p. 96).

Nevertheless, underrepresented languages may capitalize on the power of English as a lingua franca or a means of communication to reach out to international audiences because English “is a key factor in making one’s voice heard” (Susam-Sarajeva, 2002, p. 194). Here, translators play a significant role in ‘consecrating’ authors and their literary works in the international field of literature (Casanova, 2009).

Translation fields are not static. They are dynamic and keep changing from one historical moment to another bringing changes to the orientations of translation agents (Hanna, 2016). This brings in Toury’s notion of translational norms which indicate that social conditions may complicate the task of the translator who may have to comply with “social pressures to constantly adjust ... [his/her] behavior to norms that keep changing” (Toury, 1995, p. 175). In a nutshell, the dynamics of the field or social space within which translation agents operate are likely to influence their selection of a work for translation and the ways the translation product circulates in its space of production.

Bourdieu’s sociological framework has informed several translation researchers who seek to elaborate on the practices of translation agents as well as their role in accepting or defying the social norms regulating their translation behaviors; building on Bourdieu’s notion of habitus, these researchers have explored the interaction between translation agents and translation

contexts within which they operate (e.g. Buzelin, 2005; Gouanvic, 2005; Simeoni, 1998). In the following section, I reflect on the notion of habitus and its use in examining practices of translation agents.

3.3.2. Habitus

In addition to the concept of field that can be used to inform analyses directed to the social conditions surrounding translation practice, the notion of habitus is also utilized to guide analyses focusing on “the agents – individuals and institutions – that participate in this practice” (Heilbron & Sapiro, 2007, p. 104). Translation as a social practice, thus, brings to the fore the translation agent’s role in the production and circulation of translation products.

A simple sociological analysis of the process of translation can reveal that this process involves the participation of a network of agents, including translation commissioners, publishers, critics, business individuals or even an institution “that starts off the translation process and determines its course by defining the purpose for which the target text is needed” (Nord, 1997, p. 20). With this in mind, it can be said that Bourdieu’s concept of habitus constitutes an ideal theoretical tool that can be applied to research studies examining the practices of translation agents, their ideological orientations, and the strategies they may use in selecting a source text and rendering it in the target language. In what follows, I draw on some translation views concerned with social factors shaping the practices of translation agents.

As explained earlier, the influence of the dynamics of a translation field on translation agents can be referred to as an external dimension of power, which regulates translation activities within that field. As such, the actions of translation agents can be circumscribed by the political and economic constraints prevailing in their field/society. As long as the field “contributes to

structuring ... the [individual's] habitus" (Gouanvic, 2005, p. 148), it can indirectly influence the agent's own strategies and decisions when approaching a translation task.

Personal interests, educational backgrounds, and social environment, are among the factors that determine not only the selection of a literary work for translation but also the random choices translation agents make while performing a translation activity, the decision to take on a translation task or not, or to adhere to the particulars of the source text or the norms of the receiving end (Gouanvic, 2005; Hanna, 2016; Simeoni, 1998).

A translator might be driven by personal interests when selecting a source text in that the selection of a text for translation might be subject to the diverse forms of the habitus of translators who may have "very different social trajectories that determined their literary tastes when they began to translate" (Gouanvic, 2005, p. 159). For instance, the type of literature a translator favors can be a decisive factor in the translator's dedication to a specific literary genre and in consecrating one specific author rather than another (Casanova, 1999/2004; Hanna, 2016). Personal preferences may also dictate the stylistics of the final product in that the translator's decision to add lexical or syntactic elements to a translation "is essentially not a conscious strategic choice but an effect of his or her specific habitus" (Gouanvic, 2005, p. 158).

Not only does a translator select a source author because he/she favors his/her works; the selection might be ascribed to other reasons, including the translator's educational background that may guide his/her choices of source texts. For example, Susam-Sarajeva (2006) explains that the selection of the French author Barthes and the tendency to translate his works into Turkish language, at a certain point in the Turkish history of literature, were based on the educational interests of translation agents who wanted to bring more support to their literary critical beliefs by importing an author whose views are in line with their literary knowledge.

In addition to educational backgrounds and personal preferences, the translator's selections are also influenced by the conditions prevalent in their social environment at a given historical moment. The choice of a specific author from a source language can be seen as a response to the demands of the translator's social environment or as a result of a tendency to abide by the social norms of the translation context. For example, Simeoni (1998) builds on Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* to re-examine Toury's notion of translation norms, drawing attention to the translator's developed tendency of subservience and compliance with already existing norms.

Abiding by the existing norms of a translation context is not the only criterion defining the translation agent's practices. Individual agents, in some cases, may set out to resist and reject the conventions prevalent in the context of translation. Female translators, who are motivated by civil rights movements, are good examples of the active involvement in translation practices in that they get engaged in actions to "subvert certain aspects of texts they found unpleasant, or belittling, or simply silly in the face of newly-won feminist confidence" (Flotow, 2011, p. 1). Through translation, women are able to reject their constructed inferiority to men; they can use translation to call attention to the underrepresentation of women in society and resist the silencing of women's contributions "to society as translators and writers and, more generally, the non-recognition of women as influential actors in culture and writing" (Flotow, 2011, p. 2).

Despite the external forces that might undermine their activities, translators still have the potential to exercise their agency when rendering the voice of human subjects whose rights are likely to be violated by military or political powers; even if translators are required to render a text marked with ideological opinions, they still have the choice "to reproduce existing ideologies as encoded in the narratives elaborated in the text or utterance, or to dissociate

themselves from those ideologies” (Baker, 2006, p. 105). They also have the potential to develop their own strategies “to strengthen or undermine particular aspects of the narratives they mediate, explicitly or implicitly” (Baker, 2006, p. 105).

When situated in a position or operating in a context that is controlled by forces of other fields (e.g. judicial and political fields), a translator, depending on his/her habitus, may show efficacy in redefining his/her position in the translation context and in developing strategies to resist the possible external forces imposed on them (Inghilleri, 2005). As Inghilleri (2005) points out, the translation agent situated in a weak position beyond his/her control is driven by his/her habitus or feel of the game to either maintain that position or thrive to “occupy an equal or greater status within the social/interactional space” in which she/he operates (p. 76). In either case, “it is always the habitus of a translator that influences the way translation is practiced (Gouanvic, 2005, p. 164). To help them recognize the potential of their habitus, training is needed in order to improve translators’ positions in a translation context and develop strategies to resist or adapt to the forces of other fields (Inghilleri, 2005; Wolf, 2011).

The production of a literary translation is not always a competitive process. Rather, it may involve the collective participation of multiple agents or mediators who act collaboratively to produce a translation project. In this case, Bourdieu’s sociology can be used to inform the analyses of translation networks as well as their interaction with their working environment and other social agents (e.g. Buzelin, 2005). The act of producing a translation, as Buzelin (2005) explicates, may involve the participation of “a multiplicity of mediators, some of which are technological, and [the recognition] that the latter are not simple tools but ‘black boxes’ enclosing stable forms of knowledge, consensus and presuppositions over what constitutes (good) translation” (p. 212).

Networks of translation agents who share the same interests or similar habitus may also gather around a translation task or product with a capital that resonates with their shared goals or objectives (e.g. Baker, 2016). For these agents, the translation object offers a value that serves their interests or contributes to the accumulation of their symbolic capital, as it can be understood as a “unique source of literary legitimacy” (Casanova, 1999/2004, p. 145). The translator not only benefits from the value they find in a source literary text but also “confers on the author and on the work a quantity of capital by submitting it to the logic of a target literary field, and its mechanisms of recognition” (Gouanvic, 2005, p. 162).

In a nutshell, exploring a translation agent’s habitus entails an examination of such elements as social backgrounds, educational orientations, political affiliations, ideological motivations and even personal interests, in addition to the translation context (field) and the value (capital) associated with the translated work. With this in mind, I use Bourdieu’s notion of field in my analysis of the dynamics of the field of global spaces (i.e., cyberspace websites) through which online translations of Syrian poetry of witness circulate on the Internet and the ways poetry of witness travels from local to global spaces. In so doing, I situate the selected textual data in a field of global spaces that displays diverse patterns of dissemination. I also use the notion of habitus to inform my analyses of the networks of translation agents involved in the production and dissemination of poetry of witness and explore the ideological orientations and motivations that drive these translation agents to promote translations with multiple themes of Syrian poetry of witness.

Translators’ orientations can be traced in the textual content of their final product, an element that calls for an analysis of the textual properties presented in a translation and the communicative effect they may have on the intended readership. For this purpose, I have

incorporated Habermas's notion of communicative action in order to guide my analysis of the recurrent themes featured in online translations of poetry of witness. The following section provides a summary of the notion of communicative action used to inform the textual analyses conducted in this study.

3.4. Habermas's Notion of Communicative Action

In addition to Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus, I also draw on Habermas's notion of communicative action in my take on some of the communicative aspects of Syrian poetry of witness as a translation product. Habermas's notion of communicative action is a basic tenet of his theory of communicative action. While Bourdieu's sociology divides the social world into a structure of interrelated fields, Habermas theory of communicative action classifies the modern society into two major components: system and lifeworld.

The system refers to the power of the state's administrative institutions, while the concept of lifeworld represents the social domains of general populations. To establish a background against which the notion of communicative action can be described, I will briefly draw on the theory of communicative action as seen by Habermas and its proponents (e.g. Edgar, 2006; Fultner, 2011). I will link this theory's communicative aspects to the potential function of translation as a means of intercultural communication, describe its strong connection with speech act theory, and finally show how it informs my research study.

3.4.1. Overview of Habermas's Theory of Communicative Action

Habermas (1981/1987) developed a theory that accounts for the use of language in social contexts and named it the theory of communicative action. According to this theory, human beings are by nature oriented to communicate with each other and their communication is

embedded in their produced and received utterances (Baxter, 1987; Edgar, 2006; Fultner, 2011; Habermas, 1981/1987; Heath, 2011). Habermas (1981/1987) distinguishes between two types of linguistic communication: communicative action and strategic or instrumental action. A social action is viewed as communicative when the interaction between language users is intended to achieve mutual understanding; it is, however, considered strategic or instrumental when driven by a goal or intended to achieve success (Fultner, 2011; Habermas, 1981/1987). Attempts made to distinguish between communicative actions and strategic ones require a comprehension of the social context within which linguistic communication occurs (Edgar, 2006; Fultner, 2011).

Habermas (1981/1987) states that a modern society can be classified into two main domains: the system, where the state and economy form two subsystems, and the lifeworld, which is comprised of culture, society and personality (Fultner, 2011; Habermas, 1981/1987). Each of these two domains has its own medium of communication. The system, on the one hand, works by functional logic and uses steering media like money and power to achieve integration between the state and the economy; on the other hand, lifeworld uses “natural language” as its medium of communication and is resistant to the more functional modes of communication (Habermas, 1981/1987; Heath, 2011). As such, the system is a site for instrumental action, while lifeworld is a space for communicative action (Fultner, 2011; Habermas, 1981/1987; Pensky, 2011).

Habermas (1981/1987) criticizes the structure of modern society because it works in favor of the system’s modes of communication. According to the theory of communicative action, the state itself is an administrative system that “is at odds with lifeworld through which ordinary people give meaning to their world and formulate their opinions and values” (Edgar, 2006, p. 4). While linguistic communication at the lifeworld level organizes social interaction

between individuals in the same society, shapes their knowledge of the world surrounding them, and enables them to reproduce their social shared values, communication at the system level reflects the influence of the administrative power of the state (Habermas, 1981/1987; Heath, 2011; McCarthy, 1981). This power is likely to be imposed on society members turning them into passive recipients who gradually become unaware of the forces that manipulate their actions (Edgar, 2006; McCarthy, 1981). The state's mode of communication might also be used to control and, under certain circumstances, colonize the minds of people from the lifeworld domains (Edgar, 2006). Such colonization happens when, for instance, the economic system in a society places pressures on the state that, in turn, transfers them onto the lifeworld in order to solve the problems facing the economy, but, in the long run, such pressures might lead to a crisis in the society (Fultner, 2011; Habermas, 1981/1987). Habermas's theory of communicative action, thus, shows the importance of the communicative force of the utterance, whether used instrumentally by the administrative power of the state or naturally by members of the lifeworld.

Nevertheless, Habermas (1981/1987) stipulates that social institutions can be reformed through constant negotiation between the lifeworld and the system (Edgar, 2006; McCarthy, 1981). The use of appropriate utterances that maintain discussions between these two domains of communication demands that our ability to express intentions exceeds the mere production of strings of words and manifests a capacity to make, revise, defend or refute claims about "the rightness, appropriateness, or legitimacy of our speech acts in relation to the shared values and norms of our lifeworld" (McCarthy, 1981, p. x). By contesting existing claims, utterances used in social interaction have the potential to emancipate the lifeworld from unnecessary oppressive opinions caused by unidirectional forms of communication coming from the system and its institutions (e.g. mainstream news media) (Edgar, 2006; Fultner, 2011; McCarthy, 1981).

Through communicative action, individuals from the lifeworld can communicate the suffering of victimized agents that may be classified as unworthy or neglected victims in governments' political agendas and modes of communication.

Given Habermas's notion of communicative action, my take on translations of Syrian poetry of witness highlights the importance of transferring poetry of witness into global spaces and its potential as a reliable source of information that is free, to a large extent, from the influences of administrative power. Translation makes this important source of information available for communities that gather around poetry translations.

3.4.2. Communicative Action and Speech Act Theory

Habermas's notion of communicative action is based on the ways people use language to perform certain actions that can be explained through Austin's (1962) speech act theory. For Austin (1962), language has a communicative force or effect on speech recipients when it is used not only as a vehicle to convey the interlocutor's ideas but also as a platform to perform an action intended to have a certain influence on the world around its users. According to speech act theory, utterances or words are capable of expressing three types of meaning: (i) a locutionary meaning, the literal meaning of the words used in an utterance, (ii) an illocutionary meaning, the impact an utterance is intended to have on the listener, and (iii) a perlocutionary meaning, the resulted effect of the produced utterance on the listener or reader and the elicited reaction to the utterance (Austin, 1962; Myers, 2005; Searle, 1969). Building on the tropes of speech act theory, Habermas's notion of communicative action is, thus, realized in a purposive use of language with the aim of conveying messages that attempt to clarify a situation or achieve understanding of an issue under discussion.

Speech act theory can also be applied to poetic discourse to analyze the text producer's

intentions, communicative messages, and the recipient's expectations (Al-Mallah, 2012; Pratt, 1977; Stetkevych, 1996). In this respect, it provides a means for analyzing utterances "not only in terms of their surface grammatical properties but also in terms of the context in which they are made, the intentions, attitudes... and conventions that are understood to be in play when an utterance is made and received" (Al-Mallah, 2012, p. 86). Accordingly, poetic language constitutes the creative use of language to perform a communicative action in Habermas's terms.

The illocutionary properties of words have also been examined in translation studies (e.g. Hatim & Mason, 1990; Morini, 2013; Nord, 1988/2005). While Hatim and Mason (1990) describe a text act as "the predominant illocutionary force of a series of speech acts" (p. 78), Morini (2013) views this act as encompassing all intentional or unintentional "performative forces displayed by a text" (p. 34). Speech act theory also informs Nord's (1988/2005) translation-oriented model of analysis that can be used to analyze both textual and contextual meanings of a translation product in order to assess its communicative effect. Nord's (1988/2005) model of textual analysis resonates with the theory of communicative action as it helps a translation researcher explore possible representations of a source text or community, communicative messages intended by a text producer, and the strategies of communicative action that might be employed to communicate, for instance, the suffering of the victims of the Syrian crisis.

The notion of communicative action also resonates with a myriad of translation theoretical views that underscore the communicative potential of translation in, for instance, advocating for underrepresented groups of people and translation's potential as a site of interaction for different cultures.

3.4.3. Communicative Action in Light of Translation Studies

Despite the dearth of research in translation studies that explicitly utilizes Habermas's notion of communicative action, this notion is in tune with studies that focus on translation as an intercultural tool that aim to promote understanding between different cultures or societies with asymmetrical power relations. Aspects of Habermas's notion of communicative action can be traced in translation studies that explore translation as a means of intercultural communication and a form of voicing the concerns of underrepresented social groups in the final product of translation (e.g. Bachmann-Medick, 2006; Flotow, 2011; Sturge, 2007). Communicative action is pertinent, in part, to translation practices bearing a commitment "to cultural negotiation or cultural transformation" (Bachmann-Medick, 2006, p. 39). A translation communicative action here aims at replacing the dichotomy of two opposing extremes with an endeavor to understand a foreign culture or, as Bachmann-Medick (2006) puts it, "a break with the principle of dichotomy in perception of the other, the dichotomy of us and enemy" (p. 39).

In other words, communicative action lies in the process of negotiation that translation agents may seek to highlight in carrying over a text from a source culture to a new culture, as "cultures constitute themselves in translation and as translation" (Bachmann-Medick, 2006, p. 37). For instance, Sturge (2007), in her study of some instances of ethnographic translations of Native American oral art into English, suggests that an adequate translation should be oriented towards an understanding of the traditions of the source culture. Achieving understanding of the source culture here is driven by a motivation to preserve the oral art of Native Americans through translation that views "language as the prime source of anthropological data and linguistic records as the anthropologist's main tool" (Sturge, 2007, p. 103).

Like an anthropologist, the translator, as Sturge (2007) points out, embarks on the

translation task with an ethnographic intent or a keen interest in the content of the work and in what it can tell readers about people and their behaviors. To encourage the reader to enter the world of the source text, translators may follow translation strategies that range from accountability for the source culture to strategies of appropriation to the target culture that may include, but are not limited to, transcriptions, commentaries, end notes, annotations, and plain vocabulary, which in turn are employed as aids to interpret the source language and attempts to reproduce the ‘original’ weight of the source text (Sturge, 2007; Tymozcko, 2000). A justification for appropriation or manipulation strategies is based on the translator’s commitment to a noble cause that involves for instance, shattering images of hegemony or advocating for underrepresented groups in a society (Flotow, 2011; Wolf, 2017).

Translation potential as a means of intercultural communication makes it a fertile space for communicative action that goes beyond the simple task of transferring meaning or information from one language into another, a “place where cultures merge and create new spaces” (Wolf, 2002, p. 186). Such spaces open up “when something is translated into something else” (Iser, 1995, p. 35), creating opportunities for communicative interaction or what Iser (1995) refers to as dynamic recursion that happens in loops of communication. This dynamic recursion in turn creates a circle that organizes the process of negotiation “in order to achieve understanding or the application of what has been understood” (Iser, 1995, p. 37). These new spaces can also be described as translational contact zones “where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other” (Pratt, 1992, p.4); a contact zone “is neither the property of a single nation, nor an amorphous condition associated with postnationalism, but rather a zone of critical engagement that connects the ‘l’ and ‘n’ of transLation and transNation” (Apter, 2006, p. 5). Translation thus can function as a site for generating new relations, negotiating and reconciling

differences, and achieving understanding between different cultures (Bachmann-Medick, 2006; Iser, 1995; Wolf, 2002).

Drawing on Habermas's notion of communicative action, I argue that one way to achieve a translation that produces desirable communicative action lies in the selection of a source text with a content and themes that resonate with the objectives and messages a translator wants to convey to his/her intended target readership. And so, I present a number of strategies provided by translations of poetry of witness and list examples of these communicative strategies that are arguably employed to achieve understanding of the forms of suffering caused by the Syrian crisis. I discuss how these strategies reflect a translation commitment to the future of humankind in that they advocate for the victims of violent power struggles.

My analysis of these strategies reveals how they are employed in both the source and target texts to create communicative action committed to achieving an understanding of the suffering of humans in times of uncertainty and violence. Since the theory of communicative action is deeply rooted in Austin's (1962) speech act theory, my textual analyses are meant to show that translation agents do things through poetry translation, that the action of translation is an act of witness through which text producers use translations of creative work to bear witness to the Syrian crisis events described in this study. In so doing, I address the last question of this study, that is, the question relating to the communicative strategies employed by agents of witness in order to draw attention to the suffering of the victims of the Syrian crisis.

In addition to the communicative strategies that will be examined in this study, I also rely on speech act theory in order to demonstrate how source poets use poetry to bear witness to the suffering of humans and how translators repeat that task by translating this type of poetry into English making it available to more audiences.

Chapter Four: Methods

The fourth chapter is comprised of three major sections, each of which addresses a single aspect of the methods used in this qualitative research study. The first two sections are devoted to discussing the research-informed methods used in this study in order to collect and analyze data. The third section, in turn, describes the procedure followed to increase the reliability of the study results.

4.1. Data Collection

Since this qualitative research study explores the way in which online translations of Syrian poetry of witness communicate the suffering of Syrian victims, research-informed methods of data collection were used in order to compile data from online sources, classify and sample the compiled data, and select a unit of analysis.

4.1.1. Compiling Data

The data were collected from the Internet by using a keyword-based search technique (e.g. Jones, 2010). In this technique, a word or unit of words is used to search for data relevant to a target phenomenon under investigation (Jones, 2010). Following the keyword search technique, the term “poetry Syria” was used to trawl the world-wide web for translation projects of Syrian poetry from Arabic into English over a period of five years, between March 15, 2011 and March 14, 2016. It is worth noting here that the start date for this research study (i.e., mid-March 2011) marks the beginning of the Syrian crisis events (Howard & Hussain, 2011; Pantti, 2013). Using Safari browser, the projects were collected via Google search on a MacBook Pro laptop; a project here is a search result that displays in its title the word “Syria” and/or “poetry,” a link to

the website publishing the project, a short paragraph describing the project, and a date of publication.

The search parameters included the start date and the end date for each year—search was conducted by relevance (Appendix A presents screenshots that demonstrate the way in which the search was conducted). For example, the first year exhibited projects from March 15, 2011 to March 14, 2012. The search process was abandoned when the Safari browser displayed a message stating that “in order to show you the most relevant results, we have omitted some entries very similar to the ... already displayed. If you like, you can repeat the search with omitted results included” (see Appendix A). A total of 1235 projects resulted from the search process. These projects included articles about Syria or poetry in general, YouTube clips, post cards, announcements about various events, interviews with Syrian poets, poems posted to websites, and some other irrelevant materials that contained either the word “Syria” or “poetry” in the search results.

4.1.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Due to the large size of the collected data and irrelevant projects resulting from the search process, certain criteria were used for data screening and selection. The first criterion was used in order to select projects that directly relate to the study objectives (i.e., an exploration of the way in which online translations of Syrian poetry of witness are used to reflect the suffering of Syrian people). In other words, only projects that featured poetic texts about Syria or by Syrian authors were included, and all other projects that were irrelevant to the research objectives or only displayed poem titles were excluded.

Based on the above-mentioned criteria, external links were excluded with the exception of hyperlinked poems that appeared in the body of a text from a project found through the search

process. Articles dealing with irrelevant topics (i.e., news stories and poetry composed by non-Syrian authors), scholarly articles, announcements about literary events, book releases, images, biographical statements, and postcards were also omitted. This initial exclusion stage reduced the 1235 collected projects to 271 projects that contained poetry portrayals composed by authors who were described as Syrians (see Table 1 below). Each of these projects includes at least one English poetic text which is composed of a minimum of two lines of poetry.

Table 1			
<i>The Number of Poetry Projects which Resulted from the Search Process</i>			
Year	Projects resulting from the search process	Projects showing poetry which appeared in English	The collected translation projects
2011-2012	209	28	22
2012-2013	242	51	26
2013-2014	230	58	32
2014-2015	241	66	32
2015-2016	313	68	21
Total	1235	271	133

Since some of the 271 projects contained texts that were composed in English (i.e., texts that are not translations from another language), a second selection criterion was used to exclude other irrelevant projects, that is, projects that did not include translations from Arabic into English. As such, the 271 selected projects were further reduced to 133 projects that were considered relevant to the objectives of this research study. In other words, each of the 133 projects had a clear reference to the fact that the featured poetry was translated from Arabic into English, included the source and target texts, or appeared partially in other projects that presented it as a translation. The selected 133 projects were deemed translation projects of Syrian poetry and, thus, constituted the data for this qualitative research study. These projects were collected from 114 websites (Appendix B shows the list of websites, their locations, and the number of projects collected from each).

It is worth noting here that the projects which featured interviews with Syrian writers but had no poems in them were added to a separate collection and used for additional or supplementary information in the analyses conducted in this study (e.g. the question dealing with the motivations driving translation agents' responses to the poetry emerging from the Syrian crisis). Audio recordings were transcribed into textual data.

4.1.3. Unit of Analysis

A unit of analysis, which can be a word, a phrase, a sentence, a line, a paragraph, or a chapter in qualitative methods of inquiry (Berg, 1989), was determined prior to the data analysis stage. The nature of the research questions together with the objectives of this research study dictated that “meaningful utterances” which, according to Bakhtin (1979/1986), can be a word, a phrase, a sentence, or a cluster of sentences be the unit of analysis for both poetry translations and the texts surrounding them.

For the texts surrounding the poetry translations, paragraphs or meaningful chunks of words were considered the clusters of meaningful utterances constituting the unit of analysis. For poetry translations themselves, the collected poetic texts were divided into clustered lines of poetry or verses that were used as units of analysis. A cluster of verses had to include at least two lines of poetry and could be extended to a whole poem. If a poem contained sections separated by asterisks, dots, spaces, or headings, each section was treated as a separate unit of analysis. If a poem was not divided into sections, the whole poem was considered one unit of analysis. Accordingly, the collected translations were divided into a total of 551 units of analysis. Each cluster of verses was assigned a code that described its content, as explained in the data analysis section below.

4.2. Data Analysis

Exploring how a translation is produced and used for a certain purpose requires an examination of the translation as a product, the work settings surrounding it, the mechanism of its production or dissemination, and the agents involved in the production process (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014; Schäffner et al., 2014). Since the objectives of my research study focused on the use and dissemination of translation products, it needed to examine the collected translations at both textual and contextual levels (e.g. Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014; Schäffner, et al., 2014). At the textual level, a qualitative content analysis (McDonough Dolmaya, 2011) and Nord's (1988/2005) model of analysis were used to answer the first research question which focuses on what the collected translations communicate about the Syrian crisis. As a translation product, the poetic text was used as a starting point.

At the contextual level, placing a translation phenomenon in context requires establishing "links between different factors influencing that phenomenon and ... creat[ing] a descriptive model that prioritizes certain explanations over others" (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014, p. 205). It also requires the observation of procedures in a work setting and practices of networks of translation agents (Koskinen, 2008; Schäffner et al., 2014). Based on these suggestions, a descriptive approach was used to answer the second and third questions. While the second question is concerned with the websites featuring translations of poetry of witness, the mechanism of dissemination, and the agents involved in the process of dissemination, the third question addresses the ethical impulses underpinning the translation agents' responses to the Syrian crisis events.

The data analyses were, thus, conducted in two phases: the first phase presented a text-oriented analysis that focused on the translated text as a product in order to address the first

question of this research study. The second phase centered around context-oriented analyses that are dedicated to answering the second and third research questions. Both the content analysis (McDonough Dolmaya, 2011) and Nord's (1988/2005) model of analysis were used, alongside the theoretical framework that was developed to guide the analyses conducted in this research study (see Chapter 3), in order to enhance the objectivity of the textual analysis and ensure the reliability of the results, especially in the first phase that focuses on the translated text as a point of departure.

4.2.1. Content Analysis

Content analysis is an analytical tool used in qualitative and/or quantitative methods of research and can be defined as “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (Holsti, 1969, p. 14). This analytical technique is used as a method to examine poems and any form of written textual data in order to make “valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 18). A qualitative content analysis typically involves text coding to inductively generate tentative codes that can be organized into a system of categories and/or unifying themes (Krippendorff, 1980; McDonough Dolmaya, 2011). Tentative codes can be defined as “tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). Such codes are created to describe “chunks of varying size –words, phrases, sentences or whole paragraphs, connected or unconnected to a specific setting” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). These codes can be counted “to determine which concepts are most cited throughout the data” (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008, p. 596).

The content analysis was applied to the textual data in order to identify the recurrent

themes featured in the online translations of Syrian poetry. These themes were investigated in order to help explain the communicative actions associated with the poetic depictions of the Syrian crisis, to describe the type of poetry that got translated in the collected projects, and to highlight the most common themes translation agents selected in their accounts of the Syrian crisis events.

4.2.2. Nord's Model (1988/2005) of Analysis

In addition to the qualitative content analysis, Nord's (1988/2005) model of analysis was used to look at the possible communicative effects inscribed in the selected examples of poetry of witness. A text's communicative effect can be defined as the impact that "works on the recipient" of the translated text (Nord, 1988/2005, p. 131). With such an effect in mind, Nord (1988/2005) argues that the text producer may have an influence on the reader's "level of knowledge or his[her] emotional state," and the reader's "future actions may be influenced by his[her] reception of the text" (p. 131). According to Nord (1988/2005), a communicative effect can be measured by looking at the text's internal and external aspects. While the external aspects of a text deal with such elements as the intended message of the text producer (a person or an institution), the medium of communication (e.g. a poem or news article), and the recipient's expectations in the source text situation or the target text situation, the internal factors focus on the analysis of such elements as, subject matter, content, presuppositions, composition, lexical choices, and sentence structure (Nord, 1988/2005). Nord's (1988/2005) model of analysis was used to guide the textual analyses at both the macro level (i.e., external textual aspects) and the micro level (i.e., internal textual aspects).

The analysis stage also focused on context-related elements. As Koskinen (2008) explains, "translations do not take place in a vacuum ... [and] need to be interpreted and

evaluated in their relevant context” (p. 72). A context-based analysis, thus, focuses on the settings or the elements that affect both translated texts and translation agents (Saldanha & O’Brien, 2014). In other words, examining the context of a translation requires an analysis of the places from which translations are launched, the social conditions surrounding the translated text, the types of networks of translation agents involved in the process of dissemination, and the motivations underpinning the work of a translation agent (Koskinen, 2008; Saldanha & O’Brien, 2014). Using a descriptive analysis approach informed by sociological theoretical views, the settings surrounding the collected translations were investigated in order to explore the ways the online translations of Syrian poetry of witness circulate in global spaces, the types of networks involved in the dissemination of these translations, and the motivations underpinning translation agents’ responses to the Syrian crisis events. In so doing, I addressed the second and third questions of this research study.

4.2.3. The Process of Analysis

As explained above, the process of analysis was carried out in two phases. The first phase focused on the textual properties of the selected translations, and the second phase was more oriented towards the settings surrounding the collected translation products and the networks involved in the dissemination of online translations of Syrian poetry of witness.

4.2.3.1. Phase One

This phase is concerned with answering the first research question which addresses poetic depictions that highlight the suffering of the victims of the Syrian crisis. With this aim as a guide, the textual data were examined following qualitative content analysis as well as Habermas’s (1981/1987) and Nord’s (1988/2005) notions.

The textual data were first divided into 551 units of analysis in order to inductively develop codes at two levels. To this end, I used worksheets to facilitate the process of analysis (see Appendix C). Each worksheet consisted of three columns. In the first column, I placed poems or poetry segments constituting units of analysis. If the poem/poetry segment appeared in an article, I also included the title and a brief summary of the article surrounding the analyzed poetry translation(s). The second column was designated for the first-level codes that described the content of the units of analysis. In the third column, I converted each first-level code into a second-level code or a category/sub-theme reflecting my interpretation of the unit of analysis. Each subtheme/category was described, and textual examples were provided based on frequency (i.e., the number of times the poet/poetic text appeared in the collected projects), variation (i.e., productions of diverse categories of poets like women, children, youth, etc.) and relevance (texts relevant to the theme under investigation). These examples exhibited multiple forms of repercussions for the victims of the Syrian crisis. The communicative effect associated with each example was also highlighted. The process of coding resulted in developing ten categories/sub-themes that were grouped under four unifying themes which constituted what is referred to in this study as the Syrian poetry of witness.

After developing the four unifying themes based on qualitative content analysis, Habermas's (1981/1987) concept of communicative action and Nord's (1988/2005) model of analysis were used to inform the interpretation of each of the four unifying themes and, subsequently, identify the communicative strategies used in the examined data to draw attention to the suffering of the victims as presented in a poetic text. These strategies were examined at both the macro and the micro level.

4.2.3.2. Phase Two

The second phase of analysis was devoted to answering the second and third research questions, which deal with the settings within which the translations of Syrian poetry of witness disseminate on the Internet and the agents involved in the process of dissemination. This analytical phase was based on Saldanha and O'Brien's (2014) descriptive approach as well as Bourdieu's (1983) concepts of field and habitus. These theoretical views were respectively used at this phase of analysis in order to link the results of the textual analyses to their settings and to situate the settings within an overarching field.

Following Saldanha and O'Brien's (2014) suggestion that analyzing a translated text entails analyzing the agent(s) involved in its production and the environment within which it is produced using a descriptive model, the websites from which the 133 projects were collected were analyzed for their translation practices, networks of agents, and materials that are of interest to them by looking at the "about" sections or their interfaces (e.g. Baker, 2013). After examining the content of the sections describing the websites' interests and scope of work (e.g. "about" and "mission statement" sections), I categorized these websites into three main types: Literature-oriented websites, news-oriented websites, and personal websites. The three main types were further classified into sub-categories in order to facilitate the description of the spaces that publish poetry translations, the ways in which poetry translations disseminate in each type of website, and the networks of translation agents involved in the dissemination process. The location of each website was also identified using its contact information in order to explore the regions from which the websites are launched. The three-column worksheets included the name of each website, its location, and its type (see Appendix C). To explore the dynamics of the dissemination of the collected translations on these websites, two main modes of dissemination

were also identified: mediated translations and unmediated translations.

Saldanha and O'Brien's (2014) descriptive approach was also used to answer the third research question. Addressing this question involved an investigation of the motivations associated with the translation agents involved in the production and dissemination of translations of Syrian poetry of witness. For this purpose, the work orientations and ideological leanings of the examined websites, the source poets, and the translators were examined. Again, I used worksheets to group these orientations into two main categories: Institutional motivations and personal motivations. Bourdieu's (1983) concepts of field and habitus were, in turn, used in order to situate online translations of Syrian poetry of witness in a cyberspace field composed of websites with different characteristics and forces that were likely to affect the activities carried out by translation agents and the mechanism of dissemination for translation products. These theoretical concepts guided the analyses of the types of the websites featuring translations of Syrian poetry of witness, the collected translations circulating on the Internet, the types of networks involved in the dissemination of these translations, and the motivations underpinning translation agents' responses to the Syrian crisis events.

4.3. Reliability

To ensure the reliability of a coding process, a second coder may code a selected portion of the textual data and then an inter-rater reliability test is computed (Dörnyei, 2007; McDonough Dolmaya, 2011). In my research study, a second coder with a PhD in Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies coded randomly selected samples of the textual data and an inter-rater reliability test was computed to ensure the reliability of the coding process. For this purpose, I selected the first half of the translation projects of the first year and the last half of the fifth-year projects and provided the co-coder with the derived list of categories/sub-themes. After the co-

coder assigned the categories to the selected data, Cronbach's alpha inter-rater reliability test was computed to compare my coding to the coding made by the second coder. According to Dörnyei (2007), the coding process is valid if the result of this test is equal to or greater than .70. The results of the inter-rater reliability test were greater than .70 at all the stages of the content analysis (see Appendix D).

Chapter Five: Results

This chapter presents the answers to the three questions guiding this research study and is divided into three main sections. The first section analyzes the content of the collected translations of Syrian poetry of witness, highlighting the recurrent themes, communicative effects and a number of communicative strategies associated with the impact of the Syrian crisis on its victims. The second section is concerned with the global spaces featuring translations of Syrian poetry, the dynamics of dissemination, and the agents of translation. The third section focuses on the ethical impulses underpinning translation agents' responses to the Syrian crisis events and the poetry coming out of it.

5.1. Poetic texts on Suffering and Strategies of Communication

This section deals with the first question of this research study: How do online translations of Syrian poetry of witness communicate the impact of the Syrian crisis? A detailed answer to this question necessitated dividing it into two sub-questions: What does poetry of witness in online translations communicate about the Syrian crisis? What communicative strategies are used to bring more attention to the victims of the Syrian crisis? Addressing these two sub-questions entailed an examination of the content of the poetry of witness and its recurrent themes as well as an investigation of the possible communicative strategies pertinent to text producers.

5.1.1. Recurrent Themes: What Gets Translated?

In my examination of the contents of the collected translations, I classified them into two types: literary tradition and poetry of witness—the classification is based on the results of the

content analysis. I created a unifying theme and named it Literary Tradition to describe the contents of the units of analysis that deal with poetic depictions irrelevant to the new political situation in Syria. Most of these poetic depictions, which were translated before the outbreak of the uprisings, feature renowned Syrian poets from different eras, focus on their positions in both Arabic and international literatures, their poetic talent, and portrayals describing their social or political circumstances. Among these poets are Ephrem the Syrian (a Christian theologian who lived in the fourth century), Qabbani, and Adonis. For example, Ephrem's hymns refer to samples of religious poems that revolve around religious teachings. Qabbani and Adonis are two contemporary Syrian poets: While Qabbani is known for the beauty of his love poetry (Loya, 1975), Adonis appears in projects that are concerned with his reputation as a modern poet.

All other items, I classified as examples of Syrian poetry of witness because they refer to or are poetic depictions pertinent to the Syrian crisis events. As can be seen in Table 2, I grouped these poetic depictions into three unifying themes: Arab Spring Sentiments, Modes of Suffering, and Universal Contemplations. Table 2 below shows the appearance of the four unifying themes in the translation projects collected between mid-March 2011 and mid-March 2016.

Table 2				
<i>The appearance of the unifying themes in the collected projects according to the results of the content analysis</i>				
Year	Arab Spring Sentiments	Modes of Suffering	Universal Contemplations	Literary Tradition
2011-2012	59%	23%	18%	36%
2012-2013	42%	38%	0%	38%
2013-2014	66%	41%	6%	16%
2014-2015	34%	59%	13%	25%
2015-2016	38%	71%	5%	14%
Note. A project may feature more than one theme.				

The results of the content analysis (see Table 2 above) indicate that the theme of Arab

Spring Sentiments appears in more projects than all the other themes in the projects collected during the first three years of the Syrian crisis. The table also indicates that the majority of the projects collected from the subsequent years are concerned with the suffering of the victims of the crisis. Further, the table demonstrates that most of the themes inferred from the collected poetry translations focus on or can be linked to the Syrian crisis events.

The recurrent appearance of the themes of poetry of witness also highlights the importance of this phenomenon and underscores a need for a detailed examination of its content, recurrent themes and sub-themes, and the communicative effects expressed in the poetic texts. It is worth noting that the three unifying themes resulting from the content analysis (i.e., Arab Spring Sentiments, Modes of Suffering, and Universal Contemplations) developed from other sub-themes, which I used to describe the content of each unit of analysis or poetic segment examined in this study. Each sub-theme illustrates a different portrayal of the impact of the Syrian crisis.

5.1.1.1. Arab Spring Sentiments

The sentiments that stem from the events of the Arab Spring appear frequently in the collected translations, especially during the first two years. These sentiments revolve around voices calling for change at both social and political levels in the Arab World in general and Syria in particular. The theme of the Arab Spring Sentiments is comprised of other sub-themes that resulted from my second-level coding of the textual data (e.g. Songs of Protest, Advocacy for the Spring, Perseverance, and Appeal for Help and Understanding). Table 3 below shows the number of projects for each Arab Spring sentiment (i.e., sub-theme) that resulted from the interpretive coding of the content analysis.

Table 3				
<i>Distribution of the sub-themes that constitute the unifying theme of Arab Spring Sentiments</i>				
	Songs of Protest	Advocacy for the Arab Spring	Perseverance	Appeal for Help & Understanding
Number of projects	8	35	30	9
Percentage of appearance	6 %	26 %	23 %	7 %

The table above shows the appearance of each sub-theme and its percentage of appearance in the 133 projects collected for this study. In each project, a theme appears as a descriptor of one unit of analysis (poetic segment) or several units of analysis. As can be observed in Table 3, the poetic depictions I classified under the sub-themes of Advocacy for the Arab Spring and Perseverance appear in more projects than the poetic texts I interpreted as Songs of Protest and Appeals for Help and Understanding. The frequent recurrence of these two sub-themes could be seen as a tendency of the global spaces to respond to the phenomenon of the Arab Spring and to an interest in poetic depictions that reflect on or deal with the principles and issues associated with this phenomenon.

The table above also reveals that the sub-theme of Songs of Protest doesn't occur in any of the projects collected in the last two years covered in this study. The disappearance of this sub-theme could be ascribed to the discontinuation of the demonstrations and the subsequent development of the crisis from an Arab Spring context into one of more internationalized military conflicts all over the country. Each sub-theme provides a different communicative effect associated with the Syrian crisis.

To start with, the sub-theme of Songs of Protest is present in articles that talk about the use of arts in the Syrian uprisings, describing verses sung in demonstrations or songs composed by Syrian musicians. Verses sung in demonstrations call for freedom and change of the political

system in Syria, among other things. For example, Ibrahim Qashoush's songs⁷ are cited in articles that focus on lyrics chanted in demonstrations, in articles that advocate for freedom of expression, and in articles that deal with the use of arts and creative words as a form of protest. Qashoush's song "Syria is Longing for Freedom"⁸, for instance, appears repeatedly in news articles that admire the courage of protesters who gather to sing their songs of dissent, saying, "Syria is longing for freedom / Syria is demanding freedom..."

Articles featuring songs of protest also focus on the dangers associated with protesting. For example, "What a Pity" by Samih Chkeir⁹ is a song that focuses on the consequences of participating in a protest: "Oh pity! Oh pity! / The bullets whined at the defenseless, / Oh pity!" Chkeir's lyrics talk about the violent reaction of police forces to individuals participating in demonstrations against the Syrian government. The song conveys a message that the act of protesting is something similar to a crime that requires punishment: "The jailor can't stand a single word of freedom, it rocks him to his foundations, and at the crowd's cry he leaps like he's been stung." The word "pity," which appears frequently in the song, is actually a translation of the word "shameful" or "what a shame" in the Arabic text. It is not clear if the word is translated into "pity" in order to create a certain effect on the translation agent's intended audience.

Another example of the lyrics composed in response to the events of the uprising is Malik

⁷ Qashoush's songs appear in 6 projects on several websites, including the website of PEN International and the website of Freemuse.

⁸ The song, translated by Ghias Aljundi, was featured on the website of Freemuse at <http://freemuse.org/archives/4> and on several other websites in articles that focus on the Arab Spring movement and the dangers associated with protesting.

⁹ This poem was collected from the website of Heinrich Boell Foundation in an article titled "The impact of the arts on the Syrian revolution - Conflict & Intl. Politics." The article, written by Syrian poet Elie Abdo and translated into English by Robin Moger, talks about the use of Arts in Syrian uprisings and the dangers associated with protesting. The article can be accessed at <https://lb.boell.org/en/2014/03/03/impact-arts-syrian-revolution-conflict-intl-politics>.

Jandaly's song¹⁰ that places an emphasis on the glorious history of Syria and its free heroes:

Syria, Syria! Homeland of the free and land of freedom

Syria, Syria! Land of the golden grain

Oh my country, cradle of civilization. Its heritage inspired scribes

Homeland of the honorable, resting place of the martyrs...

Land of the free and home of freedom

Syria, Syria! Homeland of the free and land of freedom

In this song, expressions like “homeland of the free,” “land of freedom,” and “home of freedom” express values that are hailed by the society in which the text producer lives as well as the global space that has featured this song. According to the article featuring this song, Jandaly proposes his lyrics as a replacement of Syria's national anthem which praises soldiers.

Generally speaking, the content of the songs of protest in the textual data communicates support for the wave of uprisings in Syria. Such an effect emphasizes freedom of expression, communicates calls for change in Syria's political system, and portrays the Syrian crisis as a conflict between dissident voices with a public outcry for freedom, on the one hand, and governmental forces that fiercely suppress and crack down on these voices, on the other.

Advocacy for the Arab Spring is the second sub-theme I grouped under Arab Spring Sentiments. The poetic translations I classified under this sub-theme appear frequently in the textual data, especially during the first two years of the Syrian crisis. These translations revolve around subject matters like freedom, equality, social justice, the dangers of dissenting, national identity, and hope for a better future. For example, the poetic depictions composed by poets like

¹⁰ Malek Jandaly is an acclaimed Syrian-American pianist and composer. The song has appeared in a project published on the website of Global Voices at <https://globalvoices.org/2014/03/03/the-soundtrack-of-the-syrian-resistance/>.

Youssef Abou Yahya, Hala Mohammad, and Almadhoun are presented as celebrations of what seems to be an Arab Spring that praises dissent and speaks out against oppression. For instance, Youssef Abou Yahya's poem "I am a Syrian"¹¹ emphasizes an inclusive identity of Syria:

I am a Syrian: Shiite, Druze, Kurd,
 Christian,
 and I am Alawite, Sunni, and Circassian.
 Syria is my land.
 Syria is my identity.
 My sect is the scent of my homeland,
 the soil after the rain,
 and my Syria is my only religion...

This poem places an emphasis on a unified identity for all Syrians regardless of the differences in their beliefs, race, or religious leanings and is cited in articles that describe the principles around which Syria's dissident voices gather. Abou Yahya's poem provides an example of poetic texts with a communicative effect indicating that the dissatisfaction with the performance of the Syrian government is not a call to divide the country, nor does a change to the political system aim at the destruction of Syria.

Other examples of poetry advocating for dissent show the consequences of not only participating in a demonstration but also the dangers associated with living in an area where a

¹¹ The poem is translated by Ghada Al-Atrash and was first shown on the Aljazeera website in an article titled "New Poetry Emerges from Syria's Civil War." The article can be accessed at <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/09/20139784442125773.html>.

protest may take place. For example, Hala Mohammad's "The Notebooks Fall"¹² brings attention to the random killings of school children who fall as victims of indiscriminate attacks on protesters: "The notebooks fall bare-chested / reading and composition lessons / sandwiches with fresh bread... / Lead pencils / that the family at home / worked together to sharpen / to pack them in the satchel / with lead [live] ammunition they wilt away...." Hala Mohammad's verses demonstrate that the retaliation for protests may take the form of random killings of innocent people, including school children and passers-by who happen to live in a neighborhood where a demonstration occurs.

Besides the dangers associated with demonstrations, Almadhoun highlights the heavy price a poet may pay for writing poetry that criticizes a center of power: "The poet whom I met [in] one bar in Damascus ... / Was eaten by the wolf"¹³. In a comment on this line of poetry, Almadhoun explains that the word "wolf" stands for police forces that may kidnap and, in some cases, kill poets who dare to criticize the government or its political leaders¹⁴. Almadhoun's words suggest that poetry writing has become a dangerous practice, in which a poet puts his/her life at risk when he/she writes poetry that triggers the dissatisfaction of a center of power.

The examples above and the other poetic texts I classified under the theme of Advocacy for the Arab Spring communicate the voices of Syria's dissidents that advocate for the values of the Arab Spring and highlight the dangers associated with protesting against centers of power.

¹² Translator is anonymous. The poem was featured in article titled "Hala Mohammad: Waiting for Spring" on Aljazeera website at

<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/artscape/2012/08/201282711412941304.html>.

¹³ These two verses are taken from Almadhoun's poem "The City," which presents detailed descriptions about life in the city of Damascus. Translated by Catherine Cobham, the poem appeared on the website of Lyrikline at <https://www.lyrikline.org/en/poems/city-11156>.

¹⁴ Almadhoun provided this comment in an interview with the Scottish Poetry Library. The interview can be found at <http://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/connect/podcast/ghayath-almadhoun>.

The sub-theme of Perseverance is another Arab Spring sentiment I named to categorize the poetic texts that endorse uprisings and encourage protestors to continue their course of actions. For example, Najat Abdulsamad's poem "When I am Overcome by Weakness"¹⁵ admires protesters' endurance and exhibits a defiant spirit that resonates with the sense of determination fueling the Syrian uprisings:

When I am overcome by weakness, ... I bandage my heart with the determination of that boy they hit with an electric stick on his only kidney until he urinated blood. Yet he returned and walked in the next demonstration ... I bandage it with the voice of reason that was not affected by a proximate desolation ... I bandage it with the outcry: "Death and not humiliation."

The poem ends with the phrase "death and not humiliation," an expression that is sung in street demonstrations. Concluding the poem with this phrase emphasizes the poet's admiration for and endorsement of the determination of protesters to continue the course of peaceful protests until they achieve their goals.

Tal Al-Mallouhi's poem, "You will Remain an Example"¹⁶, also reflects the determination of dissident voices to carry on with their peaceful actions despite the dangers that loom on the horizon: "I will walk with all walking people... / I will not stand still... / This is my Homeland / In which / I have/ A palm tree / A drop in a cloud / And a grave to protect me." Later in the poem, Al-Mallouhi says that dying while trying to achieve one's goals is "more beautiful" than living in subservience and oppression: "This is more beautiful / Than all cities of fog... / I

¹⁵ Translated by Ghada Al-Atrash, the poem appeared on several websites in articles that talk about the new poetry emerging from the Syrian crisis. The poem was first shown on Aljazeera website at <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/09/20139784442125773.html>.

¹⁶ The poem is translated by Ghias Aljundi and was collected from the blog of Arabic Literature in English (<https://arablit.org/2011/06/07/remembering-syrian-poets-in-prison/>).

would like to have power / Even for one day / To build the “republic of feelings.” Besides the determination expressed in this poem, Al-Mallouhi’s words deliver a message of hope for a better future.

The spirit of defiance and determination takes another form in an example provided by the Karbouj¹⁷ brothers, three children who live in a refugee camp in Lebanon. The following verses show their determination to overcome the hardships posed by the living conditions in such a camp: “Make the sky your limit, don’t make it a ceiling .../ Losing doesn’t mean failure, keep going and continue / To know sweetness, you need to try bitter... / My thoughts will spread forth and no one can stop them.” The article featuring these verses displays sympathy for displaced children and highlights their determination to conquer hardships caused by poverty, deprivation, and other challenges of living in new places.

While highlighting the challenges facing Syrian individuals, examples of perseverance convey a communicative effect that exhibits strong determination to overcome these challenges. Most of the translations I labeled under this theme appear in articles that comment on this sense of determination.

Appeal for Help and Understanding is the last sub-theme I classified under Arab Spring Sentiments. I included poetic texts that issue a call for help and urge audiences to look at the circumstances associated with the suffering of Syrian people. Poets like Khawla Ghaysaniya, Abou Afach, and Ali Jamal Al-Deen make appeals to external powers and urge them to put an end to the chaotic situation in Syria. For instance, Ghaysaniya (15-year-old child), from her

¹⁷ Translator is anonymous. The poem was collected from the website of Buzzfeed in an article titled “These Extremely Talented Children are All Refugees from Syria.” The article can be found at https://www.buzzfeed.com/matthewtucker/meet-some-of-the-talented-refugee-children-from-syria?utm_term=.uaexez9xv#.ncLBY52Be. The stories presented in the article also appeared on other websites.

refugee camp in Lebanon, makes an appeal to God to stop the suffering of her fellow people:

“Oh God, my God / Preserve those hearts that I love / In short - me, my family / The fear flying over my head does not shock me as much as that which has / Been robbed from me¹⁸.”

Certain that the fate of innocent people lies in the hands of powerful parties, Abu Afach, in turn, calls on influential countries in the world to end the suffering of victimized humans. In a section titled “Prayer to the gods of the 21st century¹⁹,” Abu Afach seems to plead that superpowers spare the lives of children and give them the chance to live and cherish their dreams: “Take the herd / Take the herders... / But don’t lay your hand on a child... / Take the Earth / And let the children dream.” Later in the poem, Abu Afach implores superpowers to show mercy toward stranded children: “If they go up into the mountains / Don’t send earthquakes beneath them / If they go into the valleys / Don’t let floods loose upon them.”

While the two poets in the examples above make appeals for help, other poetic texts express appeals for understanding the circumstances that have stranded Syrian people in different places. Through Facebook, Ali Jamal Al-Deen²⁰, for example, uses a poetic text to call for support and solidarity with displaced Syrians: “I cry to you, my friends, / With the tears of a young girl... / And I tell you... / Of my humiliation and the injustice of who adopted this fight as

¹⁸ Translator is anonymous. The child was featured on several websites, including Buzzfeed and Their World. Her poem can be found on the website of Their World at <http://www.aworldatschool.org/news/entry/Syria-Young-Talent-the-girl-who-writes-poems-to-feel-better-2509>.

¹⁹ Translated by Peate, this section is part of Abou Afach’s poem “Fukushima,” which was featured on the website of Poetry International Foundation at <http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poet/item/19868>. I classified most of Abou Afach’s poetic depictions under the theme of Universal Contemplations because the poet makes no direct reference to the Syrian crisis and puts his depictions in a universal context.

²⁰ Translated by Ibrahim Daib, the verses are taken from untitled poem that appears at the end of an article titled “Syria’s Poetic Justice,” in which AlDeen answers questions about, among other things, the Syrian crisis and its impact on Syrian civilians. The article introduces AlDeen as a 19-year old poet, who finds in poetry a way to respond to the suffering of Syrians. The article can be accessed at <http://www.12thstreetonline.com/2013/12/16/syria/>.

his.” Later in his poetic text, Al-Deen urges his intended readers to think of the circumstances that forced displaced Syrians to leave their homes, the sadness reflected in their “tears,” the injustices imposed on them, and the “humiliation” of living in a foreign place. He asks for support for and solidarity with displaced individuals, saying “I cry to you and my tears drowning me up to my ear... / They kill the child with injustice, and aggression.../ So how do we accept such humiliation ... and torture?” Al-Deen’s words call for an understanding of the hardships and atrocities surrounding the Syrian people and communicate a need for immediate assistance.

The poetic texts I classified under the heading Arab Spring Sentiments deliver communicative effects that associate the Syrian uprisings with a quest for freedom, justice, and equality, highlight the heavy price protesters and their families pay for their opposition against centers of power, and deliver a call for help and understanding of the circumstances around the struggles of Syrian dissident voices. Such poetry translations also emphasize a message that the conflict in Syria is taking place between Syrian dissident voices from different sects and social backgrounds on the one hand and a government that doesn’t respond to their calls for change on the other.

5.1.1.2. Modes of Suffering

Modes of Suffering is the second unifying theme that came out of my content analysis of the collected translations (see Table 3 above). The collected translations reveal several forms of suffering depicted by poets who explicitly talk about their own experiences of suffering or their observations of the hardships of other Syrian people. Table 4 below presents all the sub-themes I grouped under the unifying theme of Modes of Suffering. They present the poetic depictions of daily suffering, the loss of place and human lives, the suffering in prison, and the experience of displacement.

Table 4				
<i>Distribution of the themes that constitute the unifying theme of Modes of Suffering</i>				
	Daily Suffering	Loss	Displacement	Prison
Number of projects	21	25	23	11
Percentage of Appearance	16%	19%	17%	8%

Similar to the sub-themes listed in Table 3, the sub-themes in Table 4 above appear from my coding of the units of analysis (poetic segments). Table 4 presents the appearance of each sub-theme and its percentage of appearance in the 133 projects collected for this study. Table 4 also shows that the sub-themes of Daily Suffering, Loss, and Displacement occur more frequently in the textual data than the sub-theme of Prison. The frequent appearance of the sub-theme of Displacement, especially during the last two years covered by this study, may reflect an emphasis on the refugee crisis that was a major concern for global spaces, especially in Western countries, at that time. The following is a further explanation of the four sub-themes of suffering.

First, I grouped under the sub-theme of Daily Suffering all the poetic texts that focus on the forms of suffering that occur on a daily basis, such as stressful routines of living, lack of basic needs (e.g. electricity, water, and food), and random killings. The stressful routines of life range from feelings of uncertainty, to pain, to difficulty earning a living for a family. For example, the motif of uncertainty permeates Almadhoun's "The Capital,"²¹ a poem which centers on life in Damascus and portrays it as a city stripped of its joys and colorfulness. Of this

²¹ Translated by Cobham, the poem was collected from the website of Lyrikline at <https://www.lyrikline.org/en/poems/capital-12393>. The poem appears in Arabic and in translations into English, German, Italian, French, Dutch and Czech. Almadhoun is introduced as a poet who was born in Damascus and has been living in Sweden since 2008. As a rising poet, Almadhoun has won several awards for his poetry writings. The website of Lyrikline explains that a collection of Almadhoun's poetry translated into Dutch was among the top 10 selling poetry books in Belgium in 2015 and that Almadhoun has been translated into other target languages including English, French, German, Italian, Czech, Greek, Swedish, Slovenian, Croatian, Danish, Spanish, Albanian, and Chinese.

melancholic atmosphere, Almadhoun says, “when we were born / life was coloured / and photos were black and white / now photos are / coloured / and life is black and white.” In another poem, “Schizophrenia²²,” Almadhoun explains that Damascus has turned into a barren land in which life has become a torture to its inhabitants: “I was going to death when the fighters stopped me. They searched me, found / my heart in my possession.../ One cried, / He’s still alive / and they decided to sentence / me to live.” Almadhoun’s verses communicate the message that life in Syrian places has become very stressful and that death is the only option to free people from forms of torture.

Lack of food and the financial resources to support one’s family is another form of daily suffering. Golan Haji’s “Autumn Here is Magical and Vast²³,” for instance, places emphasis on starvation and the inability to afford basic needs. This inability aggravates the daily hardships of living in Syria: “and [they] left us nothing but the clouds to dwell in / with our mouths, as our pockets, stuffed with sand.” The whole poem can be interpreted as presenting the consequences of the ongoing conflicts for people who have no means to cope with multiple forms of daily suffering: “Like drenched cats we took shelter under the tree when it rained / and big droplets put out our cigarettes... / There is a sea tossing & perspiring under the soil / & a young man is

²² Translated by Moger, the poem has appeared on the website of Lyrikline at <https://www.lyrikline.org/en/poems/schizophrenia-12580>. The poem appears in Arabic and in translations into English, Dutch, French, and German. The poem has also appeared on the Website of Citybooks, which is based in Belgium.

²³ Translated by Stephen Watts, the poem can be found on the website of Words without Borders at <http://www.wordswithoutborders.org/article/autumn-here-is-magical-and-vast>. Haji is another rising poet who appears frequently in the collected projects. The website of Words without Borders introduces Haji as a Syrian poet and translator who had to flee Syria to settle in Paris, France. The website explains that Haji has published several collections of poetry and participated in poetry festivals in Syria and all over the world. The website also introduces Watts as both a translator and a poet.

sobbing because he's seen bread." Haji's "Shooting Sportsmen"²⁴ is another example that shows how worries about the basic necessities of life have put people in a perpetual state of insomnia: "They left us insomnia and a list of names / Dust which the hungry licked off their shoes... / Jugs of turbid water, a shoe on the road / Cold and candles, the spit of merchants / Bullets in the refrigerator door, the screen and the cistern's belly."

In addition to describing the perturbations about life's necessities, examples of daily suffering also cast light on the psychological distress caused by the emptiness of life. For example, feelings of pain and anxiety dominate the poems written by Fouad Mahmoud Fouad²⁵, who provides an account of the emptiness of life in Aleppo. In "I am King," for instance, Fouad presents a description of a typical day of a Syrian individual inside their home, a day from which joyful moments have disappeared: "I am king of the room / My crown is the dust of morning ... / A king of cold / and wounded loneliness / A king of coughing/ and rotting teeth..." In another poem, "Aleppo Diary," Fouad shows that stressful news is the only incident that disturbs this emptiness: "And the blood that drips down the screen pollutes the atmosphere staining the couch with what looks like dried coffee, which we touch with trembling fingers so we don't get infected." These lines indicate that watching scenes of killing on TV provokes even more feelings of anxiety. Later in "Aleppo Diary," Fouad reflects on the dangers looming outside

²⁴ Translated by Golan Haji himself, the poem can be accessed on the website of Arabic Literature in English at <https://arablit.org/2013/02/02/two-views-of-syria-speaks-a-view-of-syria-through-the-arts/>.

²⁵ Fouad's "I am King" and "Aleppo Diary" are translated by Alshaer for the website of Poetry Translation Center which is based in London, the UK. Both poems can be found at <https://www.poetrytranslation.org/poets/fouad-mohammad-fouad>. The website introduces Fouad as a Syrian medical doctor and poet who has published several poetry collections and participated in conferences on poetry in Europe and Arab countries. The website also explains that Fouad had to leave Syria to work as a visiting professor at the American University in Beirut, Lebanon.

homes by telling the story of an ordinary woman²⁶ who, like many other Syrians, needs to go out to earn a living.

I am Marina
 returning from the Carlton
 where life clings to music...
 I am Marina
 who, at the wrong turn, smelled
 the odour of fear exuding from sweating fists
 piercing the air like lead
 before the Citadel vanished in a magician's hat ...
 I am Marina
 who did not know she had died
 until ...
 she heard
 the words of the priest in the church of Prophet Ilyas.

These lines display the risks people take in their journeys to work—people in Aleppo risk their lives if they dare leave their homes to run daily errands, go to work, or if they simply happen to be in the wrong place. Fouad's verses, together with other poetic accounts of daily suffering, highlight these horrible conditions of life for the ordinary people.

The sub-theme of Loss is for poetic texts that highlight feelings of grief over destroyed places and lost lives. These feelings appear more frequently in the projects collected in the last

²⁶ The verses were written in memory of Marina Shihwaro, an ordinary woman from Aleppo who was killed on her way back from the Carleton Hotel. The poem includes references to real places in Aleppo like the word "Citadel," which refers to Aleppo Citadel, the Carleton Hotel and the Church of Prophet Ilyas.

two years, after the Syrian crisis developed into a military conflict which resulted in the deaths of many innocent people and the destruction of large parts of cities, towns, and villages in Syria.

Grief over lost places is evident in poems composed by poets whose homes and neighborhoods have been destroyed by military actions. For example, Reema²⁷, a displaced child, expresses feelings of sadness while reflecting on her destroyed home and school. About these places she writes, “My school is no longer there / Now, destruction is everywhere... / My school has turned into stones scattered here and there / Shall I write about my house that I no longer see ... / Shall I write about flowers which now smell [of] destruction²⁸.” The lines here show that Reema’s mind, like the minds of all Syrians deprived of their homes, is affected by the loss but is still attached to her home and school. Earlier in the poem, the sense of loss becomes more apparent: “when I take my pencil and notebook / what shall I write about? / Shall I write about my house, my school, and my land / Of which I was deprived?”

Similar to destroyed places, lost lives is another source of sadness manifested in examples of poetry of witness. For example, Hala Mohammad conjures up a painful picture about the loss of loved ones, a picture of a mother mourning her son whose dead body was left at his family’s doorstep²⁹. Hala Mohammad puts herself in the mother’s position and says, “Not at the doorstep / In the hallway of the house.... / Oh, apple of my eye / I will be denied / Your beautiful eyes....” Mohammad’s verses provide an example of the sorrows of thousands of

²⁷ A team from OXFAM visits Reema and her family in Lebanon, publishes an article that talks about the living conditions for Reema’s family, and presents samples of her poetry. The article explains that Reema’s poem was first translated by a non-professional translator accompanying the team and was later revised by another translator. The article also shows that Reema is not her real name. The story can be found at <https://www.oxfamireland.org/blog/syrian-refugee-reema>.

²⁸ The poem appears in several projects. One of the projects indicates that Dr. Nahla Baydhoun is the translator.

²⁹ The article featuring this poem explains that it is written in response to the death of an activist who was killed and whose body was placed at his house’s doorsteps. The article can be accessed at <http://theconversation.com/how-wordsworth-informed-the-poetry-of-the-arab-spring-35412>.

women who have lost their children and are still living with their memories.

The loss of homes and human lives turns into the loss of the whole country in Maram Al-Masri's words that depict Syria as a dying person: "Syria for me is a bleeding wound / It is my mother on her death bed / It is my child with her throat cut³⁰." Al-Masri's words indicate that the loss of Syria has meaning beyond the death of individuals and destruction of places.

The poetic depictions expressing the sense of loss communicate an enormous amount of pain inflicted on Syrian people because of destroyed towns and villages, deaths of individuals, and, ultimately, the loss of Syria as a whole.

Third, the sub-theme of Displacement is concerned with internally and externally displaced Syrians. The examined translations provide personal accounts of the pain that accompanies Syrians in their journey from one place to another. The sub-theme of Displacement covers poetic portrayals that describe the suffering associated with Syrians' attempts to find safer places, the hardships in new resettlement places, and the feelings of attachment to abandoned homes in Syria.

Examples of displacement reveal that escaping to a new place is a painful and risky experience. To escape a zone of conflict in search for a safe haven, displaced individuals need to take a journey that brings many dangers. Displaced individuals have to, for instance, walk long distances, stay without food or water for a long time, sleep in the open, and, at times, risk their lives in attempting to cross a border into another country. Ammar Akres, for example, writes about this experience saying, "The night / became long and the dark increased / but I didn't find starlight to indicate the path / The trip became long, and my footsteps began / to disappear,

³⁰ Maram's poem appears in an article titled "Poetry and Activism." The article can be found at <http://deborahbirdrose.com/tag/syrian-poetry-against-war/>. The translator's name is not mentioned in the article.

without them how would I find a way back....³¹” Akres’s verses display the state of fear a displaced person may experience in attempting to escape into another country as well as the hope of returning home that encourages him/her to complete the journey.

After arriving at a safe haven in a neighboring country, displaced Syrians may become victims of other kinds of suffering such as sorrow or the need to cope with new realities in refugee camps. For example, Miral Birorada³², a Kurdish writer forced to live in a small town in Turkey, reflects on the pain associated with being away from home. Although he finds security in Turkey, Birorada’s mind is still attached to his home in Syria: “I have no place other than pain / And some of the nostalgia / Eyes deflected, closed slightly / What tours the incurable memory of Kurdish rivalry³³?” Similarly, Ronida³⁴, another Kurdish individual living in a refugee camp, shares her inner distress with a journalist reporting on Syrian refugees in Iraq. Ronida, like many other refugees, explains that she suffers from the doleful consequences of losing her job, friends, neighbors, and community: “And the pain in my heart is growing / And the tears from my eyes are blood / Our pains are too many / Our wounds are too deep³⁵.”

Suffering also finds its way to externally displaced people who have to confront cultural

³¹ The verses appear in a news report that features an interview with Akres and another young man in a refugee camp in Turkey. Titled “Syria’s War Poets: Two Young Refugees Seek Artistic Inspiration in Civil War,” the article has appeared on the website of the Atlantic and can be found at <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/07/syria-war-poets-refugees/375195/>. The translator is anonymous.

³² Titled “An Exiled Poet,” Miral Birorada’s story appears in an article on the website of a Canadian literary journal based in Ottawa. The article talks about Syrian refugees in Turkey and can be found at <http://www.mtls.ca/issue13/writings/essay/mathew-nashed/>.

³³ The translator is anonymous.

³⁴ Ronida’s verses appear in a news article on the website of The Independent at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syrian-refugees-the-singular-stories-of-the-millions-on-the-move-9241145.html>. In this article, a reporter meets Ronida in a refugee camp in Iraq while covering the flux of Syrian refugees. The article appeared under the title “Syrian Refugees: The Singular Stories of the Millions on the Move.”

³⁵ The translator is anonymous.

differences. Abboud Saeed's poems³⁶, for example, bring to light the forms of suffering associated with living as a refugee in a foreign culture. His poem "Don't Leave the Bar Carrying her Coat in your Hands"³⁷ features a love story between a newcomer and a girl from a new place of settlement and shows how emotional suffering may result from cultural differences:

Don't leave the bar carrying her coat in your hands...
 I used to love many things
 The Sunday bread-crust buyer and hide-and-seek
 I was hiding among the burlap sacks
 Do you know what a burlap sack is?
 A bag made of burlap that you put seeds in,
 Seeds, not love.
 But we used to put dried bread in it
 and happiness-to-be...
 Many things bother me
 The neighbor's curtain, your hair everywhere in the room
 and how I left the bar carrying your coat

In this poem, the poet explains that leaving a bar carrying a girlfriend's coat is an unacceptable behavior. Abboud Saeed's words call attention to the impact of cultural differences on newcomers who try to understand and respect the social values prevalent in a new place of resettlement but fail to do so because of their ignorance of such values. The poem also provides

³⁶ Abboud Saeed's poems appear in an article that talks about the use of Facebook to communicate feelings of daily suffering. Titled "For Those Who are Still Asking Who is Abboud Saeed," the article has appeared on the website of Cold Front and can be read at <http://coldfrontmag.com/for-those-who-are-still-asking-who-is-aboud-saeed/>.

³⁷ Translated by Sandra Hetzl.

details about the poet's background and the living conditions in the place he had to leave.

The poetic texts I classified under the sub-theme of Displacement focus on the forms of suffering associated with displacement inside or outside Syria. These texts depict the hardships associated with Syrians' journeys in search of safe places and communicate the need for help not only for internally displaced Syrians but also for those living as refugees in new places.

Fourth, the sub-theme of Prison describes poetic texts that talk about prison experiences or what can be considered testimonies to the circumstances associated with incarceration. Most of the prison poetry in the textual data is written by prisoners or poets who have experienced imprisonment. With little information available about what happens in prison, prisoners' writings remain an invaluable source of information about the circumstances leading to imprisonment, the living conditions in prison, and the consequences of imprisonment.

Some poetic accounts of prison focus on imprisonment as a punishment for speaking out. "The Crypt³⁸," by Dia'a Al-Abdullah, for instance, relates the cause of his imprisonment—speaking out against a center of power:

The jailor kills me with a sword

I answer with a word...

So, this is my homeland;

I became its enemy

by speaking out

Speaking out brings pain –

but how can we not?

My homeland,

³⁸ Translated by Ghias Aljundi and Mitch Albert, the poem can be accessed on the website of PEN International at <https://pen-international.org/print/2549>.

if it were not for you

I would not be so brave...

These verses show that advocating for a “homeland” may cause “pain” in times when “speaking out” against a center of power becomes a dangerous activity, for which a poet or a dissenting voice may end up in prison. Imprisonment may also result from trivial reasons such as liking a Facebook page. For example, Dara Abdallah³⁹, in “Sentences Stuck in My Head; Written [in] Solitary Cell No. 1 in Al-Khatib Prison,” explains that he has spent “[t]hirty days for clicking “like” on Al-Jazeera’s Facebook page.”

Examples of prison poetry reveal details about the circumstances of staying in prison. Dara Abdallah, while reflecting on his thirty days of imprisonment, says in his poem “Rooms” that he has never “encountered greater events than [the events] that take place in closed rooms.” He also adds that “[h]istorians do not know that world history is concealed in [these] rooms.” In “Sentences Stuck in My Head; Written [in] Solitary Cell No. 1 in Al-Khatib Prison,” Dara Abdallah tells us that writing is not allowed in prison and that prisoners use other tools to keep track of what is happening around them—prison walls and nails could be the only accessible means of expression. About these tools, Dara Abdallah writes: “I passed by here. / If you want to write on the wall, there is a nail under the cardboard in the / right corner. Return it to its place when you have finished writing.” In the same poem, Dara Abdallah also explains that a prisoner’s family might not be able to contact him/her or even know his/her whereabouts: “[m]y dad broke down in / tears after I called him from court, using the policeman’s cellphone. He told

³⁹ Fourteen poems by Dara Abdallah appear on the website of Asymptote with a bio statement about the poet and another statement about the translator, Mona Kareem. The poems can be read at <http://www.asymptotejournal.com/nonfiction/dara-abdallah-loneliness-spoils-its-victims/>. All the poems appear in one project titled “Fourteen Poems from *Loneliness Spoils its Victims*.” Each poem appears under a separate title.

me / that they had set up a tent for my funeral.”

The translations of prison poetry also provide a window onto the experience of individuals who spend a longer time in prison. Faraj Bayrakdar’s poems offer examples that reveal how miserable circumstances of imprisonment impact the lives of prisoners. Most of his poems include minute details about the forms of suffering inside prison, such as feelings of constant loneliness and anxiety. In “Black Memories⁴⁰,” for instance, Bayrakdar says that “prison is a time / you jot down on the walls / in the early days / But when the years turn / into a long train / tired of its own whistles / and exhausted by the stations / you try something else / similar to forgetfulness.” Later in this poem, Bayrakdar explains that the poem is his only companion in prison: “I hide / inside the poem / and look for myself outside it... / It invites me to bed... / It takes off its clothes / and I undress / Then, the poem wears me / yet I remain naked.”

Prison poetry also calls attention to post-imprisonment. For example, Dara Abdallah’s poem “From the Non-Existence of Freedom to the Freedom of Non-Existence” reveals the consequences of imprisonment on freed prisoners. In this poem, Dara Abdallah points out that prisoners continue to suffer even after they regain their freedom: “The first night at home, you do not dare to fully / stretch out on your bed... / At four / in the morning, I was about to break into tears and ask them to return me to / prison.” Dara Abdallah concludes his poem with a confession that he is “not good for anything but being a prisoner.”

The poetic texts about prison carry a communicative effect which emphasizes the harsh circumstances in jail as well as the post-imprisonment experience that continues to cause pain to prisoners for the rest of their lives. They also highlight the causes associated with imprisonment

⁴⁰ Translated by John Asfour, the poem has appeared on the website of PEN America at <https://pen.org/poetry/black-mirrors>. Bayrakdar spent more than 15 years in prison and his poems appear in articles that are linked to the wave of the Arab Spring and the dangers threatening the lives of dissident voices.

and its consequences on prisoners' relatives who have to endure the pain of a family member disappearing.

As shown in the examples illustrated above, the translations of poetry of witness classified under the theme of Modes of Suffering show multiple forms of suffering, highlight the need for support for both internally and externally displaced individuals, and promulgate the personal testimonials of imprisoned writers.

5.1.1.3. Universal Contemplations

Universal Contemplations is the third unifying theme of Syrian poetry of witness. Under this theme, I grouped the poetic texts produced by Syrian poets who provide personal accounts of forms of suffering that transcend place and time. Universal Contemplations, thus, describes poetic sentiments that draw lessons from the crisis in order to highlight the destructive consequences of conflicts on humanity. Although the themes I discussed above incorporate universal aspects, the examples I grouped under the theme of Universal Contemplations bear no direct reference to the Syrian zones of conflict. They rather show what people, regardless of time and place, can do to their fellow humans. Among the motifs I classified under Universal Contemplations are Futility of War, Ignorance, and Public Misconceptions.

The poetic texts I grouped under Futility of War have a communicative effect that lays stress on the barrenness of war and its destructive impact on humanity. Such a communicative effect explicitly warns humans about the consequences of military conflicts and indirectly calls on them to put an end to the atrocities these conflicts cause. It also delivers a message that all humanity is doomed to vanish if armed conflicts continue to exist. For example, Nazih Abou

Afach,⁴¹ like many other poets of witness, warns against the consequences of war even if no one listens to his accounts. In “Rose War⁴²,” he describes war as a human practice that instigates feelings of fear and fuels hate speeches. To him, if war is inevitable, humans should fight with roses instead of deadly weapons: “I don’t want to die / And it doesn’t cheer me to see you dead / Now, since we are afraid and unable to forgive... / Come, let’s fight with rose petals.” In another poem, “The Other; Or the Militant Trench⁴³,” Abou Afach questions the classification of human societies, cultures, or nation-states into “Self” and “Other” and explains that such a classification is used as a means to support military actions: “You’re not my brother, my friend, my life partner / We’re both “the other” / We’re merely an “other” ... / And both of us are sacrificial animals.” Later in this poem, Abou Afach suggests that feelings of hatred survive wars and continue to create future wars: “I am “the other” / And you are “the other’s other” / We both own reality / But neither owns right / Evil will last forever.”

Other poetic texts with universal sentiments show that victors, too, become the victims of their own practices. For example, translations of Golan Haji’s poetry focus on the consequences of war on all parties involved⁴⁴. Two verses from his poem “Soldier in a Madhouse⁴⁵,” for example, are used in an article that condemns war atrocities, describes conflict as a human tendency, and sounds the alarm about the consequence of conflicts on humanity. In these two verses, Haji describes the eyes of an injured soldier who is rushed to a hospital after he has

⁴¹ Eight of Abou Afach’s poems about war appear on the website of Poetry International Foundation at <http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poet/item/19868>. All these poems are translated and published on the website after the breakout of the Syrian crisis.

⁴² Translated by John Peate.

⁴³ Translated by John Peate.

⁴⁴ Most of Golan Haji’s poetry appears on websites that are concerned with conflicts and their impact on the future of humanity.

⁴⁵ The verses are featured on a blog that talks about wars and their impact on the world. The article can be found at <https://proletarianpoetry.com/2015/01/10/book-review-the-hundred-years-war-modern-war-poems-edited-by-neil-astley/>.

experienced hysterical moments: “How terrified I am by the eyes of the terrified, / Everyone who’s terrified, terrifies⁴⁶.” These lines deliver a message that humans may become victims of their own practices. These verses also suggest that victims and victimizers both become the victims of the fear that is sparked by the unpredictability of other humans’ behaviors.

Ignorance is another universal aspect expressed in Syrian poetry of witness. For example, Osama Alomar⁴⁷ highlights humans’ lack of knowledge in making judgments about events around them. In his poem “Lost,” Alomar draws a picture in which humans are portrayed as weak creatures that may easily lose their way despite the small size of the planet on which they dwell. In this poem, Alomar compares the earth to a larger well-organized universe in which stars, planets, and other objects float freely without colliding into each other. The poem features a newborn star that is afraid of losing its way in the wide universe and wants to move closer to its mother. The mother-star tells her to stay in her place and trust the rules of the universe that organize the relationships among its elements and protect them from losing track. The newborn star replies, “If that’s true, then why do so many humans get lost so easily when the size of the tiny multicolored seed on which they live is negligible compared to the size of the universe?” Alomar’s words here communicate a message that indirectly mocks the chaos created by humans, the wars waged to solve their problems, and the harm they do not only to other humans but also animals, plants, and the environment around them.

Ignorance leads to public misconceptions, another universal element present in examples of poetry of witness. Examples from Dara Abdallah’s poetry, for instance, criticize patriotic

⁴⁶ The translator’s name is not mentioned in the article featuring these two verses.

⁴⁷ Osama Alomar is a Syrian poet who currently lives as an immigrant in the United States. Samples of his poetry have appeared on the website of Blue Flower Art (a literary agency) at <http://blueflowerarts.com/artist/osama-alomar/>. The website introduces Alomar writing as transcending time and place. The website also explains that Alomar works as a cab driver in the city of Chicago.

sentiments that glorify war practices. In “Praising Fear⁴⁸,” Dara Abdallah says that crimes against humanity can be introduced to a society as acts of heroism: “Zealous writing that glorifies ‘heroism,’ and ‘sacrifices’ and ‘blood’ recharges a violent and masculine symbolic language / text filled with heroism is a suffocating lung.” In these words, the poet says that taking pride in brutal acts is harmful behavior that breeds more violence. Later in the poem, Dara Abdallah warns humans about the consequences of patriotic language that creates harmful misconceptions, saying that such language doesn’t help in healing human wounds, nor does it help in making reparations to the victims of conflicts: “Heroism kills the space of longing that exists between reader and writer ... / A language that speaks of killing happily and cheerfully will one day justify killing.” At the end of the poem, the poet urges writers to use a language that reduces feelings of pride, suggesting that humans today “need writings filled with defeat and evanescence.”

The universal contemplations I found in the examined translations underscore the dark side of humankind in that they convey messages about the drastic repercussions of man-made wars on humanity. These contemplations deliver a communicative effect that urges humans to take measures to stop political crisis before it develops into a bloody conflict that will destroy all parties involved. Such a communicative effect suggests that all humans, whether victors or defeated, are losers when they choose war as a solution to their problems. This communicative effect also indicates that conflicts are not limited to the case of Syria—they took place in the past, are happening now in Syria, and are likely to happen in other places if humanity is not able to develop preventative measures against them.

⁴⁸ Translated by Mona Kareem, the poem has appeared on the website of Asymptote at <http://www.asymptotejournal.com/nonfiction/dara-abdallah-loneliness-spoils-its-victims/>.

In a nutshell, the analysis of the contents of the collected translations revealed recurring themes that focus on the struggles of Syrian dissident voices for change in the Syrian political landscape and for other aspirations these voices perceive as honorable. They highlight multiple forms of suffering that are affecting Syria's ordinary people, and warn against the repercussions of man-made conflicts on humanity. These themes deliver communicative effects that provoke feelings of sympathy for the victimized individuals and call for an understanding of the causes and the destructive consequences of the Syrian crisis.

It is worth noting that this analysis of the contents of the collected translations shows that no translated work encourages fighting or the use of force to defend a homeland. Poetic depictions that support the Syrian government and its narrative about the foreign intervention are also absent from the themes in the textual data, and so are themes of vengeance. In my readings of some of the poetic texts circulating *in Arabic* on the Internet, I observed themes that provoke sentiments of violence, hatred, and vengeance (but an examination of poetic texts circulating in Arabic is beyond the scope of this study). The absence of such themes from the collected translations indicates a deliberate selection or censorship that favors certain themes over others.

This selection process may be ascribed to the fact that most of the examined translations are collected from websites based in Western countries. The political systems of these countries explicitly denounced the practices of the Syrian government, provided platforms for Syrian individuals to publicize evidence of violence demonizing Syrian official authorities, and promoted narratives for international intervention in Syria (Howard & Hussain, 2011; Khashanah, 2014; Wolfsfeld, et al., 2013). As such, the selection of translations that implicitly or explicitly highlight the impact the excessive use of power against defenseless Syrian dissident voices could be associated with the Western political narratives about the Syrian crisis events. In

other words, even translation activities that are motivated by a desire to bear witness to the violations of human rights are subject to external forces influencing the selection of the themes that are promoted. Such influence suggests that the examined translations of Syrian poetry are not entirely free from external forces; external forces have an impact on the translator's choices and may shape the final product of a translation activity (Inghilleri, 2008).

Despite the selection process which focuses on the victims *only* and seems to censor pro-government poetic depictions, the collected translations show that poetic depictions are effective in documenting the suffering of Syrian people. Based on the suggestion that poetic accounts of conflicts raise the reader's awareness of atrocities against humanity and provoke protective measures to put an end to them (Forché, 1993a, 1993b; Ilesanmi, 2011; Orlando, 2010), I suggest that the examined translations remain an important source of information about the atrocities experienced by Syrians and that they constitute universal lessons about the repercussions of military conflicts on humanity in general. They also provide creative strategies through which a text producer can effectively communicate the voices of vulnerable individuals to his/her intended audiences.

5.1.2. Strategies of Communication in Poetry of Witness

The recurrent themes examined in the collected translations revealed communicative effects that center on the victims of abuse and violence, highlighting a need to examine the communicative strategies that help text producers create such effects. I have identified a set of communicative strategies at both macro and micro levels. At the macro level, I explore such strategies as the use of poetry translations from the past, the presence of pro-victim persona, and the use of romantic motifs. At the micro level, I analyze linguistic features such as simplicity of vocabulary, allegorization, pronouns, verbs, and nouns.

5.1.2.1. *Revival of Pre-Crisis Poetry*

Certain examples of poetry of witness include old or pre-crisis poetry translations that are linked to the Syrian crisis events. These translations appear in articles about the crisis. Here, the author of an article may quote poetry from the past to support his/her opinions about an event or a situation in the present. Making use of the popularity of a poetic text or a poet, a text producer resorts to a poetic text from the past to, for example, compare a situation in the past to a situation that has occurred in the current crisis, provide supporting evidence for their arguments, or avoid having to take sides or declare their position on the Syrian crisis. Renowned Syrian poets who are quoted frequently in the textual data are Adonis, Qabbani, and Abu Alalaa Almaarri.

Especially during the first years of the Syrian crisis, Adonis's poetry⁴⁹ appears in articles that align with sentiments associated with the Arab Spring. Although Adonis doesn't support the Arab Spring wave, his poems continue to be used by authors who express support for Syria's voices of dissent. For instance, verses like "A time between ashes and roses is coming / When everything will be extinguished / When everything shall begin⁵⁰" appear in articles that describe demonstrators' determination, hopes, or struggles to bring change to the political scene in Syria. Other examples of Adonis's poetry are employed in articles that reflect on social as well as political issues that could have caused public dissatisfaction with Syrian policy makers.

Nizar Qabbani's (1923 – 1998) poetry also appears frequently in translation in the textual data. Qabbani, who spent most of his life in exile, is known for his criticism of Arab leadership and his attachment to his homeland. His poetry reflecting on social and political situations in Syria is often republished and linked to situations associated with incidents from the Syrian

⁴⁹ Adonis is the most quoted poet in the collected projects. However, most of his poetry productions are classified under Literary Tradition because they focus on topics irrelevant to the Syrian crisis.

⁵⁰ The poem can be found at <http://www.caravanmagazine.in/photo-essay/shadows-war>.

crisis. For instance, Qabbani's poem "A Lesson in Dawning"⁵¹, which portrays the country as a big jail, is linked to restrictions on the freedom of expression. In this poem, his son asks him to draw a "bird" and a "wheatstalk," but Qabbani draws instead "a square with locks and bars" and "a gun." When the son asks why the father doesn't know "how to draw a bird" or a wheatstalk, Qabbani answers that he has forgotten the shape of all these things in a time of "armed wheatstalks / armed birds / armed culture / and armed religion," in which even "the trees of the forest have joined the militia men." Qabbani's words, although written a long time before the inception of the Syrian crisis, are used to comment on the chaotic conflict in Syria.

Abu Alalaa Almaarri's poetry also appears in articles on the Syrian crisis. Almaarri is a poet from the 11th century who is known for his criticism of the use of religion to control the minds of ordinary people. His work criticizes the blind following of religion and religion-based forms of ruling: "Faith, disbelief, rumors spread / Koran, Torah, Gospels / Prescribe their laws... / Lies at every generation / That one hastens to believe and record"⁵². Almaarri believes that the blind followers of religious rule "are rushing towards decomposition." Almaarri's philosophy, along with his established position in both Arabic poetry and international literature, is used in articles that cast aspersions on the gory violence committed in the name of religion and that discredit the use of religious teachings or verses to justify crimes against humanity.

The examples listed above demonstrate that using poetry translations from the past and linking them to situations from the Syrian crisis can be interpreted as an indication of a text producer's intention to raise his/her readers' awareness about destructive moments in the past which may be repeated in Syria today, to show concerns about Syria's infrastructure and its

⁵¹ Nizar's poem can be accessed at <https://arablit.org/2011/06/07/remembering-syrian-poets-in-prison/>.

⁵² The verses appear on the website of France24 at <http://observers.france24.com/en/20130214-jihadists-behead-statue-syrian-poet-abul-ala-al-maari>.

historical monuments, to intensify feelings of yearning for the homeland, and to express grief over lost lives and the suffering of Syrian people, among other purposes.

5.1.2.2. *Pro-Victim Persona*

The presence of a poet in this poetry can be interpreted as a strategy through which the poet intentionally adopts agency that seeks to provide a testimonial to a personal experience or bears witness to the suffering of fellow humans. The examined samples of poetry of witness demonstrate multiple forms of agency. Among these forms are the persona of a revolutionary, the persona of a victim, the persona of a universal reconciler, the persona of a witness, and the persona of a romantic individual.

To start with, the revolutionary persona is noticeable in the poetic depictions I classified under the theme of the Arab Spring Sentiments. Through this type of persona, the poet is explicitly present as a voice that challenges the Syrian government and aspires to make reforms to Syria's political system. This persona permeates the poems of such poets as Maram Al-Masri, Hala Mohammad, and Najat Abdulsamad, among others. For example, Maram Al-Masri is present in the poetic texts from her collection "A Red Cherry on White-Tiled Floor" as a rebellious person who defies control by masculine power and the exploitation of women: "women like me do not know how to speak. / A word remains in their throats / like a thorn / they choose to swallow." In an untitled poem, Al-Masri openly declares her revolutionary persona by expressing her support for dissident voices seeking freedom, social justice and political reform: "I am...the one who screams in the face of the dictator... / The one who only lives in the nobles' heads / Only knows of the hearts of heroes ... / My name is Freedom."

Similarly, Najat Abdulsamad joins the voices that express their support for the Syrian uprisings. In a frequently recurring poem in the textual data, "When I am Overcome by

Weakness,” Najat Abdulsamad exhibits a persona that has uncompromising stance and is determined to continue the course of struggle or die with dignity. Hala Mohammad provides another example of a persona that leads the revolution against centers of power: “I decided to revolt / So I kicked away my anxiety.” This poetic statement exhibits a persona that is both inspired by and inspires voices of dissent in their endeavors to fight for a cause in which they believe even if they have to “kick happiness” out of their way.

The revolutionary persona found in the textual data reflects the poet’s willingness to participate in and lead what he/she believes are progressive movements intended to bring a new life to her/his country. This persona allows the text producer to communicate his/her stances to audiences from multiple cultures and to explicitly express support for voices of dissent.

The persona of a victim (i.e., victimized persona), in turn, is present in poems that speak about the poet’s personal experiences or the suffering of other victims. This victim-persona allows the poet to describe humiliation, degradation, starvation, and death, indicating the poet’s determination to testify. For example, “Black Mirrors,” by Faraj Bayrakdar, exhibits a persona that suffers from loneliness in prison. It seems that Bayrakdar, who spent more than 15 years in prison, uses this persona to talk not only about his loneliness in prison, but also about the suffering of other prisoners who have only words as their companions: “I hide / inside the poem / and look for myself outside it. / ... the poem wears me / yet I remain naked.”

Like Bayrakdar, Housam Al-Mosilli, who was forced to flee Syria, is present in his poem “Diary of the Silent” as a victim who not only speaks for himself but also for other individuals who have gone through the same experience. This collective victim-persona voices the suffering of other victimized groups and talks on behalf of many Syrians who were forced to take the journey to unknown and presumably safe havens: “If you only knew that this sea standing

between us is nothing but the tears of our mothers and lovers, you would, at the very least, swim to us barefoot.” Through this collective victim-persona, the poet becomes both a member of a victimized community and an advocate who wants to convey his people’s distress to other audiences. To questions that “ask .. from afar” about the wellbeing of displaced Syrians, Al-Mosilli’s answer refers to the pain of separation from the relatives left behind: “In our land, / ... every cell of our bodies goes numb. / Not because we are dying, / but because tears will carve their canyons / on the cheeks of our mothers and loved ones.” Through a collective victim-persona, Al-Mosilli is able to provide written testimonials to the conditions that turned Syrians into refugees scattered in different places and to highlight the pain associated with the decision to stay in or escape from Syria.

The victim-persona also appears in poems of displaced children who, through poetry, are given the opportunity to speak spontaneously about the realities they have to face in displacement. For example, Reema is present as a victim in her poem examined above, so is Khawla Hassan Ghaysaniya. The following lines, for instance, can be seen as a representation of Ghaysaniya’s experience of suffering: “Oh God, my God / Preserve those hearts that I love... / Those I loved the most are now closest to you / ...love has escaped from my heart / And I cannot make new friends / Fear of loss binds me.” The presence of the child as a victim of fear shows the impact of the crisis on children and stresses the need for psychological support to help her and other children lead normal lives. Whether conscious or unconscious of their presence in the poems, child-poets writing about their suffering introduce themselves as vulnerable individuals whose words document the consequences of the crisis on Syrian children and their families.

The victim-persona allows the poet to speak directly to the consciousness of his/her audiences much in the same way as close friends vent to each other in times of sadness. This

type of persona enhances the proximity relationship between the speaker and his/her intended readers and persuades them to identify with the individuals in vulnerable positions.

The universal conciliator is another pro-victim persona. The collected translations include poetic texts in which the poet occupies the position of a universal conciliator who seeks to reconcile and maintain peaceful relationships between parties involved in a conflict. Through this position, the poet appears as an ethical educator or social conciliator whose descriptions of human conflicts can be perceived as an attempt to reform humanity. Such poetic depictions display concerns about the future and well-being of humankind.

Golan Haji's "A Soldier in the Madhouse"⁵³ provides an example in which the poet adopts the persona of a conciliator. This persona considers that the perpetrators of crimes are themselves victimized humans who deserve sympathy and help; they are not simply victimizers who should be punished for their criminal actions. This persona sympathizes with soldiers and features them as victims of fear or of a conflict they were involuntarily pushed into. The following excerpt from "A Soldier in the Madhouse" describes the face and eyes of an injured soldier receiving medical care in a hospital:

I stare at the dark in the dirty white

It turns out to be an eye staring back at me

Wherever I looked I find myself multiplying

There are stairs devouring me

Leave nothing but a crust if I touch it with my fingertips I would vanish...

⁵³ This poem describes Haji's experience when he was working as a medical doctor in a hospital that treated traumatized soldiers. This poem, along with other poems, introduces him as a person who wants to find a remedy for conflicts or preventive actions to protect humans from getting involved in crimes against other humans. The poem was collected from the website of the BBC and can be accessed at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p035w98n>.

How terrified I am by the eyes of the terrified

Everyone who is terrified terrifies.

Haji's observations here draw attention to the circumstances that change humans into beasts and, at the same time, into victims who suffer from the consequences of their actions. The concluding line, "Everyone who is terrified terrifies," communicates a message that fear is a major source of atrocities or a factor that drives humans to be killers. Haji's adoption of the persona of a universal conciliator can be viewed as a strategy through which the poet is able to sympathize with humans who are forced to turn into victimizers.

The persona of a universal conciliator in examples of poetry of witness enables a text producer to focus on the universal aspects of human conflicts, to draw attention to the roots of violence, and to promote an understanding of the circumstances that turn humans into victims and victimizers.

The presence of the poet as a witness (i.e., witness-persona) appears in poems focused on witnessing the events causing pain to himself/herself or to other fellow humans. The persona of a witness is declared explicitly in the poetic text. In "Schizophrenia," for example, Almadhoun's witness-persona moves between the past, the present, and the future to provide vivid descriptions of the impact of wars on humanity.

The poem tells a story in which a witness visits the city of Ypres and its graveyard to reflect on soldiers who fell in World War I in the first gas attack and then links his visit to the gas attack that took place in Damascus. While walking along the burial ground, the witness thinks about the lives of dead soldiers and compares them to the lives of humans who live around the graveyard, saying "I, / witness who turned up late, survey the gravestones calmly, ... / A witness from lands whose / sons are not permitted to give witness." Later in the poem, the

witness appears as both a victim and victimizer: “I remain, suspended between the contradictions, I, witness... / martyr who never made it, killer and killed, culprit and / victim.”

After Almadhoun’s persona provides witness to atrocities caused by a war that took place in the past, the persona also bears witness to a similar event in which civilians fall victims to a gas attack in Damascus. In his testimony, the witness says that “Ypres / was a nightmare that ended a hundred years ago and Damascus is a / nightmare happening now.” Almadhoun continues his witness while juxtaposing the suffering of Syrian people with the suffering of the victims buried in the Ypres graveyard.

The persona of a witness displays the poet’s intention to be listed as a witness to human atrocities. The poet uses this persona to perhaps bring more attention to their poetic description and give more credibility to their stories.

Last but not least, romance in times of suffering is also employed as a form of pro-victim persona. Love and romance are common motifs in poetry in general and Arabic poetry in particular. Examples of poetry of witness examined in this study showcase love relationships surrounded by multiple forms of suffering. Here, the poet adopts the role of a lover involved in love stories that are mixed with various manifestations of suffering. For example, Alkatreb’s poems combine love with distress⁵⁴. In these poems, the lover is suffering from the circumstances that separate him from his beloved and that cause pain to those who are unable to come together. Love here could be seen as a medium through which the poet indirectly speaks about the suffering of ordinary people who strive to protect their love in times of uncertainty. In “The City of the Blind,” for example, Alkatreb talks about his desire to reach out to his beloved,

⁵⁴ Alkatreb’s poems are featured on a website that talks about his poetic talent. All his poems revolve around love relationships that are linked to situations from the Syrian crisis. The poems can be found at http://pcccwriting.blogspot.ca/2013/02/national-translation-month-akram-al_1192.html. The poems are translated by Osama Esber.

saying that he wants to walk “barefoot” to her, but he is unable to afford a ride to her place: “Barefoot, I want to walk towards you, / unable to pay for a ride.” Later in the poem, he describes himself as a helpless person or “bough / Cut from a tree that bends in front of [her] house.”

In the subsequent poems, Alkatreb provides more details about living and having a love affair in times of conflict. For instance, in “I Cannot Describe all this Blood,” the lover, while reflecting on his love relationship, provides a picture of mass killings and bloodshed surrounding his romantic relationship: “How can I become an adult while running towards you, / Drunk a little bit, unable to describe all this blood / Even in an evil life?” In another poem titled “Under the Sun of the Caucasus Mountains,” the motif of love is juxtaposed with the experience of exile. In this poem, Alkatreb juxtaposes his waiting for his beloved with the long waiting of Caucasian or Armenian⁵⁵ individuals longing to go back to such places as “Ararat Mountain⁵⁶” or Caucasian territories from which they were displaced. Of these waiting feelings, he says, “I wait for you, like a Circassian man, dreaming of a mat under the Caucasus sun; / Or an Armenian longing [for] Ararat Mountain from the window of a train at al-Hijaz station⁵⁷.”

In these examples, the poet juxtaposes romantic contemplations with multiple forms of suffering that range from harsh conditions of life in zones of conflict to suffering in exile. After introducing emotions stirred by a love relationship, the poet skillfully and swiftly diverges to the bitter realities associated with such a relationship. The depictions of romance exhibit the poet’s

⁵⁵ The poem has references to the hardships associated with the lives of such minority communities as Caucasian, Kurdish, Armenian, and Circassian. These groups left their home places to resettle in Syria. The poem shows their attachment to things and places that remind them of their homes.

⁵⁶ Name of a mountain in present-day Armenia.

⁵⁷ A train station in Damascus.

ability to utilize such a common theme in poetry to skillfully communicate agonies associated with the circumstances surrounding the suffering of Syrian citizens now.

In short, the multiple forms of the persona examined above reveal text producers' strong desire to be present in the poetic text, to speak for his/her fellow humans, and to comment on hardships associated with the Syrian crisis. The explicit presence of a poet in a poetic text helps him/her bring more credibility to his/her description, hold the attention of intended audiences, and establish proximity with his/her intended readers. In such strategic endeavors, the poet's persona becomes an integral part of the poem, its message, and the possible inferences the reader may make about it and its surroundings.

5.1.2.3. *Victim-Centered Language*

In addition to the various forms of persona examined above, other strategies that help a text producer focus attention on the suffering of victimized agents are found in the text's linguistic properties. At a text-linguistic level, I have highlighted three elements that show how a text producer consciously or unconsciously employs lexical choices and a style of writing that effectively communicate the suffering of a victim in a poetic text: story-telling style, symbolic reference, and undisrupted linguistic representation.

The story-telling style appears frequently in examples of poetry of witness. Involving the use of plain language and simple lexical choices, a story-telling style is concerned with the sequence of events affecting the characters featured in a poetic text. The use of plain language enhances the communicative effect of a poetic text and enables readers to easily comprehend its intended messages. For example, Najat Abdulsamad uses plain language to report on what is

happening in isolated places in Syria. Her poem “If⁵⁸” provides details about the hardships ordinary people experience in a besieged neighborhood near the city of Damascus. In a story-telling style, Abdulsamad conspicuously demonstrates her concerns about people who are starving: “I don’t care about being pro or anti. / All I want is for my only brother to find food.” Abdulsamad continues to reveal further details about the lives of ordinary people in simple words, calling the characters in the poem her brothers and sisters. She explains that her brother is “seven years old and is as thin as a shadow, and he has not been able to go to school,” that her “sister is also about to collapse from lack of food,” and that her fellow women “have been displaced, each with her husband in a different country.” In her story, references to real places give credibility to her account of the living conditions: “My mother told me that one kilo of rice where they live in al-Ghouta⁵⁹ sells for 5,000 Syrian pounds, and that for months they have been under siege, entrapped without electricity, water, work, or money.” At the end of her short poem, Abdulsamad clearly delivers a message stressing the need to help her people either by getting them out of besieged areas or sending them food, medication and other necessities: “If only I could bring them to me. If only I could send them bread and sugar.”

The story-telling style used in examples of poetry of witness is characterized by the use of simple vocabulary and prose-like poetry. These characteristics enable a text producer to talk clearly about fragments of every day realities that shape the suffering of people living inside or outside Syria, to pass on communicative messages smoothly to his/her intended audiences, and to produce personal accounts that are direct and free of allusive meanings.

⁵⁸ The poem can be accessed at <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/art/najat-abdul-samad-ghada-alatrash-syrian-literature/>.

⁵⁹ The poet refers to the besieged al-Goutah neighborhood in the eastern part of the city of Damascus and draws attention to the lack of basic life needs and people’s inability to buy food for their families.

Symbolic reference is another linguistic tool that intensifies sympathy for the victims. Reference describes the relationship between a referring expression (i.e., a linguistic expression) and its referent(s) (i.e., person, place, or thing) and can be divided into two types: endophoric (reference to a situation within the text) and exophoric (reference to a situation outside the text)” (Carter & McCarthy, 2011, p. 921). Allegorization, for instance, shows how reference relationships are symbolically expressed in order to create a communicative effect that focuses attention on the victimized agent.

Allegorization, as a linguistic tool, is used to conjure up images that bring more attention to referents inside or outside a poetic text. For example, Osama Alomar’s poem titled “Tongue-tie⁶⁰” can be interpreted as an allegory representing censorship and oppression in a certain society. Alomar writes, “[b]efore leaving for work I tied my tongue into a great tie. / My colleagues congratulated me on my elegance. / They praised me to our boss, who expressed admiration and ordered all employees to follow my example.” The whole poem can also be interpreted as an allegory of situations, in which obedience, pretense, and shut mouths are ideal characteristics for individuals who want to avoid trouble. The poem may also indicate that a victimized agent doesn’t have the power to talk about abuses committed against him/her. Allegorization also allows a text producer to implicitly criticize the actions of powerful victimizers.

The use of symbolic language, along with its internal or external reference relationships, thus, helps a text producer draw attention to certain elements inside or outside a text and, at the same time, adhere to the aesthetic demands of poetry writing. This communicative strategy allows a text producer to focus attention on a victimized agent by creating concise and

⁶⁰ The poem can be found at <http://blueflowerarts.com/artist/osama-alomar/#Selected-Writings>.

condensed messages about events described in poetic language. In so doing, the text producer prepares his/her intended readers, regardless of their position on a described event, to accept concealed criticism.

Undisrupted linguistic representation, in turn, is an important characteristic of victim-centered language. I use the term undisrupted linguistic representation to describe the frequent use of linguistic expressions that are pertinent to the same referent in a way which maintains the focus on a victim or form of suffering throughout the text. Again, Golan Haji's "Shooting Sportsmen"⁶¹ is a good example that shows how a victim-oriented communicative effect can be created by a sequence of multiple referents and little attention to or even absence of victimizing agents from the poetic description. With such a strategy, the victims remain in the center of attention throughout Haji's poem, which is comprised of 40 verses. The following verses show how a continuous focus on victimized agents is achieved:

Passengers in minibuses paid for their death in the morning with ten liras...

Then they came, cancelled their appointments,

Picked their teeth to throw the remains of our hearts to ants...

They blocked the entries of cities and the openings to the squares...

They left us insomnia and a list of names,

Dust which the hungry licked off their shoes,

Armour of trash bins...

Jugs of turbid water, a shoe on the road...

They murdered the madman of the quarter, the milk vendor and the parsley seller.

They killed the window and the sister who looked from it...

⁶¹ The poem appeared on the website of Arabic Literature (in English) at <https://arablit.org/2013/02/02/two-views-of-syria-speaks-a-view-of-syria-through-the-arts/>.

They crucified the carpenter, strangled the goldfinch and slaughtered the singer...

In this poem, the opening lines introduce readers to what seems to be an urban place, in which ordinary people still live and perform their daily routines as they continue to use “minibuses” to move around. Ironically the fare, “10 liras,” that the commuters pay to use this means of transportation in Damascus has become the price they pay for their death. The poem uses only one pronoun (i.e., “they”) to describe the victimizers whose actions cause multiple forms of suffering to a wide range of victims, all ordinary people. The pronoun “they⁶²,” which refers to anonymous armed victimizers, occurs more than 10 times in the poem to introduce verbs denoting actions that cause various forms of suffering. Expressions like “insomnia,” “list of names,” “Dust,” “turbid water,” among other words,” reveal such forms of suffering as feelings of anxiety, lack of food and other life necessities, exploitation of merchants, and humiliation. Words like “madman of the quarter,” “milk vendor,” “parsley seller,” “sister,” “carpenter,” “goldfinch,” and “singer” are all referents to ordinary people who are unable to escape the forms of suffering caused by military conflicts.

Through an undisrupted listing of victim-focused expressions from the beginning of the poetic text to its end, the poem creates an effect that emphasizes the hardships and stresses imposed on ordinary Syrian people who become victims of violence, cold weather, hunger, stress, and exploitation. The use of one word referring to anonymous victimizers and a sequence of words that stand for atrocities and victimized agents helps the text producer keep the focus on the action causing the suffering and on its victims.

⁶² The English language uses the passive voice to hide the doer of an action in a sentence. To do so, Arabic uses a suffix that is added to the verb in its active voice. This suffix is translated into English as “They” to perhaps maintain the active voice structure in the target language.

The communicative strategies I outline above imply an inclination to focus on forms of suffering vulnerable people experience. Throughout the victimizing agent is, however, absent from the actions causing suffering. I interpret this absence as a tactic or a translation choice that avoids instigating further conflicts. Based on Folkart's (2007) suggestion that poetic texts tell stories in a style that "force[s] its way through the wall of language ... to put us into more or less unmediated contact with fragments of world" (Folkart, 2007, pp. 1-2), I suggest that the analyzed communicative strategies help text producers draw attention to the repercussions of actions of violence, establish proximity with intended audiences and enhance sympathy for the victims, and reduce possible confrontations with audiences holding opposing views on a described event.

If the poetic text is capable of creating a process of interaction that transforms the alterity presented in the poem into the identity of the target reader, engaging him/her in a "ceaseless shift from I to you" (Meschonnic, 1999/2011, p. 46), I consider these communicative strategies to speak to the effectiveness of the examined poetic accounts in building a relationship between the victimized voices in the poetic text (i.e., the "I") and the reader (i.e., the "you"). Such a relationship enables the victimized voices to connect with the consciousness of the intended reader who is likely to become engaged in the process of constructing meanings out of the foreign poem or the poetic medium of communication that "has the capability to create useful, credible, and trustworthy truths" (Shapiro, 2004, p. 147). The examined translations, thus, indicate that, regardless of the forces surrounding a translation activity, the act of bearing witness to the suffering of victimized agents requires a language that focuses the attention on the forms of suffering and on the victims affected.

The focus on the victims in the themes I observed in the contents of the collected translations as well as the communicative strategies I identified above can also be discussed with

reference to Habermas's (1981/1987) notion of communicative action. According to Habermas (1981/1987), there are two types of linguistic communication: communicative action and instrumental action. While a communicative action is intended to achieve mutual understanding, an instrumental action is driven by a goal to serve a certain agenda (Fultner, 2011; Habermas, 1981/1987). With the distinction between communicative and instrumental actions in mind, I propose that the focus on the victims and the absence of the victimizers from the selected translations are indicative of a communicative action which aims to achieve an understanding of the suffering of Syrians rather than an instrumental action that serves the agendas of a certain political system or that is intended to instigate further violence.

In summary, this section has attempted to provide answers to the first research question (i.e., How do online translations of Syrian poetry of witness communicate the impact of the Syrian crisis?). To address this question, I analyzed the contents of the collected translations, identified the recurrent themes, and outlined several communicative strategies that highlight the suffering of Syrian people. The analyses were based on content analysis (McDonough Dolmaya, 2011), Nord's (1988/2005) notion of communicative effect, and Habermas's (1981/1987) concept of communicative action.

Relying on the content analysis, I generated subthemes from the poetic texts and grouped them into unifying themes that describe the topics of the collected translations. My analysis showed that the majority of these translations revolve around topics that focus on the struggles of Syrian *dissident* voices and the suffering of the victims in zones of conflict. I used Nord's (1988/2005) model of analysis to examine the communicative effects inscribed in the examined poetic texts, where the text's communicative effect—defined as the possible impact that “works on the recipient” of the translated text (Nord, 1988/2005, p. 131)—was measured by looking at

the text's internal and external elements (e.g. subject matter, presuppositions, lexical choices, the text producer's intended messages). Relying on these elements, I examined the communicative effects as well as the communicative strategies in the textual data and found that the translated poetic texts communicate the suffering of Syrians through communicative effects and strategies of communication that place the people exposed to atrocities in the center of attention. My analysis was also informed by Habermas's (1981/1987) concept of communicative action; based on this concept, I argued that the analyzed poetic texts imply a communicative action that aims to achieve an understanding of the suffering of ordinary Syrians and of the repercussions of conflicts on humanity.

The victim-centered contents, along with the communicative strategies I observed above, also denote a desire to bear witness to the suffering of the victims of the Syrian crisis and an inclination to communicate this suffering, through translation, to wider audiences. To further examine this desire/inclination, an analysis of the websites and the networks of agents involved in the dissemination of the collected projects is required.

5.2. Websites and Agents

This section is concerned with the second question presented in this research study: How are translations of poetry of witness disseminated on the Internet? Answering this question requires an examination of the websites from which the data were collected, their locations, and the dissemination of the collected translations as well as the types of networks of translation agents involved in the process of dissemination. The section concludes with a summary that links the results to theoretical views in translation studies.

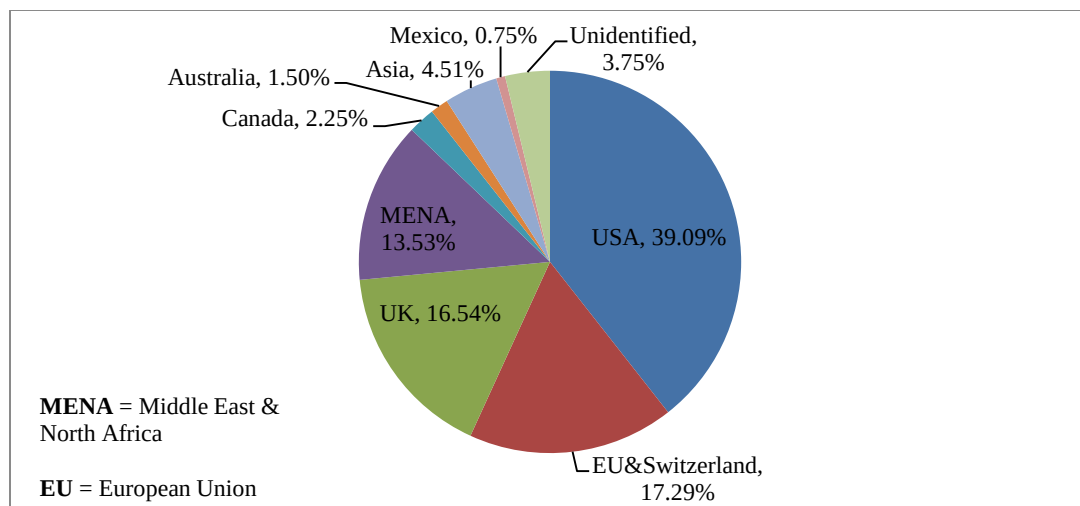
5.2.1. Websites: Locations, Types, and Dissemination

My analysis of the websites included in this study, which I also describe as global spaces, focuses on their locations, their types, and the dynamics of the dissemination of the translations I collected from them. The analysis of these three elements provides further explanations about the dissemination of Syrian poetic texts that appeared in online translations between mid-March 2011 and mid-March 2016.

5.2.1.1. Locations

To identify the location of each website examined in my analysis, I relied on the “contact us” and the “about” sections that include information about where each website is located (see Appendix B). (Only five projects out of the 133 projects collected for this study displayed no information about the location of the websites from which they were collected). The analysis shows that the projects featuring translations of Syrian poetry are initiated by institutions, groups of people, or individuals based in different parts of the world. Figure 1 displays the regions from which the websites are launched.

Figure 1. Website locations.



As illustrated in the pie chart, the websites displaying translations of Syrian poetry are located in different countries around the world (Appendix E lists the names of the countries in descending order according to the number of projects collected from their websites). The fact that the websites come from four major continents (i.e., Asia, Europe, Africa, North America, and Australia) indicates that news about the Syrian crisis was disseminated to all corners of the world. My analysis of the locations shows that the majority of the websites come from four regions: The United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region (see Appendix E). This can be interpreted as an indication of not only the attention these regions pay to stories from Syria but also the availability of space on the Internet as well as the active participation of the institutions and individuals living in these regions.

The large number of the projects collected from the United States and the UK can be ascribed to the active participation of personal blogs in disseminating translations of Syrian poetry. For example, out of the 52 projects from the websites based in the United States, 40 projects were collected from personal websites. Similarly, 90% of the 22 projects from British websites are disseminated via personal websites. In the case of the websites from Europe, most of the projects collected from them are initiated by institutions that promote literary translations. Again, most of the European websites are located in Western Europe.

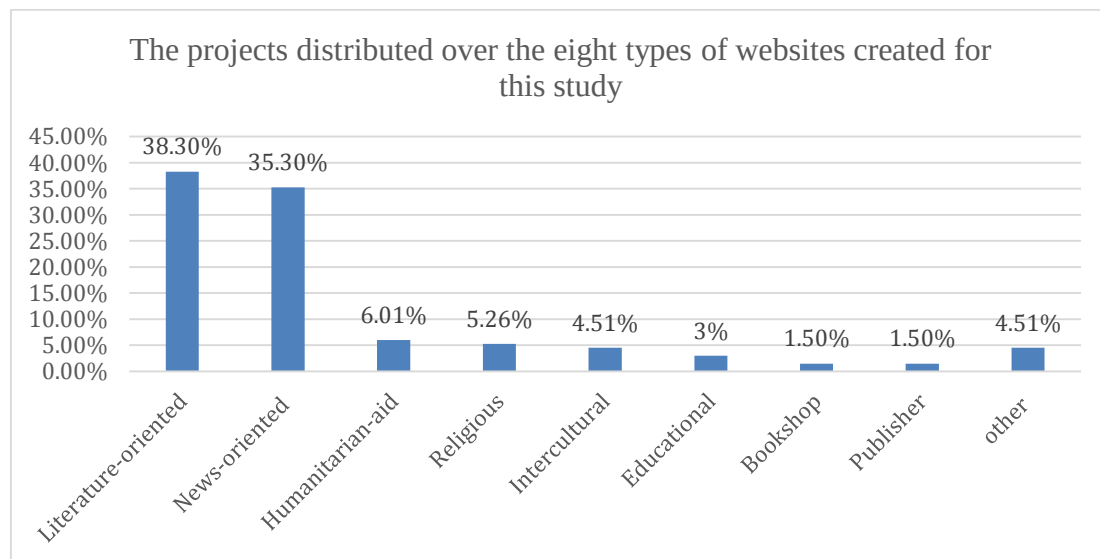
My analysis also revealed that although the majority of the projects are collected from English speaking countries, translations of Syrian poetry are also disseminated by websites based in countries whose first language is not English (see Appendix E). For example, the translation projects collected from the websites located in Germany or the Netherlands outnumber the translation projects collected from the websites from Canada or Australia. It is interesting to see

that the projects collected from the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region (13.53%) are close in number to the projects collected from the UK (16.54%) and the EU (European Union) and Switzerland region (17.27%). This relatively high percentage of projects compared to the projects collected from Canada or Australia, can partly be ascribed to the strong presence of English language in the countries of this region.

5.2.1.2. Types

After I examined the content of the websites and the information available in the “about” section, I grouped them into eight types based on the scope of work: literature-oriented websites, news-oriented websites, humanitarian-aid websites, religious websites, intercultural websites, educational websites, bookshop websites, and publisher websites. I classified the projects that don’t fit under any of these types as “other.” The following bar chart presents the percentage of the projects for each type.

Figure 2. Website types and project distribution.



The bar chart above reflects the diversity of websites featuring translations of Syrian poetry and shows that the circulation of a poetry translation is not confined to websites that focus on literary works; many of the translation projects are in fact compiled from websites with a different scope of work. However, most of the projects, as indicated in the bar chart, come from literature-oriented and news oriented websites.

The type of literature-oriented website focuses on literary works. I created the name “literature-oriented websites” to group all the websites whose content is dedicated to translations of literary products in one type. This type displays literary works produced by international writers in English translations and, in some cases, into other target languages. The analysis shows that the literature-oriented websites vary in their scope of work and in how they display poetic texts. Based on these differences, I further divided the literature-oriented websites into two sub-types: product-focused and poet-focused websites.

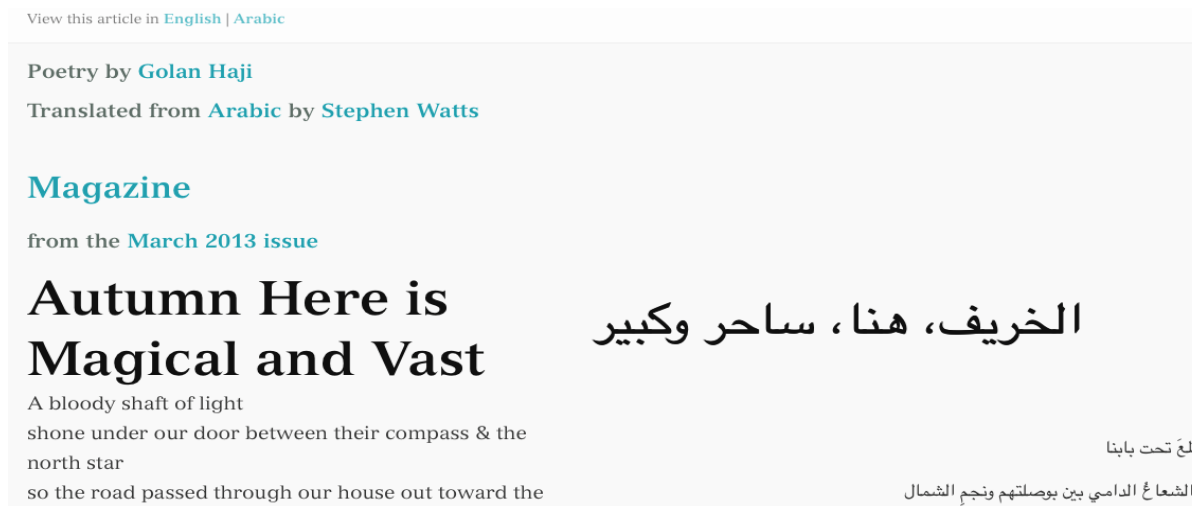
The first subtype is concerned with the projects that feature translated poems independent from any text commenting on their contents. This subtype of website exhibits an interest in literary works that have already been published in the source language or produced by a poet who has already established a reputation in his/her mother tongue. I noticed that although there is a variation in the way translations of poetic texts are displayed, the product-focused websites often provide introductory information about the source poet and his/her translator(s) and then display samples of the poet’s contributions along with their translations into English and, in some cases, other languages. Among the websites I classified under this subtype are Words without Borders⁶³, Poetry Translation Center⁶⁴, Lyrikline⁶⁵, and Asymptote⁶⁶.

⁶³ Words without Borders is a literary magazine based in New York, the US. Its website can be browsed at <https://www.wordswithoutborders.org>.

⁶⁴ Poetry Translation Center can be accessed at <https://www.poetrytranslation.org>.

The website of Words without Borders displays the source text, the target text in English language only, and a bilingual page that juxtaposes the source text with the target text. I collected two projects from this website: the first project features Golan Haji and the other one showcases a poem by Mohamed Raouf Bachir, a Syrian poet from Aleppo. The website introduces Golan Haji as a Syrian poet whose first poetry collection in Arabic has won a poetry prize and includes a mention of his published works in Arabic⁶⁷. The following screenshot shows the bilingual page that exhibits Haji's poem "Autumn Here is Magical and Vast"⁶⁸. In the left hand corner, there is a link to the source text, the target text, and to other pages that offer information about the source poet, the translator, and the Arabic language.

Figure 3. A screenshot from the Words without Borders website.



Similar to Words without Borders, the Poetry Translation Center, which is based in London in the UK, publishes only translations into English. Besides the information about the source poet and his/her translator, the website offers explanations about the process of

⁶⁵ Based in Berlin, Germany, Lyrikline can be accessed at <https://www.lyrikline.org/en/home/>.

⁶⁶ Asymptote can be accessed at <https://www.asymptotejournal.com>.

⁶⁷ The website of Words without Borders provides a brief biographical statement about Golan Haji and his translator at <https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/contributor/golan-haji>.

⁶⁸ The full text can be accessed at <https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/article/bilingual/autumn-here-is-magical-and-vast>.

translation, lists the challenges associated with rendering a text from Arabic into English, and provides two forms of translation: literal translation and final translation. The literal translation refers to the product of the first translator who takes on the task of translation, while the final translation is carried out by a team of translators who revise the literal translation and, as the website explains, adapt it to the norms of the target language. The two projects I collected from this website display three poems written by Fouad Fouad⁶⁹.

Devoted to contemporary poetry, Lyrikline, a Germany-based website, is developed by Literaturwerkstatt Berlin in collaboration with a network of international agents. While Words without Borders and Poetry Translation Center use English as the only target language, Lyrikline is navigated in nine languages—namely, German, English, French, Slovenian, Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Spanish, and Portuguese, and shows translations from a source language into several target languages. For example, Lyrikline has featured a translation project that shows a full poem titled “I cannot Attend⁷⁰” by Almadhoun and its translations into English, Swedish, Chinese, Dutch, French, Macedonian, and Italian. When clicking on the link to that poem, I found 11 other poems listed under the name of the same author, together with their translations from Arabic into several target languages. The following screenshot displays a segment of Almadhoun’s “I cannot Attend,” alongside its translation into English. The poem compares the living conditions in the poet’s current place in Northern Europe with those in Damascus and lists the reasons why the poet can’t go back to Damascus:

⁶⁹ Fouad’s poems can be read at <https://www.poetrytranslation.org/poets/fouad-mohammad-fouad>.

⁷⁰ The poem can be accessed at <https://www.lyrikline.org/en/poems/i-cant-attend-11155>.

Figure 4. A screenshot from the Lyrikline website.



Under the motto “listen to the poet,” the website of Lyrikline displays the works of its poets under three tabs: Poets, Poems, and New. Visitors can search for their favorite poets by alphabet (from A-Z), by language (approximately 70 languages), or by country (around 108 countries). The website also offers the source author the opportunity to read his/her poems in Arabic and provides a recording of the poem in its source and target languages. Lyrikline has a newsletter section and a blog attached to it, to which posts about poets and comments from followers are uploaded.

Based in Asia, Asymptote exhibits poetic texts in translations from different source languages into English. The website indicates that Asymptote has published literary products from 96 countries and 72 languages. The project collected from this website includes 14 poems, which are written by Dara Abdallah and translated into English by Mona Kareem. The poet’s biographical note explains that the poems were taken from his poetry collection “Loneliness Spoils its Victims,” which was published in Arabic in 2013 by a publishing house in Bahrain. The note also explains that the collection is comprised of 77 poems that talk about the Syrian

crisis and the poet's experience in prison. The project appears under the title "Fourteen Poems from Loneliness Spoils its Victims."

Although the four websites examined above show different ways of displaying their published materials, as is the case with other product-focused websites, they often feature complete poems that are not embedded in other text. Nor are there texts that explain or comment on the circumstances of their production. Their contents consist of poetic depictions that implicitly or explicitly relate the impact of the Syrian crisis on Syrian people or a poet's personal experience of suffering.

The second subtype, poet-focused websites, centers on poets and the circumstances associated with their literary productions. In this subtype, the poetic depiction is embedded in another text that discusses a certain topic or talks about a certain poet. Examples of this subtype are the websites affiliated with PEN International⁷¹ and the International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN)⁷². These websites feature literary works from an activist perspective—they publish poets and writers who are at risk because of their writings. PEN International and its international centers, for instance, display articles that defend freedom of expression and advocate for endangered writers from all over the world.

In collaboration with organizations from the United Nations, PEN International also launches campaigns, which aim at releasing imprisoned writers by putting pressure on the authorities that hold them in prison. Literary samples from a writer for whom a campaign is organized appear in articles or texts posted on PEN International's website. For instance, one of the projects collected from PEN International include three postcards about three Syrian poets. Each postcard is comprised of two sides. The first side shows a poet's picture and name, an

⁷¹ PEN International has a website that can be accessed at <https://pen-international.org>.

⁷² The website of ICORN can be browsed at <https://www.icorn.org>.

extract from his/her poetry in both Arabic and English, and the name of the translator(s) who translated the text from Arabic into English. The following screenshot shows a postcard about poet Dia'a Al-Abdulla and an extract from his poem "The Crypt."

Figure 5. A postcard on the PEN International website.



The back of the postcard includes information about the poet in question and a request to send it to the authorities of the country in which the poet is detained.

ICORN, in turn, shows concerns for the safety of endangered writers and offers shelter to those who are able to escape zones of danger. While PEN International organizes campaigns to free incarcerated writers, ICORN offers places of residence for freed writers or those who have escaped persecution where they live. ICORN's websites share stories of exiled writers along with samples of their works in translation. A project collected from ICORN's website features an interview with Ugar⁷³, a Syrian poet who has been offered refuge in Barcelona, which is a

⁷³ The interview appears in an article titled "In Syria, the Place of my Birth, People do not Know the Meaning of Freedom." The article also displays one poem written by Ugar, in Arabic and in a translation into English. The article can be found at <http://icorn.org/article/syria-place-my-birth-people-do-not-know-meaning-freedom>.

member of the ICORN network. The interview presents Ugar's reflection on his prison experience, his views on the Syrian conflict, and a sample of his poetry in Arabic and its English translation. The city of Pittsburgh in the US is another member of ICORN, which has an online magazine called Sampsonia Way. This magazine provides space for exiled writers to express their opinions on subject matters they advocate for and to share samples of their works in translation. The project collected from Sampsonia Way makes available an interview with Faraj Bayrakdar. This interview presents Bayrakdar's take on the Syrian situation and the dangers associated with writing poetry that displeases official authorities.

The news-oriented websites include poetry in news reports. Under this type, I grouped all the websites of news media and journalists where views on world affairs are expressed. Such websites primarily focus on delivering stories in the form of news reports or articles covering events at both regional and global levels. In main stream media, excerpts of poetry translation are presented under such sections as Conflict, Arts, Poetry, Middle East and Culture, etc. These sections do not appear on the main page of a news-oriented website. Examples of such websites include TV satellite channels (e.g. the British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC] and Aljazeera, newspapers (e.g. the Guardian and the New York Times), and radio stations (e.g. Public Radio International [PRI] and WNYC [W New York City radio station]).

TV satellite channels like Aljazeera and the BBC have broadcast programs about the poetry coming out of the Syrian crisis. These programs have focused on the role of poetry in documenting the impact of the Syrian crisis on Syrian people. And Aljazeera, for example, has launched a series called "Poets of Protest," in response to the poetry associated with the wave of the Arab Spring. One episode featured the Syrian poet Hala Mohammad under the title "Hala Mohammad: Waiting for Spring." The episode was first broadcast in 2012 and republished in

2014. In this episode, Hala Mohammad reflects on the plight of the Syrian people and the role of poetry in covering their suffering. She first talks about the first refugee camp that was set up near the Syrian-Turkish border and explains how she was surprised to see a refugee camp for Syrians. In reaction to this incident, she wrote a poem titled “the Butterfly Said,” in which she presents a dialogue between a Syrian girl and a Turkish butterfly flying near the girl’s tent: “The butterfly said ‘who are you?’ / The refugee replied ‘I am me.’” Hala Mohammad explains that “me” here stands for herself as a fragile person and says that she wants the world to see the fragility of humanity as opposed to the violent side of humans, which is what dominates news stories everywhere. All the poetry extracts cited in this episode are linked to events from the Syrian crisis and focus on such topics as injustice, oppression, and freedom. The following screenshot shows the title of the article featuring Hala Mohammad on Aljazeera and an extract from her poetry.

Figure 6. A screenshot from the Aljazeera website.



One year later, the website of Aljazeera published an article that contained interviews with a group of Syrian writers and encompassed samples of poetry that reflected their views on the sudden political change in Syria. The list of poets included poets living in Syria like Najat Abdulsamad and Yousef Abou Yahya and poets living in exile like Maram Al-Masri and Mohja Kahf, Ghada Al-Atrash, and Ghias Aljundi. The article appeared under the title “A 'New Poetry' Emerges from Syria's Civil War.”⁷⁴

Similarly, the BBC’s website published in 2015 an episode titled “Poems from Syria,” in which news journalist Mike Embley interviewed a number of Syrian poets and translators, including Golan Haji, Aicha Arnaout, Ghada Al-Atrash, and Ghias Aljundi⁷⁵. Focusing on Syrian tragedies through the personal accounts of this group of Syrian poets and writers, the episode featured poems in a podcast with comments from authors and translators about events from the Syrian crisis and on the role of poetry in depicting these events. The discussions revolved around the circumstances under which the described poems were composed, highlighted views advocated by Syrian dissident voices, and reflected on the suffering of Syrian people caught up in zones of conflict. The following screenshot shows the title of the episode under which the interviews were featured on the BBC.

⁷⁴ The article can be read at <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/09/20139784442125773.html>.

⁷⁵ The program can be accessed at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p035w98n>.

Figure 7. A screenshot of a documentary program on the BBC.



I also added the projects I collected from the websites of newspapers to these news-oriented websites. Websites such as the Guardian, the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Atlantic, and the like, have all published articles about Syrian poetry with titles like “Poetry of Revolution,” “A Poem from Damascus,” “From the Rubble of Syria’s Civil War, Visceral Poetry Arises,” “Maram al-Masri, Violence, and Syrian Literature,” “Shadows of War,” “Syria’s War Poets,” “Syrian Refugees: The Singular Stories of the Millions on the Move,” and so forth.

The collected newspaper reports include poetry translations in articles that discuss the new Syrian poetry or in interviews with Syrian poets. The interviews feature both renowned poets living in exile and new poets living in refugee camps. Most of the collected news articles publish interviews with poets who support the public demonstrations, especially in the early phase of the crisis. In these interviews, these poets speak out about the violent reactions of the government forces against protestors as well as about the suffering of civilians caught up in the conflict between extremist groups and government forces in the subsequent phases. For example, Maram Al-Masri, another renowned Syrian poet, is featured in an interview with the New York

Daily News, in which she refers to poetry as a form of dissent and a voice for victims of oppression. As shown in the screenshot below, the interview appeared in 2013 in an article titled “Maram Al-Masri, Violence, and Syrian Literature,”⁷⁶

Figure 8. An excerpt from the New York Daily News.

Maram al-Masri, violence, and Syrian literature

PAGE VIEWS | SEP 20, 2013 | 3:59 PM

BY: SANDRA JENINA

Syria is a treacherous place for writers. In 2012, the Committee to Protect Journalists ranked Syria the most dangerous place in the world for journalists. Assad maintains a cyber squad to police the Internet.

Interviews with ordinary individuals who happen to write poetry as a hobby are also present in newspaper articles. In such articles, journalists visit refugee camps to meet with children, youth, and old people who have a talent for writing poetry. The interviews typically address such topics as the reasons for escaping their home country, the dangers of the journey to safe havens outside of Syria, living conditions in refugee camps, longing for home, etc. For instance, a journalist working for the Atlantic magazine⁷⁷ visits a camp in Turkey, meets with two young poets, and asks them about the living conditions in the refugee camp and why they left their country. As indicated in the screenshot below, the article appeared under the title “Syria’s War Poets” and featured two short poems as samples of the two poets’ productions.

⁷⁶ The article can be accessed at <https://www.nydailynews.com/blogs/pageviews/maram-al-masri-violence-syrian-literature-blog-entry-1.1641048>.

⁷⁷ The article can be accessed on the website of The Atlantic at <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/07/syria-war-poets-refugees/375195/>.

Figure 9. A screenshot of an article on the Atlantic website.



Poems from Syria also appear on the websites of radio stations that broadcast local and/or national news and host talk shows. For example, both the website of PRI (Public Radio International) and the website of the WNYC (W New York City radio station) have broadcast articles featuring an interview with Ghada Al-Atrash and poems that refer to the current political situation in Syria. In these articles, Al-Atrash comments on the new poetry coming out of Syria as well as her translations of Abdulsamad’s poem “When I am Overcome by Weakness” and Abou Yahya’s poem “I am Syrian” as examples of contemporary Syrian poetry concerned with the suffering of ordinary Syrians. Both poems had already appeared on the Aljazeera website.

In addition to the websites of TV satellites channels, newspapers, and radio stations, I collected Syrian poems from personal websites that belong to individuals who work as reporters for other news agencies and as freelance journalists. The individuals who produce stories for news agencies also use their own websites to share or comment on their own contributions. For example, the film director Yasmin Fedda, who interviewed the Syrian poet Hala Mohammad for

Aljazeera, has a personal website that featured this interview with Fedda's comments on it⁷⁸.

Fedda wrote an introduction about Hala Mohammad and about the use of poetry in response to the Syrian crisis events, and then published her contribution to the Aljazeera website.

The individuals who identify themselves as independent journalists use their personal websites to comment on stories covered by mainstream news outlets. Utilizing the space available on the Internet, these individuals have the opportunity to select and write about stories that reflect their own opinions. For example, Andy Worthington describes himself as investigative journalist and publishes articles about Guantanamo Prison, human rights abuses, war on terror, and other stories involving human rights violations on his personal website. The project I collected from this personal website features a poem in an article that refers to the suffering of detained voices of dissent. In this article, Worthington reflects on the Arab Spring protests, calls them "revolutionary impulses sweeping the Middle East"⁷⁹ and makes references to content from the Observer and Aljazeera.

Besides the projects I grouped under literature-oriented and news-oriented websites, I collected projects from other websites with different scope and areas of interests. Based on how work is oriented, I classified these websites into such types as humanitarian websites, intercultural websites, religious websites, educational websites, bookstore websites, and the websites of publishing houses (see the bar chart above for the percentage of the projects collected from each type).

⁷⁸ The article can be found at <https://tellbrakfilms.com/films/waiting-for-spring/>.

⁷⁹ The article can be accessed at <http://www.andyworthington.co.uk/2011/04/24/the-roots-of-revolution-in-syria-the-sad-tale-of-tal-al-mallouhi-a-girl-imprisoned-for-blogging/>.

I use the term humanitarian websites to refer to the websites launched by humanitarian-aid organizations like Oxfam, Save the Children⁸⁰, Their World⁸¹, and the UNICEF⁸². For example, Oxfam—an organization with several affiliate organizations worldwide, including, Oxfam UK, Oxfam Canada, Oxfam America, Oxfam Ireland, and Oxfam Quebec—is dedicated to helping distressed children. Its website publishes stories about children living under difficult circumstances. The organization was first established in 1942 in the city of Oxford in England by groups of social activists and Oxford academics as a response to the famines impacting countries under the control of Great Britain. Today, Oxfam continues to focus its efforts on alleviating the effects of poverty in different parts of the world. The translation projects I collected from the websites of Oxfam feature, as explained in the previous section, an interview with a displaced Syrian child, Reema, who is introduced as a girl who uses her talent in poetry writing to reflect on the events that forced her family to leave Syria. The interview is presented in an article that recounts the Oxfam visit to Reema’s family. Other Oxfam’s websites, including Oxfam America,

⁸⁰ Save the Children is a humanitarian organization that advocates for children, defends human rights, and provides help to children in poor and developing countries. With headquarters in England, Save the Children has a network of more than 25 other member organizations in countries like America, Canada, Australia, Mexico, India, and Jordan. The project collected from the website of this organization features an article with extracts of poetry written by Syrian children living as refugees in Egypt and Jordan. The project is published under the title “Poetry is helping young people affected by the Syrian crisis express their feelings and find hope for the future.” The article can be found at <https://www.savethechildren.org.au/about-us/media-and-publications/latest-news/years/2014/finding-freedom-in-words>.

⁸¹ Their World is another humanitarian organization that advocates for children and focuses on children’s right for access to education. A website operated by this organizations has published an interview with a Syrian child who loves to write and read poetry. The interview is presented in an article titled “Syria’s Young Talent: The Girl who Writes Poems to Feel Better.” The article can be accessed at <http://www.aworldatschool.org/news/entry/Syria-Young-Talent-the-girl-who-writes-poems-to-feel-better-2509>.

⁸² The website of the UNICEF has featured an article about a displaced child who lives as a refugee in Turkey. The article, “Ala Finds Peace in Poetry,” can be found at <http://childrenofsyria.info/2014/03/19/ala-finds-peace-in-poetry/>.

Oxfam Ireland, and Oxfam England, have circulated samples of Reema's poetry in English translation, along with the article that describes the living conditions in Reema's place in Lebanon, Reema's feelings about her home and friends, and the child's desire to go back to school.

Dedicated to promoting intercultural dialogue between the West and Islamic cultures, Qantara, which I classified as an intercultural website, is an example of websites dedicated to cross-cultural relations. Qantara, which means a bridge in Arabic, is a project initiated by the German Foreign Office in collaboration with other German institutions such as the Federal Center for Political Education, Deutsche Welle, the Goethe Institute, and the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations. The website of Qantara (Qantara.de) displays articles that deal with political, social, and cultural topics from diverse cultural perspectives. The website can be navigated in three languages: German, English, and Arabic. The content of Qantara.de can be browsed under seven tabs: "home," "politics," "society," "culture," "topics," "essays," and "photo essays." On its home page, the website shows that its content focuses on "dialogue of religions," dialogue of cultures," "international dialogue," and democracy and civil society.⁸³ The only project collected from Qantara.de appears under the tab named "culture" and features a translation of a prose poem written by Hala Mohamamd⁸⁴. The poem relates the story of Syrian uprisings and their consequences on Syrian people.

The remaining types of websites I identified in the bar chart include educational websites that provide materials for both teachers and learners of English or essays focusing on academic

⁸³ The website can be accessed at <https://en.qantara.de>.

⁸⁴ The project can be accessed at <https://en.qantara.de/content/the-syrian-poet-hala-mohammad-they-are-stealing-the-soul-from-our-revolution>.

writing, religion-based websites that use poetry to promote religious teachings, and websites of bookshops and publishers that advertise books on various topics.

5.2.1.3. *Dynamics of Dissemination*

After examining the websites featuring translations of Syrian poetry and classifying them into several types based on their scope, I identified two types of dissemination based on how a translation of a poetic text is featured: unmediated translations and mediated translations. While the former refers to poetry translations that are posted on a website without a text explaining or commenting on their content, the latter shows poetry translations that are embedded in other text that comments on their content or discusses topics relative to their communicative effect. Of the 133 projects collected for this study, I have observed that the unmediated and mediated translation projects respectively constitute 24% and 76%. This percentage may be interpreted as an inclination of the examined global spaces to comment on the events of the Syrian crisis.

On the one hand, an unmediated translation project refers to a poetry translation(s) collected from a website that doesn't explain its communicative effect or link it to a certain context of events associated with Syria or any other place. This type of projects appears frequently in literature-oriented websites that focus on the works of acclaimed Syrian poets and on the quality of their poetry (e.g. Lyrikline, Poetry International Web, Poetry Translation Center, Words without Borders, Asymptote, Citybooks). In such translation projects, a translated poem or set of poems is posted online and the reader is invited to read both the source text and its English translation and, in some cases, other target languages.

The reader who doesn't know Arabic relies on the target language in order to interact with the poem's content, grasp its explicit and implicit meanings, and make associations with realities that can be linked to a situation in Syria or any other place in the world. With the

absence of a text that explains the poem's content, such associations are mainly contingent on the reader's familiarity with poetic discourse, his/her knowledge of the language in which a poem is written, as well as his/her opinions about the realities described in the poetic text.

The collected projects show that the unmediated translations are associated with Syrian poets who have already published their source texts in Arabic. An unmediated translation project tends to present a large number of verses and long poetic texts. Nevertheless, the unmediated translations have a relatively static position; most of them remain confined to the website that first published them. For example, Dara Abdallah's 14 poems on Asymptote, Nazih Abou Afach's 8 poems and Adonis's 13 poems on Poetry International Web, and Almadhoun's two poems on Citybooks are all examples of poetry translations that appear on a website that displays little or no flexibility in sharing its content with other websites.

On the other hand, the mediated translations are associated with poems or poetry extracts that are embedded in other text which illustrates the views of an author writing about a certain topic. These translations appear frequently on personal websites, in news articles, in interviews with Syrian poets commenting on the upheavals in Syria and its new poetry, and in essays about the use of arts or other forms of creative expression as a response to the Syrian crisis events. For example, all the poetic texts I collected from the news-oriented websites are featured in mediated translations. The text incorporating a poetic depiction in a mediated translation often aims to draw attention to the use of poetry in portraying the events of the Syrian crisis. The following screenshot shows the title of a news report from the Aljazeera website, in which a group of

Syrian writers and translators talk about a new Syrian poetry that is more literal and visceral in its portrayals of the events of the Syrian crisis⁸⁵.

Figure 10. An excerpt from Cuen's article on the Aljazeera website.



A mediated translation project pays little or, in most cases, no attention to the translator or the process of translation and is concerned with the circumstances surrounding a poetic text. In some cases, two or three lines of poetry are displayed in a long article talking about the new situation in Syria. In other cases, poetry translations are combined with pictures, recordings, or video clips about Syria's conflict, with subtitles in English.

As far as the dissemination of a poetic text from one website to another is concerned, my analysis shows that a mediated translation demonstrates more dynamic movement than an unmediated one. The examined projects have shown that a mediated translation tends to move more frequently and freely on the Internet. For example, the projects initiated by websites such as news-oriented websites, humanitarian-aid websites, and personal websites are more dynamic in movement than the unmediated translations that appear on literature-oriented websites.

⁸⁵ The article, edited by Leigh Cuen, is available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/09/20139784442125773.html>.

A mediated translation also allows the website featuring samples of poetry to express its position on the Syrian conflict. For example, Najat Abdulsamad's poem, "When I am Overcome by Weakness," first appeared on the Aljazeera website in a report on poetry associated with the Syrian protests and the Arab Spring in general. Since then, the poem and its author have reappeared on several other websites in articles that describe the new poetry emerging from Syria and its role in covering the events of the Syrian crisis. I propose that the frequent appearance of Abdulsamad is most probably due to the openness of the websites featuring her poetry and their willingness to share their content. The following is a description of the movement of a sample of Abdulsamad's poetry.

5.2.1.4. *Example of Dissemination*

This example shows the circulation of Najat Abdulsamad's poem "When I am Overcome by Weakness" on the Internet over the period covered by this study. The poem may also have been disseminated on other websites that are not included in the collected data.

Abdulsamad appears in 12 projects collected from several websites including Aljazeera, Truthdig, PRI (Public Radio International), WNYC (W New York City radio), Los Angeles Times, and PBS (The Public Broadcasting Service in Arlington, Virginia). All Abdulsamad's poetic texts have appeared in mediated translation projects. Abdulsamad, who is always described through the words of her translator Ghada Al-Atrash, first appeared on the Aljazeera website in the article titled "A 'New Poetry' Emerges from Syria's Civil War." Written by Leigh Cuen, the article reflects on this poetry and includes quotes by Ghada Al-Atrash and other Syrian writers. In this article, Cuen discusses the characteristics of the new form of Syrian poetry, asks questions about its channels of dissemination, and provides some examples including an extract from Abdulsamad's poem "When I am Overcome by Weakness." The article also indicates that

translator Ghada Al-Atrash discovered Najat Abdulsamad and another poet on Facebook, through which she connects with Syrian poets, takes their poetry, translates it into English, and shares translations on social media. Al-Atrash describes the new poetry coming out of the Syrian crisis as visceral and more literal. Referring to Abdulsamad's poem as an example, Al-Atrash points out that this poetry springs from the depth of the events impacting the Syrian people.

Another project featuring Abdulsamad is presented in the form of a short interview with the translator Ghada Al-Atrash on the PRI website. Published in October 2013, the interview appeared under the title "Take a Peek into Syria through the Poetry Spurred by its War⁸⁶" and reiterated Al-Atrash's description of the new poetry emerging from Syria. Again, Al-Atrash says that she has discovered new poets; one of them is Najat Abdulsamad. Al-Atrash introduces Abdulsamad as an obstetrician, gynecologist, novelist and poet from Sweida, Al-Atrash's hometown in Syria. In the recorded interview, Al-Atrash first recites a few lines from Abdulsamad's poem "When I am Overcome by Weakness" in Arabic and then continues reciting the full poem in English. The recording is followed by an article that discusses the new poetry and new poets emerging from the Syrian crisis and showcases a complete translation of Abdulsamad's poem recited in the interview. The interview also describes Al-Atrash as a writer, teacher, and translator who grew up in Syria and lived in the US for 25 years before moving to Canada.

In the following years, Abdulsamad's poem circulated on several other websites in articles that emphasized what was described in the Aljazeera's report and the article posted on

⁸⁶ The interview and the article can be accessed at <https://www.pri.org/stories/2013-10-12/take-peek-syria-through-poetry-spurred-its-war>.

the PRI website. Among these websites are Truthdig⁸⁷, WNYC radio⁸⁸, the BBC⁸⁹, and Los Angeles Times⁹⁰. The last project featuring Abdulsamad is collected from the PBS website, in which an email interview is conducted with Abdulsamad and translated into English by Ghada Al-Atrash. The project featuring this interview was published in 2016 in an article titled “Imagine our Helpless Feeling – a Syrian Writer’s Plea to the World⁹¹.” It is the first project that features Abdulsamad’s comments on her poetic writing.

On the PBS website, Abdulsamad shares two new poems that are published for the first time in English. The two poems “If” and “Don’t Die” focus on the consequences of the crisis on ordinary Syrian people. Voice recordings are also provided at the end of the article; Abdulsamad recites the two poems in Arabic and Al-Atrash reads out the translations in English. The following screenshot shows how the translation of “If” is displayed on PBS website.

⁸⁷ The project appears in an article by Nataha Hakimi under the title “From the Rubble of the Syrian Civil War, Visceral Poetry Arises.” The article can be read at http://www.truthdig.com/arts_culture/item/from_the_rubble_of_the_syrian_civil_war_visceral_poetry_arises_20130909#below.

⁸⁸ Abdulsamad appears in an article titled “Syria’s New War Poetry.” The article can be accessed at <https://www.wnyc.org/story/syrias-new-war-poetry/>.

⁸⁹ Abdulsamad’s poem “When I am Overcome by Weakness” is recited in Arabic by Al-Atrash and in English by another female who seems to be a native speaker of English. The poem is featured in a documentary program under the title “Poems from Syria.”

⁹⁰ Under the title “Great Read 'Poetry is a Witness' to Suffering Wrought by Syria's Civil War,” the Los Angeles Times has published on its website an article that features two Syrian-American poets who use their poetry as a response to the Syrian crisis events. The article also describes the new poetry emerging from the Syrian crisis and displays some poetic examples including Abdulsamad’s poem “When I am Overcome by Weakness.” The project was found at <https://www.latimes.com/world/great-reads/la-ca-c1-syria-war-poetry-20151026-story.html>.

⁹¹ The article can be accessed at <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/najat-abdul-samad-ghada-alatrash-syrian-literature>.

Figure 11. An excerpt from Abdulsamad's poem "If" on the PBS website.

"If"

“

"I don't care about being *pro* or *anti*. All I want is for my only brother to find food."

Wouldn't it have been better if I had emerged as a wild plant in this soil not belonging to a family, or if I had been a bundle that was accidentally dropped from above by a passing stork onto a peaceful land that did not have someone I was worrying about in all four of its directions?

"I don't care about being *pro* or *anti*. All I want is for my only brother to find food. He is seven years old and is as thin as a shadow, and he has not been able to go to school for a day. My sister is also about to collapse from lack of food. And we, the older

It is worth noting that Abdulsamad is featured in other projects that were excluded from this study because they contained no examples of poetry in them. Moreover, she doesn't appear in any of the projects classified under literature-oriented projects.

In a nutshell, my analysis of the websites from which the projects were collected demonstrated that the English translations of this Syrian poetry are disseminated on websites from the four corners of the world (Asia, Europe, Africa, Australia, and the Americas) and that these websites are not located only in English-speaking countries; other websites from Europe and the Middle East actively participate in the process of dissemination. These websites are components of a cyberspace(s) that welcome(s) poetic texts from Syria and set(s) them, through translation, into motion. My analysis has shown that this cyberspace enables both single individuals and institutions to share their take on issues happening in remote places; it also confirms the views about a globalized world that offers communicative spaces through which people can express their concerns about the suffering of humans in any place around the world and learn to act as members of the same international community (Robertson, 2013; Silverstone, 2007; Tomlinson, 2011).

Based on my analysis, I argue that the cyberspace hosting the examined websites has characteristics different from those described in Casanova's (1999/2004, 2009) international field of literature. For Casanova (1999/2004), the international field of literature is characterized by the domination of central cities (e.g. Paris and London) which determine both the movement and the consecration of literary works in translation. Unlike this centralized international field of literature, I propose that the examined websites exist in a cyberspace or an environment which provides space for many different entities, regardless of their geographical origin, to practice in activities that promote English translations of poetry relating stories from zones of conflict such as Syria.

Furthermore, the cyberspace makes available space for several different types of websites with a wide range of interests and activities; the circulation of translations of Syrian poetry is not limited to literature-oriented websites. In fact, my analysis has shown that more than 60% of the collected projects come from websites primarily concerned with activities other than literary translation (e.g. news-oriented websites, humanitarian websites, intercultural websites, etc.). Based on the contents of the poetic texts I examined in each type, I observed that the difference in the scope of work for each type of website clearly affects the poetic themes selected for publication and the ways they are displayed; the selection process is contingent on the way work is oriented in each type of website.

This difference in the scope of each type of website can be illustrated by comparing the projects in the literature-oriented websites with those in the news-oriented. On the one hand, the projects I classified under the literature-oriented websites tend to focus on the production of acclaimed poets and feature complete poems in both source and target texts. A literature-oriented website may display more than ten complete poems composed by the same author, juxtaposing

the source text with the English translation and, in some cases, with other target languages. However, the analysis of this type of website shows that the poetic translations in most cases are not further disseminated on other websites. On the other hand, a news-oriented website focuses on the news-worthiness of a story and often contains fragments of poetic texts in translation, paying little or even no attention to the translator, the source text, or the process of translation. In this type, poetry translations often appear in English only. Unlike the literature-oriented websites, a story that first appears on a news website is likely to reappear on other such websites, with minor or major changes in the text describing this story, and move more smoothly on the Internet (all the poetic translations I classified under this type of website are embedded in other explanatory text).

As far as the dissemination of a poetic text is concerned, I identified two major ways of dissemination: mediated translations in which the poetic text is embedded in other text and unmediated translations that typically provide no explanations about the contents of the translated texts. The analysis revealed that the mediated translations move more smoothly across the Internet even if the poetic writing is produced by an ordinary person or an amateur poet. In some cases, the literary production of an amateur or a new poet appears more frequently and disseminates more smoothly than the literary works by writers who have achieved recognition at both global and international levels. In fact, my analysis demonstrates that the majority of the collected translations appear in mediated translations, which indicates a tendency on the part of the examined global spaces (i.e., websites) to comment on stories from Syria and participate in the creation of the communicative effect of a translated text. This indication can be further explained in light of the notion of textual and contextual voices proposed by several scholars (e.g. Alvstad & Rosa, 2015; Folkart, 1991; Hermans, 1999).

While “the textual voices” in a translated literary text enable a translating entity to choose and pass on certain messages (Alvstad & Rosa, 2015; Folkart, 1991), “the contextual voice” is pertinent to the surroundings of the translated text and “hence to the multiple agents that produce, promote and write about translations” (Alvstad & Rosa, 2015, p. 4). Keeping this distinction between textual and contextual voices in mind, I found that the tendency to comment on stories or poetic depictions of the Syrian crisis exists in both mediated and unmediated translations. In the unmediated translations, on the one hand, this tendency is manifested in the recurrent themes I explored in the previous section; the recurrent focus on the victims of the Syrian government implies that there is a deliberate process of selection which tends to exclude poetry that might support the Syrian government’s points of view or criticize the destructive intervention of Western countries in Syria. In the mediated translations, on the other hand, this tendency to comment on a poetic description is explicitly expressed in the text embedding the poetic text. Here, in addition to the process of selection, the author of the embedding text breathes his/her own interpretation of the crisis into the translated poetic text, creating a communicative effect that fits the website where the translation appears. For example, while a humanitarian website communicates the immediate need for support of displaced people, a news-oriented website typically focuses on the events that forced these people to leave their homes. Based on my arguments above, I conclude that the dissemination of certain poetic themes is contingent, for the most part, on the availability of websites that welcome poetry in English translations, the diversity of activities performed by these websites, and the website’s openness to sharing its contents with other websites.

5.2.2. Agents

The results of the analyses have demonstrated that the examined cyber-space provides an environment not only for translations to circulate on the Internet but also spaces for translation agents to practice their translation activities. I identified three main types of networks involved in the dissemination of the collected translations on the Internet: single-agent networks, simple networks, and complex networks.

5.2.2.1. *Single-Agent Networks*

The term “single-agent networks” refers to the translation projects promoted on the Internet by one person via personal websites in which one person undertakes the task of circulating a translation project online. Through personal websites, individuals express their own points of view by sharing certain posts from other websites or showcasing personal work. In my analysis of the websites under study, I found that 32 projects (24%) out of the 133 projects were collected from personal websites of individuals with different interests and backgrounds. For example, Moving Poems is a blog managed by its owner, Dave Bonta. Bonta collects a certain type of translation project (i.e., videopoetry) from the Internet and republishes this on his website. As stated on his website, Bonta surfs the Internet for poems that combine poetry and videos, adds them to the archives on his blog, and provides his own comments on each product. Bonta collects video-poems composed in English or video poetry from other source languages only if the videos show English subtitles. Two translation projects were collected from Bonta’s website for this study. Each one features a Syrian poet reciting a poem in Arabic, a video clip, and an English subtitle on the screen.

Another example is Writing Without Paper, a personal website owned by Maureen who describes herself as a writer, a poet, and an editor with 30 years of work experience. On her blog, Maureen shared a poem by Hala Mohammad with a brief introduction to the poet and the “Poets of Protest” series that was originally published on the Aljazeera website⁹². She also added a link to the Aljazeera website to provide more details about the episode featuring Hala Mohammad. The following screenshot shows part of Maureen’s profile, her blog archive, and part of Hala Mohammad’s poem posted on her website.

Figure 12. Sample of Mohammad’s poetry on the Writing without Paper website.



Qunfuz, which is owned and managed by Robin Yassin-Kassab serves as another example of single-agent networks. As a personal website that features its owner’s work, Qunfuz, an Arabic name which means porcupine, is an example of authors who focus on their own publications. Robin Yassin-Kassab was born in London and grew up in England. He lived and worked in several places, including France, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Oman, and is currently living in Scotland. On his website, he points out that he has published a novel titled “The Road from Damascus” and has co-written a book with another author titled “Burning

⁹² The project can be accessed at the following link:

<https://writingwithoutpaper.blogspot.com/2012/09/the-poets-of-protest-series.html>.

Country: Syrians in Revolution and War.” He has contributed to other books including “Syria Speaks,” a book that relates Syria’s Arab Spring experience.

Yassin-Kassab also shares his articles and reviews that have appeared in the Guardian, Newsweek, Foreign Policy, and Aljazeera. The project I collected from Qunfuz is titled “Ten Things to Remember about Syria.” Among the ten things highlighted in this project, Yassin-Kassab mentions poetry and writes about a number of Syria’s renowned poets including Nizar Qabbani, Maghut, and Almaarri. He lists two excerpts from Almarri’s poetry⁹³ about religion and links them to the conflict going on in Syria. The following screenshot displays the “About” section on the blog, a biographical statement about Yassin-Kassab, and samples of his publications and contributions.

Figure 13. The “about” section on Yassin-Kassab’s personal website.

About Qunfuz

with 60 comments

Qunfuz is the Arabic word for 'hedgehog' or 'porcupine'.

I am Robin Yassin-Kassab, born in west London in 1969. Except for six months in Beirut, I grew up in England and Scotland. I have lived and worked in London, France, Pakistan, Turkey, Syria, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Oman. Now I live in Scotland.

I am the author of [The Road From Damascus](#), a novel published by Hamish Hamilton and Penguin, and by il Saggiatore in Italy. I'm working on a second novel. Co-written with Leila al-Shami, our non-fiction book [Burning Country: Syrians in Revolution and War](#) is published by Pluto Press and distributed [in the US](#) by Chicago University Press. The book was shortlisted for the [2017 Folio Prize](#).

Books I've recently contributed to include [Syria Speaks](#), [Shifting Sands](#), and [Beta-Life: Stories from an A-Life Future](#).

My journalism on Syria, and book reviews, have appeared at the Guardian, the National, Foreign Policy, the Daily Beast, Newsweek, al-Jazeera, and elsewhere, and I've spoken on radio and television including the BBC, Channel 4 and al-Jazeera.



Pages

[About Qunfuz](#)

My Novel



Our Syria Book



⁹³ The essay and the poetic texts can be accessed at <https://qunfuz.com/2014/07/31/ten-things-to-remember-about-syria/>.

5.2.2.2 Simple Networks

I use the term “simple networks” to refer to translation projects involving a limited number of translation agents. In simple networks, an online translation may result from three levels of collaboration: A poetic text is created by a source poet, translated into English by a translator, and published on the Internet by a website owner. For example, the website of Arabic Literature in English⁹⁴, which is owned and managed by M. Lynx Qualey, shares translation projects that result from collaborative work among as many as three individuals: a source poet, a translator, and a website owner. Based in Cairo, Egypt, Qualey’s website features Arabic literary works available in English translations, articles about Arab authors from different eras, as well as interviews with Arab writers. The project titled “Poems from the Syrian Tragedy⁹⁵” is an example which presents three poems written by two Syrian poets and translated by one Syrian translator. The source poets produce their poems and post them in Arabic on their Facebook pages. The translator connects with them, translates these poems into English, and, then, sends them to the website manager. Qualey, who describes herself as a “writer and reader” who is interested in Arabic literature, then publishes the poetic texts on her website with a title, an introduction, and a note on both translators and source poets. Qualey also comments on the circumstances around which a poetic text is composed. The following screenshot shows another project, “Two Views of ‘Syria Speaks’: A Lens on Syria through the Arts,” which features Golan Haji and samples of his poetry⁹⁶:

⁹⁴ It seems that the website’s name has changed from Arabic Literature in English into Arabic Literature and Translation.

⁹⁵ The poems can be found at <https://arablit.org/2014/02/24/voices-from-the-syrian-tragedy-three-new-poems/>.

⁹⁶ The project can be accessed at <https://arablit.org/2013/02/02/two-views-of-syria-speaks-a-view-of-syria-through-the-arts/>.

Figure 14. A screenshot from the Arabic Literature website.



The website of Asymptote involves a similar network of translation agents, including a source poet, a translator, and a website manager or operator. The project I collected from this website involves a three-level collaboration between the source poet (i.e., Dara Abdallah), the translator (i.e., Mona Kareem), and the website manager(s) who evaluated the translated poems and agreed to post them on the website. As explained on the website, the translator is expected to submit a translation that will be reviewed and accepted by the website manager(s) before it is published.

5.2.2.3. *Complex Networks*

The term “complex networks” of translation agents is associated with the collaborative work that exists between multiple groups of agents. A complex network, thus, involves a higher level of collaboration and a greater number of individuals than simple networks. Websites like Poetry International Foundation/Web, Citybooks, and PEN International present translation activities that result from collaboration among translation agents from different places and cultural backgrounds.

The Poetry International Web based in Rotterdam, for instance, features poetry translations from multiple source languages. This is one of its activities. From this website, I collected four translation projects, all of which include poetry translations that were published for the first time after the inception of the Syrian crisis events. Two projects contain translations of nine poems written by Abou Afach—eight of which were translated by John Peate and the ninth by Abed Ismael⁹⁷. The other two projects feature thirteen poems written by Adonis and translated by Khaled Mattawa⁹⁸.

Among the other activities of the Poetry International Foundation are the Poetry International Festival and the National Day of Poetry in the Netherlands and Flanders. These diverse activities, which appear as news stories on the website of the Poetry International Foundation, involve the participation of a wide range of translation agents, including members of the board of Poetry International, which consists of a chair, a secretary and two other members, an international advisory board of international poets, a network of partner organizations and editors from around the globe (e.g. Belgium, China, Ireland, Japan, Turkey, etc.), individual translators, volunteers, and news media workers.

The website of Citybooks is another example of a complex network of translation agents who get involved in producing and circulating poetry translations on the Internet. Citybooks, a project developed by the Flemish-Dutch House deBuren in Belgium, is dedicated to portraying cities through the production of talented authors from all over the world. The website of Citybooks can be searched either by the name of an author or the name of a city. It shows a list

⁹⁷ A complete list of these poems can be accessed through the following link:
<https://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poet/item/19868>.

⁹⁸ Adonis's poems can be found at
<https://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poet/item/22899>.

of 27 cities, each of which constitutes a book that tells stories created by poets or artists. Stories are told through poetic descriptions or other forms of artistic work.

Based in Brussels, Citybooks invites international authors and photographers to share their poetic or artistic portrayals about cities in Europe or in other regions worldwide. Artistic products, whether photographs or poetic depictions, are posted to the website, together with translations into other languages like Dutch, French, English, and German. The project collected from the website of Citybooks features two poems by Ghayath Almadhoun. The two poems appear in five languages: Arabic (source language), Dutch, French, German and English. One poem appears under the city of Antwerp, while the other one is classified under the city of Ypres⁹⁹. In the description of each city, Almadhoun makes allusions to stressful conditions of living in Damascus and compares them to the difficult times both Antwerp and Ypres experienced in the past, especially during World Wars I and II.

Citybooks also keeps track of stories about its published authors. Under its news section, the website shares articles from other websites that feature or comment on works launched by Citybooks or authors participating in its projects. For example, the news section includes a link to a Guardian article about Almadhoun's contributions. The texts are also available in recordings in both source and target languages. Besides, Citybooks, as stated on its website, is sponsored by around 40 partners, including, the Flemish-Dutch House, the European Commission, the Dutch Embassy, the City Counsel of Charters, and other international partners¹⁰⁰. As is the case with the Poetry International Web, all these diverse activities involve collaboration between networks of agents with different levels of expertise.

⁹⁹ The two poems can be found at <http://www.citybooks.eu/en/artist/p/ghayath-almadhoun>.

¹⁰⁰ The following link shows a list of Citybooks's partners: <http://www.citybooks.eu/en/about-citybooks/partners>.

PEN International offers an additional example of complex networks. This organization exhibits a strong connection between its staff members in London, the UK, and network members in over 100 countries¹⁰¹. As listed on its website, PEN International has more than 150 centers in Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, and North America. Some of these centers have their own websites while others are linked to PEN International's website. Stories about endangered Syrian poets appear on several websites affiliated with PEN International. In my study, four projects are collected from these websites. Two of these projects appear on the website of English PEN, one on Swedish PEN, and another one on the website of PEN International. These four projects feature samples of poetry composed by endangered or imprisoned Syrian poets. For example, Al-Mallouhi's poem "You will never Walk Alone" appears on the websites of PEN International and English PEN. The poem is translated by Ghias Aljundi, a Syrian author who is a member of the Writers in Prison Committee at PEN International. Aljundi is also featured in other projects in which he talks about the dangers associated with writing in conflict zones.

Although PEN International is based in London, it gets involved in activities coordinated with its affiliated centers in other countries. For example, the Writers in Prison Committee works in coordination with the PEN community across the globe, advocating for persecuted writers worldwide. This committee also works with PEN International's other committees like the Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee, which was founded in Stockholm, Sweden, and the Women Writers' Committee, which participates in advocacy for imprisoned women writers, launches campaigns on freedom of expression, and attends meetings with the United Nation's organizations. PEN International's network also includes agents from other partner

¹⁰¹ The following link shows the list of centers supported by PEN International: <https://pen-international.org/centres>.

organizations, such as the International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN), the UNESCO, the Commonwealth Foundation, and European Cultural Foundation, among other organizations¹⁰².

With the help of its wide-range network of agents working within and across PEN International's communities, this organization launches campaigns to free incarcerated poets in every region in the world. For example, in 2012, PEN International launched a campaign to free Dia'a Al-Abdulla, a Syrian poet and blogger who was reportedly arrested for his posts on Facebook. The complexity and diversity of PEN International's network of agents help facilitate the circulation of poetry translations produced by endangered Syrian poets and increase their visibility on the Internet.

As is the case with the examined websites, my analysis of the agents shows that the dissemination of an online translation, in both mediated and unmediated translation projects, involves several types of networks of translation agents; the task of disseminating a poetry translation project can be initiated by a single individual (e.g. blogs or personal websites) and then extended to incorporate a complex network of translation agents (e.g. organizations with diverse centers) distributed across the globe. My analysis of these networks revealed that promoting an online translation is an act that goes beyond the knowledge of two languages; it requires skills in communication strategies, competencies in building connections with other agents, the technological skills needed to use the space available on the Internet, and the willingness to disseminate a poetry translation that has a certain communicative effect.

My analysis of the networks of agents was partly informed by the definition of agency as an inclination and capability to carry out a translation activity and create a certain influence (Koskinen & Kinnunen, 2010). Informed by this definition, I propose that the ability to promote

¹⁰² A list of PEN International's partners can be found on the following link: <https://pen-international.org/who-we-are/supporters/our-partners>.

an online translation of Syrian poetry is not limited to institutions or mainstream media; individual agents, through the space provided on the Internet, are also capable of actively participating in disseminating poetry translations that align with their own interests (24 percent of the examined projects come from blogs or personal websites). This active participation indicates that the cyberspace provides, to some extent, equal space for both institutional and individual translation initiatives. However, single individuals still need more resources and further connections with other agents in order to be able to create an influence similar to that of an institution. In other words, I suggest that the dissemination of an online translation of a poetic text also depends on how active the individual(s) managing a website is(are) in connecting with source poets, translating their literary works, and making them available for circulating on the Internet.

In summary, the second section of this chapter has provided the answers to the second research question (i.e., how are translations of poetry of witness disseminated on the Internet?). To address this question, I used a descriptive approach Saldanha & O'Brien's (2014) to analyze the websites featuring the collected translations and the agents involved in their dissemination on the Internet; according to Saldanha and O'Brien's (2014), a descriptive model is needed in order to examine the settings around a translation product as well as the translation agents involved in its production and dissemination. My analysis of the websites has revealed that these websites exist in a cyberspace or habitat/environment that offers spaces for entities with diverse types of activities; these entities, most of which are located in Western Europe and the United States, demonstrate multiple types of scope, which affect the selection of the disseminated contents of poetry translations and the ways a poetic text is displayed. The analysis also indicated that a website's scope and translational choices are manifested in both the contents of the poetic

translations selected for publication and in the text embedding them in the mediated translations; a mediated translation tends to disseminate more smoothly and broadly on the Internet, whether the source text is produced by an acclaimed writer or an amateur one. My analysis of the translation agents, in turn, reveals the involvement of several types of agent networks in disseminating Syrian poetry—agents operating through both personal and institutional websites; these agents also participate in selecting the poetic translations featured on the examined websites.

Both the websites and the agents I examined in this study indicate that the collected translations disseminate according to the types of websites featuring them and the choices of the agent(s) operating through such websites. My analysis also shows that the movement of a poetic text from one website to another depends, to a large extent, on the networking that exists among groups of websites with the same scope and on a website's openness to sharing its contents. It also requires not only talented poets and translators to carry their works into another language but also the active participation of agents from different backgrounds, who operate in an environment that is rich in its spaces and open to diverse activities. An examination of the motivations of the translation agents is required to further explore the (ethical) impulses driving their responses to poetry from Syria.

5.3. Ethical Impulses and Translations of Poetry of Witness

This section is concerned with the third research question of this study: What ethical impulses are driving translation agents' responses to the Syrian crisis? An investigation of this question requires an examination of translation agents' responses to the Syrian crisis as well as the orientations of the websites featuring these translations. For this purpose, I identified a set of motivations that I found in the examined websites and in the analysis of the networks of

translation agents involved in the production and the dissemination of the collected translations (i.e., source poets, translators, and other individuals participating in the dissemination of translations of Syrian poetry). I classified these motivations into two main types: cyber-space motivations and personal motivations. My analysis of these two types of motivation attempts to highlight the connections that might exist between the contents of the poetic texts examined in the first section and the motivations underpinning the translation agents' responses to the Syrian crisis.

5.3.1. Cyber-Motivations

I use the term cyber-motivations in this study to refer to the possible impulses or motivations driving the examined websites to feature translations of poetry from Syria. The “about” section in each website has been examined to identify such motivations. The analysis shows that the cyber-motivations vary from one type of website to another and are contingent on the scope of work undertaken by each website. A website's scope of work can be associated with such motivators as journalistic interests, a quest for literature and arts in general, promotion of poetry writing, advocacy for freedom of expression and endangered writers, engagement in humanitarian initiatives, educational purposes, intercultural relationships, and entertainment, among others.

5.3.1.1. *Journalistic Interests*

Journalistic interests are associated with the practices of the websites where news reports including excerpts of poetry pertinent to the Syrian crisis were collected. On the whole, such news reports about the Syrian crisis appear under sections like “Culture,” “Arts,” “Middle East,”

etc. All the examples of Syrian poetry collected from news websites are introduced by a journalist or reporter before they are published on the website.

As the Syrian crisis has been a major source of newsworthy events, reports featuring poetry translations are prepared by journalists as part of their coverage of events from Syria. The collected data include articles that contain interviews with displaced Syrians who happen to write poetry, and in which an ordinary Syrian individual is given the opportunity to provide a personal account about the circumstances that have forced him/her to leave his/her home, to describe the living conditions in displacement, and to express his/her feelings about the events back home. For example, the websites of The Atlantic, The Independent, and The Guardian have featured interviews with ordinary Syrian people displaced in Turkey, Iraq, and Lebanon, respectively. In these interviews, the interviewees have provided personal accounts of the Syrian crisis, told their stories of displacement, and shared samples of poetry that reflect their emotional responses to displacement and the events of the crisis. For instance, the interview retrieved from The Atlantic provided a poetic excerpt that describes the suffering associated with crossing the Syrian border with Turkey.

Poetry translations also appear in documentary programs that focus on the new type of poetry emerging from the Syrian crisis. For example, the project collected from the BBC, a documentary about Syrian poetry, has journalist Mike Embley interviewing a number of Syrian poets and writers and asking them about the role of poetry in documenting the ongoing events in Syria as well as the themes these poets address. The list of guests in the BBC documentary included Golan Haji, Ghias Aljundi, Ghada Al-Atrash, and Aicha Arnaout. Mike Embley also hosted a professor from London's University of Westminster to comment on the new Syrian

poetry and the poetic texts produced by other poets like Najat Abdulsamad, Almadhoun, and Mohja Kahf.

Other journalistic practices featuring stories from conflict zones might be driven by an inclination to raise awareness about the consequences of a conflict on society, to encourage their audiences to observe the values advocated by these websites, and to give voice to oppressed people. This applies in the case of Syria too. For example, the website of the radio station PRI has featured Abdulsamad's poetic texts and Al-Atrash's views about the new poetry emerging from Syria. As explained earlier, the same views and poetic texts had already appeared on the website of Aljazeera. The website of PRI says that it supports journalistic practices which promote "positive change," "encourage explanations" about "powerful stories" from zones of conflict like Syria, help audiences "connect" with people from other cultures, and "increase people's understanding of the complexity and interdependency of world events and issues."¹⁰³ The website of PRI also explains that its journalism aims at sharing international stories for the purpose of educating American readers on world issues and foreign cultures. The project collected from the website of PRI reflects the vision of this radio station in finding inspiring stories from Syria and other parts of the world.

In journalistic practice, what motivates a website to publish a poetic text seems to be associated with the fact that the text appeared on other news websites; but the newsworthiness of the events around which the text revolves, and the spaces the text provides for a reporter to breathe his/her voice into significant events around the world are also important. Regardless of the quality of the poetic text or its translation into the target language, news reports feature both

¹⁰³ These objectives appear in the mission statement of the Public Radio International (PRI) and can be accessed at <https://www.pri.org/about-pri>.

ordinary people who happen to write poetry and acclaimed poets as long as the stories associated with the poets meet a reporter's journalistic interests.

5.3.1.2. *Quest for Literary Products*

Some of the collected translations have appeared on websites that show a quest for literary products and interests in international literary figures (e.g. Words without Borders and Blue Flower Arts). For example, the Blue Flower Arts introduces itself as a Literary Speaker's Agency devoted to the "beauty of words"¹⁰⁴. Based in New York, the website of the Blue Flower Arts showcases biographies of authors from around the world and features selected samples of their literary productions as well as evaluations provided by literary critics.

The Blue Flower Arts focuses on stories told in works of literature and believes in a humanist role for a literary language that enhances the sense of community in modern societies, which are dominated by an individualist style of living. Believing in the voices of writers as leading participants in discussions about the existence of human beings in our modern world for instance, the agency organizes events that bring together intellectuals and their readers. In such events, the agency encourages the use of creative and refined expressions in communication between participants. As shown earlier, the project collected from the website of Blue Flower Arts presents Alomar's poems in the form of short stories that communicate moral lessons about social relations among human beings, forms of exploitation, and, in general, universal problems facing individuals in a modern society. The website has also published an essay explaining and commenting on Alomar's poetic stories.

¹⁰⁴ Information on the agency's orientations is available at <https://blueflowerarts.com/about-contact/>.

It is worth noting that a website's quest for a poetic text from Syria can be influenced by the circumstances of its production. For example, the Arabic Literature in English website produced an interview¹⁰⁵ with Almadhoun, in which he explains that his collection of Dutch poetry translations titled "Weg van Damascus," which was published in 2014 in The Netherlands and entered the best-seller list in Belgium in 2015, included only poems he wrote after the start of the crisis events. When asked about the source texts, the poet said that the publisher chose only half of his Arabic poems because they deliver his poetic take on the new situation in Syria. He also added that the Arabic version, which was published in 2014 in Lebanon and Jordan, also included poems produced before the beginning of the Syrian crisis—the publisher ignored these poems. It is very clear that the interest in Almadhoun's Dutch poems stems from their connection to the political developments in Syria and the refugee crisis that caught the attention of Europe at that time.

Websites oriented towards literary works have exhibited samples of poetry translations from Syria out of their interest in different international literatures and also in contents that deliver messages which fit with their objectives. The translation activities on these websites are not limited to poetic texts; they include other forms of literature like novels, short stories, and literary views expressed by both national and international literature figures.

5.3.1.3. Promotion of Poetry Writing

Promoting poetry writing is a motivator announced in the websites dedicated to quality poetry (e.g. Poetry Translation Center, Lyrikline, Poetry International Web, etc.). Quality poetry

¹⁰⁵ The interview appeared in an article titled "Collection by Syrian Poet Ghayath Almadhoun Makes Dutch Best-seller List" and can accessed at <https://arablit.org/2015/09/25/collection-by-syrian-poet-ghayath-al-madhoun-makes-dutch-best-seller-list/>.

here refers to poetic texts that have already been published in the source language and whose poets have achieved recognition in their mother tongues. To promote poetry, a poetry-oriented website focuses on the text's artistic properties and the quality of poetic contributions provided by international poets. For example, the website of the Poetry International Foundation/Web uses poetry produced by acclaimed international poets in projects that aim at promoting poetry writing. "The Poem is a Message," for instance, is a project in which the foundation posts poetic texts on garbage collection vehicles that roam the city of Rotterdam inviting people to read the selected lines of poetry on them.

The list of Syrian poets featured on the website of the Foundation of Poetry International includes Adonis, Abou Ach, and Almadhoun. These three poets have been published in Arabic and have received awards for their literary productions. The poems by Abou Ach and Almadhoun refer to the Syrian crisis. This association can be interpreted as an indication of the website's interest in the productions by acclaimed poets who provide poetic portrayals about the Syrian crisis events.

5.3.1.4. Advocacy for Endangered Writers

Advocacy for endangered writers seems to be a motivator that drives activist organizations like PEN International, ICORN, and Freemuse to feature literary productions of endangered Syrian poets. For example, what motivates PEN International to promote translations from Syria is the fact that this poetry is produced by endangered poets. As explained earlier, PEN International advocates for freedom of writing and launches campaigns to free imprisoned poets or protect writers whose lives are at risk. Through its wide network of centers, PEN International targets endangered writers in different parts of the world, posts on its website articles about the circumstances threatening their lives, and features examples of their writings.

The Charter¹⁰⁶ of PEN International explains the general motives behind this organization's practices, which state that poets should be protected in times of conflict and literary productions should be allowed to cross geographical borders as they belong to humanity at large. The Charter also reveals that it is the responsibility of PEN members to raise and maintain awareness about cases in which the freedom of expression for writers is violated.

While PEN International focuses attention on endangered poets in their home countries, ICORN provides safe havens to poets who are able to escape dangers and need safe places to live. On its website, ICORN hosts poets who are offered refuge in one of its member cities and posts samples of their poetry that reflect the opinions they stand for. The mission statements in the websites of the activist organizations show that they offer a welcoming environment for poetry produced by voices of dissent.

5.3.1.5. *Humanitarian Engagement*

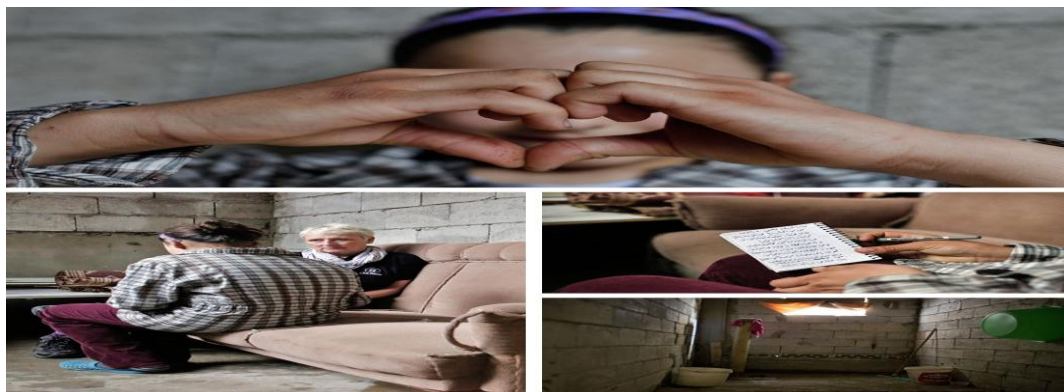
The websites of humanitarian organizations focus their attention on stories of humanitarian nature. The projects collected from these websites present poetic texts in articles that call attention to the humanitarian situations of displaced people, especially children who need help and support for their education or basic life needs. The websites of OXFAM, Save the Children, Their World, and The UNICEF are among the websites that have featured interviews with displaced children in articles that include samples of their literary talent. The description of the orientations of these websites indicates that the main motivation driving a humanitarian organization to feature poetic texts written by Syrian children lies in its inclination to draw attention to issues of poverty that prohibit children from going to school, to solicit financial

¹⁰⁶ This Charter, which has been approved by all members of PEN International, sets out the principles and scope of work for this organization.

support for impoverished families, and to provoke sympathy for humans who need immediate assistance. The poetic texts written by these children not only reflect the issues that are of concern for a humanitarian organization, but also allow them to connect directly with the organization's intended audiences

All the above-listed international organizations are dedicated to aiding children who suffer from poverty and/or are impacted by conflicts or crises around the world. For instance, the website of Oxfam, which has featured examples of Reema's poetry, has focused on the immediate assistance this girl and her family need in order to cope with the living conditions in Lebanon. As explained earlier, a team from Oxfam visited Reema and her family, took pictures of the place where the family lives, and conducted an interview that included poetic texts written by Reema. The team published a report that focuses on the circumstances which forced Reema's family to run away from Syria, the harsh conditions of life in Lebanon, Reema's talent in writing poetry, and the girl's need to go back to school. At the end of the report, the Oxfam website made a plea for donations to support displaced Syrians in need of assistance. The report, together with Reema's poetry and the pictures of the place where she lives, appeared later on several websites affiliated with Oxfam. The following screenshot shows some of these. The pictures feature Reema, an Oxfam communications officer, and an under-construction accommodation.

Figure 15. Pictures of a displaced child on the Oxfam website.



As in the case of Reema, the websites of other humanitarian organizations have published reports including poetic texts written by children in order to, most probably, raise awareness about the living conditions for Syrian refugees in displacement, provoke sympathy for the crisis's innocent victims, and, ultimately, solicit financial support for displaced families and their children.

5.3.1.6. *Involvement in Intercultural Relations*

Several translations of Syrian poetry have appeared on websites that aim at building or enhancing intercultural relationships between the West and countries of the Middle East (e.g. Qantara, Jadaliyya, and Euphrates). Supported by the German Federal Center for Political Education, Deutsche Welle, Goethe Institute, and the German Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, the project of Qantara¹⁰⁷, for example, promotes dialogue between the cultures of the Middle East and Western cultures. Through this project, these German institutions seek to introduce Germany “as a liberal, democratic state based on the rule of law,” promote the exchange of information between different cultures, and host cultural dialogues between Germany and Islamic culture¹⁰⁸.

In addition to news stories and essays on various topics, Qantara publishes literary productions and reports about literary figures from the Arab World in a section named “Culture” as part of what seems to be an involvement in intercultural relations. The project collected from this website features an essay including extracts of prose poetry written by Hala Mohammad¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁷ The website of Qantara can be accessed at <https://en.qantara.de/>. The website is browsed in Arabic, German, and English.

¹⁰⁸ More information about the missions of the institutions funding the project of Qantara can be found at <https://en.qantara.de/page/about-us>.

¹⁰⁹ Translated from German by Ruth Martin, the essay can be accessed at <https://en.qantara.de/content/the-syrian-poet-hala-mohammad-they-are-stealing-the-soul-from->

The poetic text talks about Syrian dissidents' struggle for freedom and what Mohammad describes as the collective punishment of the Syrian people who were involved in the wave of uprisings.

5.3.1.7. Educational Purposes

International poetry is also promoted for educational purposes. Translations of Syrian poetry appear on websites that use poetic texts as educational materials for both students and educators in the classroom. Through poetry translation, educators are given the opportunity to use international poetic texts as learning resources or as materials for language classes. For example, Lyrikline makes its huge archive of poetry translations available for schools and universities. Words without Borders, in turn, has developed an educational program that brings international poetry into the classroom. In so doing, the program connects international writers with students and educators in their learning environment in order to encourage the exchange of ideas and viewpoints, to develop interest in international literature in translation, and to raise awareness about other cultures, especially cultures that are perceived as enemies in the United States. The website of Words without Borders also uses its archive of literary translations as learning resources for this educational program.

Poetry translation for educational purposes is not limited to literature-oriented websites. Other types of websites also make their content available for educational purposes. For example, the website of PBS says that it targets stories that aim to expand the minds of their readers and “open up new worlds” for them. One of the motivators to feature examples of Syrian poetry

[our-revolution](#). The prose poem has appeared on another website that features a different translator.

therefore, appears to be associated with the wish to provide poetic materials for the purpose of educating learners on the use of poetry in times of conflict.

5.3.1.8. *Entertainment*

Entertainment is another motivation driving a website to publish a poetry translation. For example, Books and Company, a bookshop located in Copenhagen in Denmark, describes itself as a book café that hosts evening talks and workshops for readers interested in literature. This company invites people to have coffee in its location, enjoy reading books as well as attend talks and workshops for both children and adults. The bookshop announces its events to its audiences on the website. The translation project collected from this website features a poem by Youssef Abou Yahya under the title: “Poetry Tuesday ‘I Am a Syrian,’ Written by Youssef Abu Yihea / Translated by Ghada Alatrash¹¹⁰.” The following is an excerpt from the full poem alongside an image of a child flying what seems to be a heart-shaped balloon:



I am a Syrian.

Exiled, in and out of my homeland, and
on knife blades with swollen feet I walk.

¹¹⁰ The poem can be accessed at <http://www.booksandcompany.dk/2015/09/poetry-tuesday-i-am-syrian-written-by-youssef-abu-yihea-translated-by-ghada-alatrash/>. The poem has appeared on other projects talking about the poetry emerging from the Syrian crisis. Youssef Abou Yahya is one of the poets discovered by Ghada Al-Atrash, the Syrian-Canadian translator who has appeared on Aljazeera website and other news agencies to talk about the role of poetry in describing the events of the Syrian crisis.

I am a Syrian: Shiite, Druze, Kurd,
 Christian,
 and I am Alawite, Sunni, and Circassian.
 Syria is my land.
 Syria is my identity.

The websites from which the projects were collected exhibit a wide range of motivations for featuring poetry translations from Syria. The analysis of the areas of interests expressed in these websites shows that they target poetic content that is in line with the orientations and principles on which the website is established. These websites provide spaces for translation agents whose work fits with their orientations.

5.3.2. Personal Motivations

Personal motivations refer to the motivations expressed by individuals who take part in producing or circulating poetic texts on the Internet. In addition to the personal interests that may exist among individuals working for institutions or organizations featuring translations of Syrian poetry on their websites, the collected data have exhibited other personal motivations which are expressed explicitly by owners of personal websites, poets, and translators.

5.3.2.1. Owners of Personal Websites

Owners of personal websites show various motivations for publishing or sharing a poetry translation about the Syrian crisis. These motivations are manifested in an interest in literary works and their artistic properties, an inclination to showcase personal contributions, and a desire to express personal opinions on an event.

Some personal websites feature translations of Syrian poetry because of an interest in translated Arabic literature. The website of Arabic Literature in English, for example, shows that the act of disseminating a poetic text of witness rests on the personal preferences of the individual who owns the website. Ms. Lynx Qualey, the owner of the website explains that she has developed the website due to her interest in Arabic literature and her desire to transfer literary productions through translation from Arabic into English. Qualey has also expressed an interest in literature coming out of the Arab Spring, especially products from voices of dissent, providing a welcoming space for Syrian dissidents to share their poetic portrayals about the Syrian crisis events.

Moving Poems is another example of a personal website that is interested in one type of poetry, that is, poetry produced in videos with subtitles in English. The owner of Moving Poems, Dave Bonta, expresses his interest in international poems that are featured in videos with English subtitles. Accordingly, what motivates Bonta to feature Syrian poems is not only their content or aesthetic properties; they are featured because they come with videos with English subtitles. If the poems collected from Moving Poems were not videotaped, they wouldn't appear on this website.

Some other personal websites are designed for the purpose of sharing their owner's contributions. Here, an owner of a personal website shares translations of poetry because they are part of his/her contributions to other websites or institutions. For example, "Tell Brak Films" is the name of the personal website owned by Yasmin Fedda, the director of an episode that features a Syrian poet on the Aljazeera website. Titled "Hala Mohammad: Waiting for Spring," this episode was produced for Aljazeera's series "Artscape: Poets of Protest." On Tell Brak Films, Yasmin Fedda has shared her contribution to Aljazeera and provided comments on how

Syrian poets have responded to the events of the Syrian crisis. Fedda states that she was impressed by Hala Mohammad's refined structure of poetic words and her use of a simple language that triggers emotional feelings about the painful struggle in Syria. Fedda also describes herself as an award winning filmmaker who has made documentary films about Syria and Edinburgh, Scotland.

A personal website is also used by an individual to express her/his own views about world affairs or certain topics of personal interests. For example, Tamara Pearson has a website named "Resistance Words," on which she posts poems and works of art with the aim of promoting creative expressions as "tools of resistance." She describes herself as a writer, activist, journalist, teacher, and editor who writes for media platforms in several countries, including Australia, Mexico, Bolivia, Pakistan, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe. As a writer, Pearson is interested in stories that reveal the indecent side of the world including injustices, hypocrisies, chaos, human rights abuses as well as the beauty of words that describe such abuses. The project collected from Pearson's website features poetry translations under the title "Poems from Syria." In this project, Pearson provides a brief introduction about the conflict in Syria and says that because poems humanize people, she would like to share three poems composed by three Syrian poets: Aref Akrez, Najat Abdulsamad, and Marwa Katbi ¹¹¹. She also provides links to the websites that have featured these poems.

5.3.2.2. Poets

As is the case with website owners, other personal motivations are expressed by individuals who compose poetry in response to the events of the Syrian crisis. While the content

¹¹¹ The project can be accessed at <https://resistancewords.wordpress.com/2015/09/23/poems-from-syria/>.

analysis has revealed a desire among Syrian poets to bear witness to the realities around them, the examined interviews with a number of Syrian poets have reiterated this desire. When asked to comment on the connection between their poetry and the Syrian crisis, the interviewed poets explicitly link their poetry to what is happening in Syria. Opinions provided by Maram Al-Masri, Dara Abdallah, Hala Mohammad, Najat Abdulsamad, Golan Haji, and Reema, for example, show that their poetic productions are based on either their own experiences or observations of realities from the Syrian crisis. The comments of these poets provide information about a variety of motivations for writing poetry, including the use of poetry as a voice of dissent, a testimony to personal experiences, a tool for bearing witness to the impact of the crisis on other people, a medium of expressing universal thoughts on human conflicts, or just as a means for emotional venting.

As far as poetry of dissent is concerned, the collected data have exhibited many examples of poetry, which are written by poets who held antigovernment stances even before the onset of the Syrian crisis. Given these antigovernment attitudes, dissident poets seem to have produced poetry out of a pre-established determination to criticize the government policies and its reaction to the wave of the Syrian uprisings and to talk about such issues as social injustices, freedom of expression, unequal relations between men and women, etc. Maram Al-Masri is one of the poets who seems to have assigned herself the task of advocacy for women's rights and support for their freedom from the shackles of social traditions. Although her first book of poetry was published in Syria, the subsequent collections were not accepted for publication because they were, as she puts it, "dangerous." Describing herself as a "rebellious" woman, Al-Masri, as shown earlier, rejects all forms of oppression and is deeply concerned about the safety of people participating in protests against the Syrian government. She explains that the Syrian regime "has on its hands a

lot of blood and a lot of guilt.” The following verses depict Al-Masri’s long-standing concerns about Syria:

Syria for me is a bleeding wound

It is my mother on her death bed

It is my child with her throat cut

It is my nightmare and my hope

It is my insomnia and my waking.

Sharing personal experiences is a motivator which manifests itself in poetry written by victimized agents. Poets like Dara Abdallah, Faraj Bayraqdar, and Dia’a Al-Abdulla use their poetry to talk about the experiences they had in prison. Their poems reflect on the circumstances that led to their imprisonment and the harsh conditions they were subject to in jail.

Mohammed Bachir’s poem “I am a Refugee¹¹²” provides an example of the suffering of senior people. As a person who is over 80 years of age, Bachir seems to be driven by a desire to write about his personal experience of suffering. His poem can be interpreted as a testimony to the humiliation he faced in his displacement to Turkey. The content of “I am a Refugee” also sheds light on the hardships senior people have in dealing with displacement and reveals a suppressed outcry for assistance. A note on the website of Words without Borders explains that Bachir wrote fiction before the onset of the Syrian crisis and that he “has turned from writing fiction to producing stark, beautiful, emotionally honest poetry about losing a homeland and being forced into exile in one’s eighties¹¹³.” The following excerpt is taken from “I am a

¹¹² Translated by Alpen, the poem can be read at <https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/article/i-am-a-refugee>.

¹¹³ More information about Mohamed Bachir can be found at <https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/contributor/mohamed-raouf-bachir>.

Refugee,” a heart-touching poem that pictures a helpless senior person begging people to accept him as a refugee:

I am without a past,
 Without a present,
 Without a face;
 I am a remnant of a person...
 I knocked on Arab doors...
 All chased me away...
 All of them sold me out;
 They pilfered my life and forgot me;
 They uprooted me and left me to wither at the embassy gates.
 Foreigner, will you accept me
 As a refugee?

Another motivator to write poetry of witness is the determination to call attention to the suffering of ordinary people. In Hala Mohammad’s interview with Aljazeera, which has been discussed above, for example, she says that it is her responsibility to bear witness to the suffering of the victims and to fight for social justice, equality, and freedom of expression. For her, a poet or an artist who has established a reputation and remains silent while watching the humiliation of other human beings is selfish. She goes so far as to say that poets who refrain from using their poetic talent to condemn injustices are mere business people and, thus, shouldn’t be referred to as poets; she considers herself “a witness” who is determined to say “no” to violence and oppression. Likewise, Najat Abdulsamad expresses her concerns about the pain that men-waged wars can cause to their victims regardless of their age or sex. In the interview with PBS,

Abdulsamad says that she writes poetry as a plea for help, explaining that poetry writing is a literary “instinct” that represents “a voice for life.” Abdulsamad also says that poetic texts, unlike news reports, are “more reflective” and “more truthful” in their depictions of the consequences of the conflict in Syria. She says that she wants people who read her words to understand the repercussions of violence on ordinary people and the dangers that threaten their existences. Abdulsamad’s determination to talk on behalf of victimized people seems to motivate her to produce poetry that depicts the impact of the events of the crisis on all Syrian people.

Composing poetry of witness also springs from a personal desire to highlight the futility and the consequences of war not only on Syrians but on human beings in general. For example, Golan Haji says in an interview with the Scottish Library that he uses poetry to leave “a trace” others may read someday¹¹⁴. In his answers to questions about the Syrian crisis events and the kind of message he wants to convey, Haji draws a universal picture in which both killers and killed people are portrayed as victims of the circumstances they are forced to deal with. Haji says that when he writes about a Syrian victim, he thinks about that victim not just as a Syrian but as an individual from any part of the world; he writes about them as if he were writing about his brothers, sisters, and friends.

For Haji, writing poetry is an act of translation, which transforms his thoughts and feelings about a certain event into written words. His thoughts and feelings are a translation of what he sees in reality. Haji is concerned about the death and the suffering of innocent people and when he is unable to write about innocent people, he feels ashamed because he can do nothing. He believes that the act of translating his feelings into poetic texts is an “international experiment” in which the suffering of a human being surpasses time and place.

¹¹⁴ More about Haji’s views are expressed in an interview with the Scottish Library. The interview is available at <http://highlightarts.org/syrian-poet-golan-haji-podcast/>.

Some other Syrian poets explain that they resort to poetry to simply give vent to their repressed emotions and thoughts. The collected translations show examples where individuals, especially children, write poetry to give vent to pent-up feelings. For example, Khawla Hassan Ghaysaniya (a 15-year-old refugee) asserts that she writes poetry to “feel better.” In the article titled “Syria’s Young Talent: The Girl Who Writes Poems to Feel Better,”¹¹⁵ Ghaysaniya clarifies that she writes about horrible incidents she has experienced since she was forced to leave her village for a refugee camp in Lebanon. Ghaysaniya misses not only friends, neighbors, and relatives, but also her school. Because of the new living conditions in displacement, she is not able to go back to school or read about her favorite poets. She borrows books from charity organizations and spends her time reading. As she puts it, she reads books to learn more about the world around her and to “escape from it.”

5.3.2.3. Translators

Personal motivators are also expressed in interviews with individual translators who share their views and comments on their translations. The interviews with Ghias Aljudi, Ghada Al-Atrash, and Mohja Kahf provide information about the motivations driving their responses to the Syrian crisis and the poetry coming out of it. Their views show similar motivations to those expressed by Syrian poets.

Ghada Al-Atrash shares her interest in poetry that focuses on the new realities in Syria. In the article that appeared on Aljazeera website, Al-Atrash says that she is attracted to the new type of poetry coming from Syria, a type of poetry she describes as “visceral” and free from the constraints of censorship. In the interview with PBS, Al-Atrash reiterates her motivation for

¹¹⁵ The interview with Ghaysania can be found at <http://www.aworldatschool.org/news/entry/Syria-Young-Talent-the-girl-who-writes-poems-to-feel-better-2509>.

connecting with poets from Syria. She explains that she connected with Najat Abdulsamad, one of the two poets she discovered through Facebook, because she shares the same position on the events of the crisis and the same belief in the role of poetry in portraying these events: “Najat writes about the human suffering in Syria, and I see it as my cause and responsibility to amplify her voice and the voices of my Syrian people through translation¹¹⁶.” Al-Atrash also expresses an interest in Arabic literature and declares her support for peaceful demonstrations in Syria. She believes that the Syrian uprisings have given birth to new poetic voices that use poetry in a new manner.

Ghias Aljundi, in turn, expresses his dissenting views when he talks about or comments on the events of the crisis and the poetry coming out of it. Aljundi is a member of PEN International whose position in the Prisoner Committee is concerned with endangered poets—his name has appeared under translations published on the website of PEN International. In an interview with Aljazeera, he sounds the alarm about the well-being of Syrian poets and the dangers they face as a result of their poetry writing; Aljundi says that “Syrian writers are caught between a double danger: the regime and the Islamists,” that it is “a risk to write or utter a word,” and that most of the poets he connects with are aware of the “risk of death, imprisonment or exile” if they “write the truth¹¹⁷.” Aljundi’s motivations can be linked to his position as a member of the Prisoner Committee at PEN International. This committee looks for endangered poets around the world and initiates campaigns to protect them. Regardless of his personal motivations, translating imprisoned or endangered Syrian poets is part of Aljundi’s job at PEN International.

¹¹⁶ The article is found at the following link: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/art/najat-abdul-samad-ghada-alatrash-syrian-literature/>.

¹¹⁷ The interview can be found at <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/09/20139784442125773.html>.

Mohja Kahf is another dissident voice who believes in poetry as a tool that bears witness to the tragedy of Syrians. On the website of Universe of Poetry,¹¹⁸ she is described as an associate professor of comparative literature at the University of Arkansas, the US. The website also indicates that she is involved in projects to help Syrian refugees and support activists with values that promote peace and pluralism. In an article published on the Rumpus website,¹¹⁹ Kahf talks about her advocacy for the wave of Syrian uprisings and voices her criticism of the political system in Syria. In another article titled “Great Read 'Poetry is a Witness' to Suffering Wrought by Syria's Civil War” on the website of Los Angeles Times,¹²⁰ Kahf says that “poetry is a witness,” as she explains why she translates the works of Syrian dissidents into English. In these examples, Kahf’s translation practices are introduced as part of her advocacy for dissident voices, support for the victims of the crisis, and endorsement of her oppositional attitude to the Syrian government.

Another motivation driving translators to translate poetic texts of witness is evident in collaborative projects, in which a poet connects with another poet from a different language. In such collaborative projects, each poet translates the works of the other. For example, the website of Words without Borders indicates that both Stephan Watts and Golan Haji might have been involved in arranged translations, where Watts translates Haji’s poetic work into English and Haji translates Watts into Arabic. The biographical note on Watts’s translation of Haji’s poem “Autumn Here is Magical and Vast” demonstrates that he has been involved in co-translations of literary works from several source languages including, Arabic, Slovenian, Italian, Romanian,

¹¹⁸ Information about Kahf is available at <http://www.universeofpoetry.org/welcome.shtml>.

¹¹⁹ The article can be found at <http://therumpus.net/2011/12/the-daughters'-road-to-syria/>.

¹²⁰ The article can be accessed at <http://www.latimes.com/world/great-reads/la-ca-c1-syria-war-poetry-20151026-story>.

and Kurdish (Haji's mother tongue). The note shows that Watts's poetry has been translated into target languages like Arabic, Persian, Czech, Bengali, Finnish, and Slovenian, among others. However, the website doesn't specify if the Kurdish works are written by Haji or whether Haji has translated Watts's works into the Arabic or Kurdish language. Words without Borders encourages its contributors to translate each other in order to feature their works on its website or other programs. Similarly, the website of Lyrikline shows that Almadhoun is involved in joint translation projects with the Swedish poet Marie Silkeberg. The website features Al-Madhoun as a translator of Silkeberg's poetry from Swedish into Arabic and Silkeberg as the translator of Almadhoun's poetry from Arabic into Swedish.

The above examples show individuals who respond to the Syrian crisis events due to personal motivations. While poets produce poetry out of a strong impulse to bear witness to their personal experiences or to the suffering of their fellow citizens, the interviewed translators have revealed a similar impulse in their inclination to transfer this poetry to wider audiences.

In this section, I have used descriptive analysis to explore the (ethical) impulses driving translation agents' responses to poetry from Syria (i.e., the answer to the third research question). I consider the examined motivations, which underpin the translational responses to Syrian poetry, ethical because they are in line with the type of ethical engagement I defined in Chapter Two (see p. 58) and derived from the diverse ethical views advocated by several scholars in translation studies (e.g. Inghilleri, 2008; Pym, 1992; Tymoczko, 2000). My definition of the ethical engagement of translation refers to translation activities that highlight such issues as the peaceful struggle for civil rights, freedom and social justice, support for under-represented groups of people, and the suffering of victims in times of conflict. Based on my definition, I conclude that the examined motivations reveal ethical impulses that center on dissident voices

struggling for change, multiple forms of suffering, the hardships facing displaced Syrians, and the devastating impact of conflicts on humanity. In my analysis, I have classified these motivations under two main types: cyberspace motivations and personal motivations.

Under the cyberspace motivations, I have listed several types of motivations that are pertinent to the ethical principles stated on the websites of the organizations or institutions where the translations are published. These websites provide space for both acclaimed poets and for ordinary people to share their poetic texts as well as for other individuals to disseminate poetic translations that seemingly reflect their own preferences. According to my analysis, each type of motivation corresponds to the set of ethical principles defining the scope to which an institution or a website is committed. Here I suggest that the examined websites serve as platforms through which translation agents promote poetic texts that speak to their ethical principles (i.e., those mentioned on the websites' mission statements). This suggestion is in line with the view of translation as an activity which allows an institution to convey its voice, principles, and ethical code to its intended audiences (Kang, 2014; Koskinen, 2008) and indicates that even ethical initiatives need the environment that enables translators to translate them into actions. And indeed, the Internet provides space not only for translating institutions but also for individuals to share translations that reflect their own attitudes towards a certain reality or literary product.

In my examination of the personal motivations, I have also outlined several motivators that are pertinent to the owners of personal websites, the poets, and the translators. The examples I analyzed above present individuals with similar motivations: while the poets produced poetic texts in the source language out of strong impulses to bear witness to their personal experiences or to the hardships facing their fellow citizens, both the interviewed translators and the owners of personal websites revealed feelings of solidarity with the causes that Syrian dissent voices are

committed to or feelings of sympathy for the victims of abuse and violence. Based on Nord's (2001) suggestion that a translator's ethical actions should produce translations which introduce the translator as a third party who mediates between a text producer and target readers and makes choices that enable the target reader to understand the text producer's "communicative intentions as correctly as possible" (p. 188), I again consider the responses of the translation agents, especially translators and the owners of personal websites, ethical actions because they are often presented to the reader as personal accounts by individuals who relate their own experiences or observations of the suffering of their fellow people.

In addition to the selection process I found in my examination of the recurrent themes, the similarities I highlighted in the ethical responses of the translating institutions and the individuals involved in the dissemination of Syrian poetry are suggestive of external forces that influence the selection process. In other words, the ethical responses of a translation agent or translating entity are shaped by external discourses about a certain event or about certain values or principles. In my study, most of these values and discourses come from Western cyberspaces. I conclude that the ethical responses to the tragedies and hardships Syrian people have been subjected to stem, for the most part, from the environment within which a website (institutional or personal) is operating. My conclusion indicates that the ethical engagement of translation in times of conflict goes beyond finding source poets or texts that are in tune with a certain agenda and then translate them into another language. A further ethical role of translation requires the participation in creating those spaces of dissemination (e.g. websites) that enable translation to deliver its desired ethical values and that bring together translation agents who are willing to participate in promoting such values through their translation activities.

Chapter Six: Discussion

This chapter provides extended discussions of the results of the study and is divided into three sections. Each section reiterates one of the three research questions that guided this study, encapsulates the answers to each research question, and highlights the links between these answers and the theoretical views reviewed in the second and third chapters.

6.1. Poetry of Witness as a Form of Interpretation

The first research question aimed to explore the poetic contents of the collected translations and the ways they communicate the Syrian crisis events. The content analysis revealed poetic texts that are concerned with the consequences of the crisis on Syrian people. Based on the results of my analyses, I suggest that these texts serve as a reliable source of information about the suffering of Syrians, an effective medium of communicative action, and a strategic tool for establishing proximity between a text producer and his/her intended audiences.

6.1.1. A Reliable Source of Information

My analysis of the contents of the collected translations indicates that these translations include detailed accounts of the Syrian crisis, albeit in poetic form, from the stage of uprisings to the stage of military conflicts that resulted in the destruction of Syrian towns and cities, the deaths, and displacement of millions of Syrians (Souaiiby, et al., 2016; Syrian Emergency, n.d.). I propose that these accounts reveal what can be seen as a truth-value, and this is expressed in the examined poetic texts; such a value makes the translated texts a reliable and an important source of information about the events happening in Syria. This truth-value can be understood in light of

several theoretical views about poetry translation (e.g. Bourdieu, 1983; Folkart, 2007; Nord, 1997, 2001; Schäffner et al, 2014).

Bourdieu's (1983) notion of capital, for example, provides theoretical access to the value of a literary work. According to Bourdieu (1983), literary products are produced and disseminated according to the value of the capital attached to them; they acquire their commercial or symbolic value "only if they are known and recognized, i.e. socially instituted as works of art and received by spectators capable of knowing and recognizing them as such" (p. 318).

Since the collected data, as revealed in my content analysis, comprise contents that focus on the victims of abuse and poets who have experienced or observed multiple forms of suffering, one may suggest that the truth-value I found in the poetic texts constitutes a capital that is of special importance for audiences or translation agents who might recognize poetic portrayals as truthful testimonies. For example, in the interview with Almadhoun about "Weg van Damascus"—the collection of Dutch poetry translation that entered the list of top ten sellers in Belgium in 2015, he explained that this collection, which was published in 2014 in The Netherlands, included only half of his Arabic poems because the publisher chose only the poems that were produced after the inception of the uprisings. In this half, Almadhoun provides detailed descriptions of realities from Syria. The Arabic version that was published in 2014 in Lebanon and Jordan also included poems Almadhoun produced before the beginning of the Syrian crisis. The literary value attached to Almadhoun's second half of poems can be ascribed to what could be interpreted as a truth-value presented in the content of these poems, or to their importance as a literary source of information pertinent to the new situation in Syria. It could also be interpreted as the publisher's response to what the European readers want to hear about Syria. In both cases,

the value of the collection comes from the realities it describes rather than the aesthetic properties of its poetry. My understanding of this truth-value is based on the views provided by Nord (1997, 2001), Schäffner et al. (2014), and Folkart (2007).

To start with, the truth-value I have detected in the textual data is congruent with Nord's (1997, 2001) notion of "documentary translation." Nord (1997, 2001) makes a distinction between two kinds of translation: "instrumental translation" and "documentary translation." While instrumental translation encourages the translator to bridge any gap that might exist between two linguistic systems or cultures, documentary translation introduces the translator as a third party who explicitly mediates between the producer of the source text and the intended audiences of the target language (Nord, 1997, 2001). As explained earlier, this mediating position is pertinent to an ethical task, in which the translator makes efforts to ensure that the target reader, as a participant in the communicative interaction with the source text, is prepared to "use the signals or clues present in the text and/or the situation in order to interpret the other interactants' communicative intentions as correctly as possible" (Nord, 2001, pp. 187-188).

My analysis in the first section of the Results Chapter also shows that the collected translations provide many aspects that allow the text producer to connect directly with audiences in the target language and talk about his/her own personal experiences. Examples of such documentary translations are found in Bachir's poem on Words without Borders, which talks about the suffering of senior people in displacement, Dara Abdalla's fourteen poems on Asymptote, which provide testimonials to his personal experience in prison, and children's poetry (e.g. Ala's poetic text on the website of the UNESCO, Ghaysaniya's poem on the website of Save the Children, and Reema's poem on the website of Oxfam) that documents their experience of suffering in displacement, their emotional reaction to the new living conditions,

their dreams, and, most importantly, their need for immediate assistance. All these examples assign to the translation agent what can be understood as a role of a third-party mediator who helps the victims of the Syrian crisis directly reach wider audiences.

The possible truth-value that can be deduced from the poetic contents of the analyzed texts is also associated with the circumstances of production. In other words, relating the importance of poetry of witness to the circumstances of its production is in line with Schäffner et al.'s (2014) suggestion that the circumstances surrounding the production of a literary work influence the translation. Based on this suggestion, one may conclude that the translations under study are triggered, first and foremost, by contents that focus on the events of the Syrian crisis rather than the aesthetic properties of the poetic text; these events were probably the major factor that created a desire to publish poetry as an act of response to the Syrian crisis.

In addition to the mediating position of the translation agent and the circumstances surrounding a poetic text, the truth-value can be associated with the nature of poetic discourse. In this respect, Folkart (2007) considers poetry a description tool free from “opportunistic agendas” (p. xvi) and a medium of communication that reiterates what has already been said in a different style so as “to force its way through the wall of language and to put us into more or less unmediated contact with fragments of world” (pp. 1-2). Although the collected translations include many examples of poetry written by individuals who haven’t achieved a reputation or recognition as literary figures in the source language or on the international stage, my analysis shows that some of these individuals have produced poetry as a vent to their feelings and a way of narrating their personal experiences. Their descriptions confirm Folkart’s (2007) views about the credibility of poetry translation in that translations of Syria’s new poetry bring to global audiences personal accounts provided by individuals who have experienced the destructive

consequences of the conflict in Syria. These accounts support my view of poetry of witness as a reliable source of information.

The above-listed arguments about the poetic contents of the collected translations provide solid evidence for my suggestion that the examined poetic depictions can serve not only as an important source of information but also as a credible medium of communication that is different from the news reports covering the same Syrian crisis. Based on these arguments, one may conclude that the content of poetry of witness constitutes a truth-value, which is likely to be the main reason for its appearance on the websites examined.

6.1.2. Communicative Action in the Translations of Poetry of Witness

The content analysis of the collected translations also revealed a desire or an inclination to bear witness to atrocities committed against Syrian people, both through the poetic content and in the opinions provided by text producers. The results have shown that such a desire is associated with communicative effects that focus almost exclusively on the victims and pay little or no attention to the victimizers or perpetrators of atrocities. This characteristic can be explained in light of Habermas's (1981) notion of communicative action, Nord's (1997, 2001) concept of communicative effect, and other views about the role of global spaces in depicting the Syrian crisis events (e.g. Khashana, 2014; Smit et al., 2017).

Habermas's (1981) notion of communicative action states that a linguistic expression is intended to achieve a certain communicative force or effect on its recipients; language is used not only as a vehicle to deliver information but also as a platform to perform an action intended to have a certain influence on certain recipients. According to Habermas (1981), communicative action expressed by ordinary people who belong to the lifeworld aims at achieving an understanding of an event rather than creating an effect for hidden agendas. To establish a

communicative action, an individual from the lifeworld provides descriptions of realities in a way that is different from the accounts that serve the goals of a state-affiliated institution (e.g. mainstream news media) or the hidden interests of a political system (Edgar, 2006; Fultner, 2011; McCarthy, 1981). Similarly, Nord (1997, 2001) suggests that a communicative effect can be created by the translator in both instrumental translations, in which the translator is implicitly involved in creating such an effect, and documentary translations which present the translator as a third party mediator between the source text and the audiences of the target text.

Based on Habermas's (1981) concept of communicative action and Nord's (2001) notion of communicative effect, the analyzed content of this poetry is indicative of communicative effects/actions that document human rights violations and, by the same token, aim to achieve understanding of these violations because they introduce translation agents as explicit mediators between the target reader and many ordinary individuals who relate their own experiences of human rights abuses or their observations of atrocities against their relatives, friends, or fellow citizens.

Further evidence about the desire to bear witness to atrocities can be elicited by contrasting the results of my content analysis with views about the negative role of news reports in covering the same crisis; these views indicate that news reports actively participated in creating global narratives which escalated violence in Syria and paved the way for foreign intervention (Khashana, 2014; Smit et al., 2017). Here I discuss some people's assumption that poetry of witness is, like news reports, deployed by global spaces as an instrument for hidden agendas. I do so to further develop my arguments.

Khashanah (2014) explains that the global news media's coverage of the Syrian crisis played a role in escalating the conflict in Syria in that "any form of event must be consumed in

any way possible to incite more violence and division among Syrians” (p. 17). Similarly, Smit et al. (2017) note that the global descriptions capturing the deaths of Syrian civilians were deployed with the intention “to persuade publics to act, either morally or politically” (p. 302). According to Khashanah (2014), news portrayals of the suffering of Syrians have served as a pretext for an international intervention that “advances the interests of the more sovereign states ... regardless of claims to achieve justice, peace or better human conditions” (p. 18). With these claims in mind, one could interpret the frequent appearance of the Arab Spring sentiments and Syrians’ suffering in the examined poetic texts as a response by global spaces to external narratives that focus more attention on the victims of violent practices by the Syrian government in order to create an atmosphere for a foreign intervention.

However, although external forces may have an impact on translation products and activities and may limit a translator’s choices (Inghilleri, 2005; Koskinen, 2008; Schäffner et al., 2014), the results of my content analysis suggest that the collected translations seem not to be carried out in response to a foreign agenda advanced by a certain political system. Rather, they are congruent with Habermas’s (1981) notion of communicative action that aims to achieve an understanding of a given reality. I have developed the following arguments to reinforce the results of my analysis and to refute the assumption that the analyzed poetic texts were intended to create influences similar to the ones highlighted by Khashana (2014) and Smit et al. (2017).

First, poetic texts typically manifest a style of communication that, unlike other forms of everyday language, often puts its readers “into more or less unmediated contact with fragments of world” (Folkart, 2007, pp. 1-2). The examined translations provide examples of unmediated contact with their intended audiences. Through poetry translation, Syrian individuals voice their pains and tell detailed stories about their personal experiences. Unlike other forms of everyday

communication such as news reports, which tend “to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public” (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. 2), many examples of poetic texts are posted on global spaces without any comments that might aim at creating a specific effect on their intended audiences. Complete poems are available for audiences to interact with and elicit meanings according to their own knowledge of poetry, their understanding of the messages expressed by source poets, and their familiarity with the situation in Syria.

Second, the recurrent themes I outlined in my analysis exhibit communicative effects that promote feelings of solidarity with victimized agents and pay little or no attention to victimizers. It is worth noting here that the samples of Arabic poetry I examined on websites that are based in Arab regions do show recurrent themes that promote such violence-fueling elements—it is not unusual for Arabic poetry to be used as a tool to legitimize violence and encourage people to get involved in fighting, mobilizing collective action, and spreading certain agendas among the general populations (Al-Mallah, 2012; Al-Musawi, 2006; Holes & Abu Athera, 2009; Qutbuddin, 2011). However, the recurrent themes in the English *translations* are indicative of a type of poetry that is free from violence-fueling feelings such as hatred and vengeance.

Third, the collected translations provide many examples of poetry that is concerned with the challenges facing Syrian refugees in their new homes. For example, the set of poems written by Abboud Saeed focuses on the cultural differences that might exist between refugees and their host societies. The content of Saeed’s poem “Don’t Leave the Bar Carrying her Coat in your Hand,” which I classified under the theme of displacement, focuses on the challenges that face refugees seeking to integrate into their new societies and the form of suffering associated with such integration. Saeed’s poem shows that unacceptable behaviors may take place because of a

person's unawareness of the new place's social values. By saying "don't leave the bag carrying her coat in your hand," Abboud Saeed calls attention to a form of suffering newcomers experience; they try to meet the social values prevalent in a new place of resettlement but fail to do so because of cultural differences. Saeed's poem and other examples of poetic texts dedicated to refugees aim to first and foremost communicate the challenges in new homes as well as the need for assistance.

Fourth, external forces are not limited to those exerted by a political or economic system in a particular place. A translation agent or a website may find stories attractive because they resonate with "narratives of global justice, rather than narratives of nationalist aspirations ... or religious belief" (Baker, 2013, p. 24). Aside from political and economic entities, Western societies, for example, have many social institutions that advocate for such values as freedom of expression, equality, justice, peace, rejection of oppression, and so forth. Among such institutions are the organizations that promote literature (e.g. International Poetry Foundation in The Netherlands), advocate for human rights (e.g. PEN International in England), encourage intercultural communication (e.g. Qantara in Germany), support humanitarian initiatives (e.g. Oxfam America in the US), etc.

Fifth, the collected translations feature poets who themselves were victims of abuse or observed the suffering of other individuals. These poets can be ordinary people who haven't achieved poetic recognition in the source language. For example, the poetic texts composed by the individuals living in refugee camps provide examples of testimonies from what Habermas (1981) calls the lifeworld. These are ordinary people who write about their feelings towards the living conditions in displacement, the circumstances that forced them to escape from their homes, and their own personal experiences. The descriptions of these feelings can be considered

examples of communicative action that aims to achieve an understanding of the consequences of the Syrian crisis on Syrian ordinary people. This communicative action is also in line with the view that contemporary Arabic poetry is composed out of a desire to convey important information about living conditions or to release deep emotions about personal experiences (Al-Ghadeer, 2009; Munif, 2001). Rendering this desire into the target language, in this case English, can also be interpreted as what Nord (2001) refers to an ethical action that seeks to convey this important information to wider audiences.

6.1.3. Creative Strategies of Communication

In addition to the truth-value and the communicative action that can be associated with the poetic contents of the collected translations, the significance of these translations as an interpretation of the Syrian crisis can also be inferred from the communicative strategies I identified in the Results Chapter. The results of my content analysis reveal a number of communicative strategies that are employed in the source text and reproduced in the target text (e.g. multiple personae, plain language, victim-centered language) and that allow text producers to create communicative action which is committed to achieving an understanding of the suffering of Syrian people. These strategies shed new light on theoretical views presuming a role for translation as an effective tool in intercultural communication (e.g. Bachmann-Medick, 2006; Wolf, 2002).

Several translation scholars assert that translation is a site for cultural understanding and negotiation (e.g. Apter, 2006; Bachmann-Medick, 2006; Iser, 1995; Wolf, 2002). Translation can function as a “place where cultures merge and create new spaces” (Wolf, 2002, p. 186), a contact zone “where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other” (Pratt, 1992, p.4), or a translational zone of “critical engagement that connects the ‘I’ and ‘n’ in transLation and

transNation” (Apter, 2006, p. 5). However, these views about such assumed roles for translation don’t explain how understanding is promoted or a conflict is avoided when interaction takes place in a contact zone or a space of communication that is, in principle, open to both dialogue and confrontational encounters. In what follows, I explain how poetic texts can solve this issue.

The analysis reveals that poetry can be employed as an effective tool of communication that reflects a poet’s talent in not only producing poetic texts on real events but also in creating effective strategies of communication which enable the text producer to draw attention to the victims of atrocities. For example, Golan Haji’s “Shooting Sportsmen” showed how a text producer can maintain the focus on victimized agents in a text about anxiety and worries in “they left us insomnia and list of names...,” lack of basic needs in “[they left us] Dust which the hungry licked off their shoes, / Armour of trash bins... / Jugs of turbid water, a shoe on the road...;” exploitation of merchants in “ [they left us] the spit of merchants;” and random killings in “They murdered the madman of the quarter, the milk vendor and the parsley seller./ They crucified the carpenter ... and slaughtered the singer...”

As explained earlier, the communicative action in “Shooting Sportsmen” is created by listing various actions that cause suffering to different types of victims and by keeping the victimizers anonymous. The recurrent appearance of the actions of suffering is likely to prompt the reader to reflect on the harsh realities a victim is facing and can be described as a reflective circle of communication. In other words, the action in which the text producer uses successive descriptions that perform the same function (i.e., showing the consequences of the actions on the lives of ordinary people) opens a circle of communication whose center is the victim of the atrocities. In reflective circles of communication, the text producer moves smoothly from one action/point into another keeping the victims in the center of attention and, at the same time,

maintaining the anonymity of perpetrators. Each action communicates a form of suffering that is equivalent to one circle of communication—every time a new action or set of actions is described, the text producer departs a circle of communication and opens up a new one that introduces the audience into a new type of suffering. The series of the reflective circles of communication created in Haji's poem offers insights into communication in contact zones.

If we assume that Haji's translated text forms a contact zone or a communicative space that brings together a Syrian poet with, for example, Western or international audiences from different countries, a possible negotiation or interaction process between the audiences and the text is likely to be oriented towards sympathy for the suffering of humans as well as the feelings shared by both the victims presented in the poetic text and the audiences interacting with the text. Victims from a remote place become individuals, and are not just associated with the violence of a certain culture or groups of people. I refer to Western audiences here because most of the examined translations are collected from websites that are based in Western Europe and the US, two regions that are directly involved in the Syrian crisis and whose news media have been extensively covering its events.

I propose that the reflective circles of communication created by poetic descriptions like the ones produced in Haji's poem can minimize possibilities of confrontational encounter that might happen in a contact zone: on the one hand, a confrontational encounter may bring about sentiments of enmity, hatred, isolation, and resentment toward other communicators and could ultimately change a contact zone into an isolating border that is open to the emergence of stereotypes and misconceptions; on the other, the suggested reflective circles of communication provide tactics that help interactants avoid confrontational encounters. Whenever a circle of communication risks developing into a confrontational encounter, communicators can close the

circle and open a new one that avoids attempts at indictment or accusation on the other side of communication. These circles of communication help an interactant shift attention from defensive techniques into self-reflective thinking. In other words, reflective circles of communication help engage interactants in self-reflection about their own actions, the actions of their ancestors or community members, or the practices of their state towards other communities or under-privileged groups of people. Reflective circles of communication, thus, allow interactants to reflect on atrocities committed against victims irrespective of where they are located, and stimulate the voice of reason rather than the instinct of survival.

Through reflective circles of communication, victimizers are also invited to reflect on the consequences of their actions and on how they themselves may become victims to other victimizing elements like fear, hatred, and ignorance. When this happens, a communicative action brings together victimizers and victimized agents in a contact zone of communication that promotes understanding, cooperation, and reconciliation.

The proposed reflective circles of communication are in line with Meschonnic's (1999/2011) theoretical views about poetic discourse. According to Meschonnic (1999/2011), a poetic text is capable of transforming the alterity presented in the poem into the identity of the target reader in a process that is likely to engage the reader in a "ceaseless shift from I to you..." (p. 46). In the examined translations, this process takes place when the reader identifies with the suffering of vulnerable individuals; these translations provide examples that show how poetic circles of communication can turn interactants into a united whole or, as Meschonnic (1999/2011) suggests, oneness that thinks about preventative measures and solutions for atrocities that can be carried out by any human.

In a nutshell, the examined translations provide recurrent themes with a communicative

action that focuses on victimized agents and strategies of communication that keep the victims in the center of attention. Based on my definition of the translator's ethical responsibilities during times of conflict in Chapter Two, this action reflects what I interpret as ethical responses to the tragedy of Syrians because it emphasizes the suffering of ordinary people and warns against the consequences of man-made conflicts on humanity. As well, the truth-value I found in the contents of the examined poetic texts and the effectiveness of text producers in conveying these values to their intended audiences make these texts an important form of interpretation of the Syrian crisis as well as assets that contribute to the types of capital that agents may seek to accumulate when they translate and disseminate these materials on the Internet.

6.2. A Habitat for Literary Translation

The descriptive analysis in the second section of the Results Chapter shows that the translations under study circulate in a cyberspace or a virtual habitat of multiple types of websites (e.g. literature-oriented websites, news-oriented websites, and humanitarian websites). The analysis also indicates that the circulation of a poetic text in this virtual habitat is determined by such elements as diversity (i.e., types of websites in the cyberspace), the openness of its websites to share their content, and the multi-tasking networks of translation agents involved in the translation activities. The characteristics of the virtual habitat can be discussed based on Casanova's (1999/2004, 2009) notion of an "international field of literature" as well as other translational views that have been informed by Bourdieu's concepts of "field" and "habitus."

6.2.1. Diversity and Openness

In the results of my descriptive analysis I explained that the examined projects come from different types of websites: (i) websites that welcome international contributions from different

source languages, (ii) websites that feature translations into several target languages, and (iii) that are open to sharing their content with other websites. The first type contains websites that are open to international contributions from a wide range of source languages into English language (e.g. Words without Borders in the US and Poetry Translation Center in England). This type shows that openness to translations from Arabic into English is not limited to websites in English speaking countries—there are projects collected from countries in which English is not the first language (e.g. Germany, The Netherlands, and Belgium). In fact, most of the projects are collected from the virtual spaces of the United States and Western Europe. These two regions have exhibited spaces with a wide range of activities (e.g. news-oriented websites, literature-oriented websites, humanitarian websites, activist websites, etc.). I suggest here that the variation in the themes I found in the collected translations results from the diversity of activities of the types of websites examined, where each type of website displays poetic texts that fit its scope of work.

The second type of openness is pertinent to the target language, through which a poetic text moves from Arabic into the “West.” The websites that are open to several target languages (e.g. Citybooks, Lyrikline, and Poetry International Web) are based in countries in Western Europe. Unlike websites in the United States and the UK that display translations into one target language (i.e., English), the websites based in Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands welcome translations from multiple source languages into several target languages including European languages, Arabic, and Chinese.

The third aspect of openness is noticeable in news-oriented websites and humanitarian websites, where a website initiates a poetry translation project and makes it available for reuse by other websites. In this type of website, the poetic text is embedded in another text that comments

on its content and revolves around a topic relevant to the embedded text. The study results indicate that this type of translation tends to move more flexibly from one website to another.

The types of openness summarized above yield new insights into the mechanisms of dissemination in the field of international literature suggested by Casanova (1999/2004, 2009). What Casanova (2009) describes as an international field of literature is “formed of the entire group of national fields, which are ... situated differently (and hierarchically) in the world structure according to the relative weight which the international pole and the national (and nationalistic) pole hold in each field” (p. 87). While Casanova’s field consists of all national fields worldwide, I suggest that the cyber-space or virtual habitat featuring the collected translations incorporates all the cyber-spaces developed by different countries from around the world.

In Casanova’s (1999/2004) field of international literature, a literary work from a peripheral language is not only introduced to the international field of letters according to the norms of capital cities like Paris, London and Brussels but is also understood and appreciated according to the perceptions of Western critics who are “able to appreciate foreign works only in terms of their own cultural assumptions” (p. 161). Casanova (1999/2004) explains that international writers from outlying areas enter the field of world literature through a process of “celebration” and “annexation,” in which central capitals “reduce foreign works of literature to their own categories of perception..., neglecting all the elements of historical, cultural, political, and especially literary context that make it possible to properly and fully appreciate such works” (p. 154). Translation in this sense functions as “a way of systematically imposing the categories of the center upon works from the periphery” (Casanova, 1999/2004, p. 154).

Unlike Casanova's (1999/2004, 2009) international field of literature, the virtual habitat of the websites I examined in this study exhibits a different mechanism of dissemination. While the center in Casanova's (1999/2004) field is a space for the power of legitimate authorities that function as "the guardians, guarantors, and creators of value" (p. 127), the virtual habitat in the examined data presents several examples in which a global space invites Syrian poets to explain and comment on the content of their poetic texts and the circumstances of its production. The project collected from the BBC, for instance, featured poems from Syria, invited Syrian poets to discuss the themes of their poetry and the message they wish to communicate to their intended audiences, and hosted a literary critic from the Arab World in order to comment on the value of the poetry coming out of the Syrian crisis.

In other examples of both mediated and unmediated translation projects, Western cyberspaces provided the source author with the opportunity to talk directly to their intended audiences. In so doing, these websites function as platforms that enable both source poets and translators to publish texts that aim at promoting understanding for the suffering of humanity through the words of those who experienced or observed it. These websites thus constitute a cyberspace that provides a communicative environment allowing translation agents to connect with each other and participate in spreading personal accounts of witness from Arabic into another language.

Based on the arguments above, I conclude that both diversity and openness are two major characteristics that determine the communicativeness of a cyberspace. A communicative cyberspace like that of the US features many translation projects of various topics on websites with diverse scope of work. Although my study focuses on translations of poetry from Arabic into English, the results showed that the openness of a cyberspace to poetry translations is not

limited to English speaking countries. The projects collected from the websites based in Germany show that the German cyberspace is more communicative than cyberspaces launched by English speaking countries like Canada and Australia.

On the other hand, I find the cyberspaces (e.g. websites based in Canada and Australia) that featured fewer projects not as communicative; they did not provide projects that respond to the multiple forms of suffering expressed in the examined translations. Although Canada, for example, is known for its cultural diversity, openness to foreign cultures, concerns for human rights violations, and its quick response to humanitarian crises, the collected data reveal that its cyberspace is not as communicative as that generated by the United States or countries in Western Europe.

6.2.2. Agency

The analysis of the networks of agents involved in the dissemination of the poetic texts showed a range of networks, from single-agent to complex networks; the act of disseminating a poetic text of witness on the Internet can be achieved by one individual working alone or by a group of individuals from different areas of expertise. It also indicated that agency goes beyond the knowledge of two languages—disseminating a poetry translation on the Internet involves other skills, including the skills of using the technological tools required for managing a website and its digital contents. The acts of disseminating online translations can be discussed in light of the literature on agency in translation studies.

Several definitions have been proposed to describe the notion of agency in translation studies, including the “willingness and ability to act” (Koskinen & Kinnunen, 2010, p. 6), “the degree of freedom of translators when they have to make certain translation choices” (Tcaciuc & Mackevic, 2017, p. 419), and the influence an agent may create as a result of his/her translation

production (Baker, 2006; Koskinen & Kinnunen, 2010). Agency is also concerned with the presence of the translator in a translation (Baker, 2013), the multiple roles he or she may play in carrying out a translation task (Baker, 2006, 2013; Koskinen & Kinnunen, 2010), and the circumstances encouraging or constraining a translation activity (Schäffner et al., 2014).

Another description of agency links this notion with the voice that can be expressed in both the translated texts and the paratexts surrounding them (e.g. Greenall, 2015; Jones, 2010). While ‘textual voices’ refers to the voices or characters that exist in the translated text (Alvstad & Rosa, 2015; Hermans, 1996), ‘contextual voices’ is pertinent to “the multiple agents that produce, promote and write about translations” (Alvstad & Rosa, 2015, p. 4).

Given these views and definitions, the analysis of the networks involved in the dissemination of the examined translations yields insights into a more detailed characterization of agency. Based on the results of this study, I outlined four types of agency that are effective in the dissemination of online translations: featuring agency, textual agency, introductory agency, and promotional agency.

6.2.2.1. *Featuring Agency*

Featuring agency refers to the acts of agents who are involved in showcasing a literary translation on a website. Based on the definition of agency as a “willingness” or an “ability to act” (Koskinen & Kinnunen, 2010), the results have demonstrated that featuring a poetic text on the Internet is an action that requires linguistic skills as well as a virtual environment of global spaces that welcomes poetry translations and individuals who are skilled in using the relevant technology. While a translation agent in a literary field “confers on the author and on the [literary] work a quantity of capital by submitting it to the logic of a target literary field, and its mechanisms of recognition” (Gouanvic, 2005, p. 162), a translation agent in the virtual

environment is likely to bestow the quantity of capital on a literary work by submitting it into the logic of dissemination on the Internet. Featuring agency, thus, involves a response not only to the demands of translating a literary work from a source into a target language, but also to the technological requirements and the mechanisms of dissemination on the Internet.

With a virtual environment that is rich in space, the action of featuring a poetic text can be done by one individual who can practice as a single agent, but can also be extended to include multiple networks of individuals working collaboratively from different parts of the world on the other. Prior to featuring a text on a website, another form of agency (i.e. textual agency) is involved in transmitting the text from Arabic into English.

6.2.2.2. *Textual Agency*

Textual agency refers to the individuals who are involved in translating a text from one language into another and whose influence is embedded in the translated text. Since agency may refer to the influence of an individual or a group of agents (Baker, 2006; Koskinen & Kinnunen, 2010), textual agency in the examined translations is associated with the communicative effect or action expressed in a poetic text. Again, this type of agency may involve the influence of two individuals as text producers (i.e., a source author and a translator) or a group of individuals engaged in the production of a translation. In textual agency, the source author and the translator(s) are embedded, as co-producers, in the translated text.

Examples of textual agency are seen in unmediated translations or in readings of a translated text in isolation from any other text (i.e., paratext) that might comment on its content. The communicative strategies examined in the Results Chapter (e.g. persona of witness, persona of victim, and victim-centered language) can be considered examples of textual agency, in which both the poet and the translator(s) have participated in creating a certain communicative effect on

their intended readers—the poet creates a poetic text and employs communicative strategies in the source language and the translator(s) reproduce(s) these communicative strategies in the target language. In the examined poetic texts, the translator(s) benefit(s) from the poet’s talent in creating strategies that can be transferred smoothly into the target language.

Besides translators, other individuals might be embedded in a poetry translation. For instance, the postcard that features an excerpt from Dia Alabdulla’s poem “the Crypt” shows a picture of the poet, the name of two translators, the source and target texts, and a note written on the back of the card. Although only three individuals appear on the postcard (the poet and two translators), the design of the card and the text around it indicate that other individuals have participated in creating the effect of the final product. The selection of this text may have also involved the participation of members of PEN International’s Writers in Prison Committee. These individuals, whose names never appear under the translated text, remain embedded in the activities carried out prior to featuring the product of translation on the website.

Textual agency, thus, implies that the communicative effect in a translated text can be created by several individuals whose influence remains embedded in the text and whose names might never appear. It also shows that a desired communicative effect can be achieved not only by a poet and a translator but also by other individuals who participate in selecting a part of a text for translation, preparing it for publication, and adding such effects as audio recordings or visuals.

6.2.2.3. *Introductory Agency*

Introductory agency is pertinent to the contextual voices that introduce or comment on a poetic translation. Through this type of agency, a translation agent may breathe an additional communicative effect into a poetry translation. While Alvstad and Rosa’s (2015) definition of

contextual voices refers to “the multiple agents that produce, promote and write about translations (p. 4),” introductory agency in the collected translations describes the acts of agents who write about a poetic text or whose writing includes excerpts of poetry translation.

The introductory agency which occurs in mediated translations shows that the communicative effect may change according to the text surrounding it. For example, Abdulsamad’s poem “When I am overcome by Weakness” has appeared in several articles that present this poem from different angles. It first appeared on Aljazeera in an article titled “New Poetry Emerges from Syria’s Civil War,” and later reappeared on other websites, including the website of Los Angeles Times — in an article titled “Poetry is a Witness to Suffering Wrought by Syria’s Civil War” — and on the website of PBS in an article titled “‘Imagine our Helpless Feeling’ — a Syrian Writer’s Plea to the World.” The introductory articles were written by Cuen, Fleishman, and Segal, respectively. While Cuen’s article admires the spirit of protests in Syria, describes the new type of poetry coming out of the Syrian upheavals, and highlights the dangers associated with poetry writing, the other two articles focus on the impact of the Syrian crisis on Syrian people and the forms of suffering of its victims.

Introductory agency, therefore, allows an author not only to introduce a poetic text, its producer, and the circumstances of its production but also to comment on it and, at the same time, breathe into it his/her take on the Syrian crisis events. This agency also enables introducing agents to indirectly take part in bearing witness to atrocities described in such a poetic text, as their introductory descriptions are likely to affect the inferences or meanings gleaned by readership.

6.2.2.4. *Promotional Agency*

Promotional agency is related to the voices around a translation product; it is a type of agency in which a celebrity individual or a person with popularity points to a literary translation whose communicative effect has already been established by other individuals who first set it afloat on the Internet.

An example of promotional agency is Meryl Streep's role in promoting Reema's poetry at the fifth annual Women in the World Summit. This global conference is held regularly to address the status of women in society, their struggle for peace, justice, and equality, as well as their contributions to their communities. The conference also brings together leaders, activists, and celebrities from all over the world. At this summit, Meryl Streep, the Oscar-winning actress, recited part of Reema's poetry that had already been published on the Internet by Oxfam. In so doing, Streep put both Reema and the team that prepared Reema's story on the global stage and participated in disseminating it on the Internet.

It is worth noting here that the dissemination of Reema's story involves the four types of agency. The first type refers to the act of publishing the report, including Reema's poetic text, on the Oxfam website and making it available for circulation on the Internet. In the second type, textual agency, the translator accompanying the Oxfam team produced the first translation of Reema's poetic text, and, then, another translator revised the translation before it was published. The third type of agency is concerned with the work of the person(s) who produced the article surrounding Reema's poetic text and circulated it on the Internet. In the last type of agency, promotional agency, a celebrity person promoted Reema's work, along with all agents who made it available in the first place.

The characteristics of the cyberspace or virtual habitat and the types of agency I discussed above show that the dissemination of an online translation requires several skills that go beyond the knowledge of two languages and, at the same time, offer different choices for translation agents to express their take on poetic texts or realities from Syria (e.g. selecting poetic contents that bear witness to the suffering of displaced people, commenting on a certain topic, sharing links including poetic depictions of suffering, etc.). I suggest that the spaces available on the Internet allow translation agents, whether single translators or translating institutions, to participate in bearing witness to atrocities against humanity and in producing what can be considered translation of witness. They also have a bearing on the ethical engagement of the individuals who participate in the process of disseminating poetic texts about the suffering of humanity.

6.3. Translation of Witness and Ethical Responses to the Syrian Crisis

The analysis of the impulses driving translation agents' responses to poetic texts from Syria revealed motivations and orientations that show sympathy for the victims of atrocities and raise questions about the future of humanity—basic issues defining the ethical role of translation with which my study is concerned (see page 58). These motivations and orientations imply ethical responses that can be explained in light of Bourdieu's (1972/1977) notion of habitus and several views about the ethical engagement of translation at both individual and institutional levels.

At the level of the individual, the ethical responses shown by the translation agents (i.e., poets, translators, website owners, and individuals working for institutions featuring Syrian poetry) involved in the dissemination of these online translations can be discussed based on Bourdieu's (1972/1977) notion of habitus and several theoretical views that encourage

translators to carry out what are described as ethical actions (e.g. Spivak, 2005; Tymoczko, 2000).

According to Bourdieu (1972/1977), the habitus is defined as a system of “durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures” that regulate and guide the individual’s unconscious and conscious actions in a social environment (Bourdieu, 1972/1977, p. 72). This system of dispositions regulates the individual’s actions when a gap between his/her expectations and experiences in real life situations takes place (Bourdieu, 1972/1977). The habitus, thus, guides the individual’s conscious and unconscious reactions to atrocities committed against other human beings.

The results of the analysis of the personal motivations in the textual data are congruent with Bourdieu’s (1972/1977) notion of habitus. The results indicate that an ethical response to the Syrian upheavals stems from personal impulses that are rooted in the personality of a translation agent. This view suggests that when the translation agent responds to human rights violations committed against other humans, he/she responds to both the events he/she observes and the durable system of dispositions that constitutes his/her personality.

For example, Golan Haji’s comments on his poetry reveal ethical impulses or inner feelings that push the poet to translate this suffering into a poetic language—Haji says that he can’t remain silent while watching his “brothers” and “sisters” suffer from war atrocities and harsh conditions of life. His comments on his poetic texts of witness demonstrate that what he observes in reality brings pain to his heart and this pain translates into poetic expressions which pay tribute to the victims of the crisis.

Further, the results showed that a poetic text may be used as a medium to express the poet’s inner feelings; the text may be viewed as the poet’s personal adaptation to the social

environment that regulates his/her reactions. For example, Bachir's poem "I am a Refugee" can be seen as his personal outcry and reaction to what seems to be the humiliation of displacement, especially for senior citizens. Writing a poetic text here can be seen as a victim's outcry in the face of atrocities he/she is facing.

According to Bourdieu's (1972/1977) concept of habitus, the poetic accounts of these two poets can be ascribed to their personal dispositions or beliefs accumulated over the years: on the one hand, Haji's poetic text is influenced by his explicit desire to speak out on the suffering of other humans; on the other, Bachir's poetic account of his own experience seems to be driven by a strong belief in poetry as a tool to express incidents of humiliation. While Haji's poetic text provides an example in which the poet translates his/her inner feelings into poetic expressions partly as a response to what I consider ethical impulses rooted in his/her own disposition, Bachir's poetic depiction of his own experience appears as a response to the sudden circumstances negatively affecting Syrian individuals. In both cases, my definition of the ethical engagement of translation indicates that these poetic texts form ethical responses to atrocities committed against humanity.

As is the case with source text poets, translators get engaged in similar responses when they carry the outcry of suffering into another language. Such an engagement can be discussed in light of views from translation studies. Several translation scholars have proposed theoretical views about the translator's ethical engagement (e.g. Spivak, 2005; Tymoczko, 2000). For a political engagement that aims at a positive change, Tymoczko (2000), for example, suggests that "there must be a willingness to manipulate the texts in translation, so as to adapt and subordinate the texts to political aims and agendas" (pp. 41-42) and that an active engagement of

translation should be “effective in the world at achieving demonstrable social and political change” (p. 26).

Tymoczko’s (2000) call on the translator to manipulate the texts they translate for ethical purposes indicates that a deliberate selection of a certain poetic theme can be considered an ethical action, through which the translator identifies with the suffering of other humans. Although my study doesn’t involve comparisons between source and target texts, the ethical engagement I highlight in this study indicates that the manipulation of a poetic text of witness, even if it is done on ethical grounds, changes translation from an act of witness into another form of activism; in translation of witness with which I am concerned here, the translator has the ethical responsibility to convey, as much as possible, the poet’s witness to wider audiences.

Spivak (2005), in turn, says that an ethical approach should place an emphasis on the contextual meanings of the source text and should involve “thinking of trace rather than of achieved translation: a trace of the other, a trace of history, even cultural traces” (p. 105). Based on Spivak’s (2005) view that an ethical action should account for both textual and contextual elements of a translated text, the poetic texts that are replete with many allusions and references to real events from Syria are suggestive of ethical initiatives which draw attention not only to the individuals mentioned in the poetic text but also to the situations they evoke.

In addition to personal impulses, the translator’s ethical activities may result from a response towards a work setting or the orientation of the institution within which she/he operates. The results of my analysis revealed that the poetry translations appearing on the websites of humanitarian organizations, for instance, reflect institutional values which focus on the suffering of displaced Syrians and highlight the need for immediate assistance. In light of the literature on institutional translations, two views can be discussed about the role of an institution in shaping a

translation activity. The first view suggests that the translator's choices are regulated by the rules of the workplace because "the voice that is to be heard is that of the translating institution" (Koskinen, 2008, p. 22), and the second indicates that translation is an activity that "enables the delivery of institutional values, goals and agendas" (Kang, 2014, p. 470). In both cases, the institution's orientations tend to influence the selection of the poetic texts that are published on its website.

Based on Koskinen (2008) and Kang (2014), the dissemination of an ethical response on the Internet means more than just the desire or willingness to produce a poetic text that bears witness to the suffering of other humans. Koskinen's (2008) and Kang's (2014) views indicate that the examined poetic texts are selected because they are in line with the orientations of the websites publishing them. For example, the website of PEN International features only the productions of endangered poets and includes their work in articles that raise awareness about the consequences of dissent and advocate for freedom of expression; these are two aspects that define the work of this organization. In other words, poetry written by an endangered poet enables this translating institution to convey the voices of victimized agents and, at the same time, promote its own values and goals. Accordingly, the diversity of the websites' areas of interest leads to a diversity in the themes and topics disseminated on the Internet.

In a nutshell, my analyses reveal that the published poetic texts and the motivations on the part of the interviewed poets and translators imply a desire or an inclination to bear witness to atrocities rather than stimulate further conflicts. My analyses also show that these texts along with their writers' personal inclinations are disseminated on websites that use them to deliver their own values and ethical principles to their intended audiences. As such, the dissemination of poetry driven by ethical motivations reaches far beyond the individual translator's willingness

and ability to carry out a translation project; it also requires cyberspaces with orientations that welcome the translated topics and with the know-how to manage digital texts on the Internet and encourage the promotion of translations that represent a translator's ethical responses to zones of conflict (an impoverished cyberspace on the other hand is not likely to be as effective in promoting translations that bear witness to the suffering of the victims of a conflict).

Based on the theoretical views I used to guide my discussion, I conclude that the examined translations are indicative of an ethical impetus for translation that documents the destructive repercussions of conflicts on humanity, provokes sympathy for vulnerable people, and warns against man-made atrocities; these actions are in line with the ethical engagement I defined earlier (see p. 58). My study shows that this ethical engagement is contingent not only on the willingness and ability of the translation agent to carry out a certain translation project but also on the availability of cyberspaces that welcome and enable these projects to be disseminated online. I also conclude that although the examined translations include content or topics that present Syrian poetry as an effective tool for ethical translational projects, the ethical engagement of translation remains subject to the influence of the cyberspace(s) that select(s) the texts as fitting with its(their) ethical orientations.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This concluding chapter is divided into four sections. The first section summarizes the objectives and results of this research study. The second section discusses the implications of the study, and the third section provides directions for future research. The fourth section is intended to highlight the study limitations. The dissertation concludes with the last section that highlights the importance of my study.

7.1. Objective and Results: Summary

The ethical responsibilities of translation agents have been associated with several theoretical views that provide ideal, and sometimes, conflicting propositions about the potential role of translation in issues pertinent to human rights abuses, political engagement, and the representation of foreign cultures. The ethical engagement of translation agents in times of conflict and the dissemination of poetry translations on the Internet are still under-researched areas in translation studies. To address these topics—the conflict of ideas about ethics in translation and poetry translation—this research study examined a selected sample of translations of Syrian poetry published online between mid-March-2011 and mid-March 2016 with the aim of exploring a number of issues: the themes recurring in these translations and the strategies employed to highlight the suffering of Syrian people; the locations of the websites featuring the examined translations, the dynamics of dissemination, and the types of networks putting in touch translation agents involved in the production and dissemination of these translations; and the ethical impulses underpinning the translation agents' responses to the Syrian crisis and the new poetry coming out of it.

The results revealed a desire to bear witness to the events of the Syrian crisis and to highlight the repercussions of conflicts on human societies—on the part of the poets and the translators. This desire was inferred from the contents of the collected translations, which exhibited themes that focus on the forms of suffering rather than the political questions or the perpetrators of atrocities. The desire to bear witness to the suffering of ordinary people was also deduced from the use of multiple strategies of communication, which draw more attention to the victimized agents than the victimizers.

Besides a victim-centered content, the results showed a strong inclination on the part of the translation agents to participate in bearing witness to the suffering of the victims. This inclination was evident in the fact that the majority of the examined translations are disseminated on the Internet in mediated translations (i.e., translations appearing in articles that comment on realities from Syria or/and the poetry coming out of them); in other words, the poetry is selected to underline the writer's perspective. Regardless of the type of website featuring poetry translations, the mediated translations allowed the authors of the articles and the websites where they publish to breathe their views into the poetic texts, to promulgate testimonials to atrocities to wider audiences, and to provoke sympathy for the victims impacted by atrocities. The results also suggested that the act of witness can be achieved by one individual with a competence in technological tools and knowledge of at least two languages and can be extended to a complex network of agents who work collaboratively to disseminate a poetic text on the Internet.

The motivations underpinning the responses of the translation agents showed that a translation agent's ethical response to the victims of a conflict is deeply rooted in the way work is oriented in the global spaces that featured these translations. The results also demonstrated that the response to Syrian poetry of witness goes well beyond bearing witness to the impact of the

Syrian crisis or provoking sympathy for its victims. The act of witness requires an environment that promulgates translation agents' ethical practices.

7.2. Implications: Humanitarian Responses and Promotion of Poetry

The results of the study have implications that are relevant to the potential role of translation in leading projects that focus on the dissemination of international poetry in general and poetry that emerges from zones of conflict or crisis situations in particular. It provides implications for humanitarian responses as well as for programs that aim at the promotion of poetry.

7.2.1. Humanitarian Initiatives

The study has implications that link humanitarian projects with translation activities. For example, the study could offer guidelines for designing a humanitarian program that aims at responding to zones of conflict or humanitarian catastrophes. In this respect, Wolf (2011) says that translators have a potential role in building a new world that has space for diverse cultures and diverse philosophical views. The design of such a humanitarian program could be informed by the structure of the various websites presented in this study and their strategies in reaching out to poets or individuals from different parts of the world.

The responses of the academic program to texts from zones of conflict would be similar to the responses of social organizations to human rights abuses. Working with texts that document atrocities and provide detailed accounts of the repercussions of war or crises on humankind could be established as a major goal of such a program. This program could be developed, for example, by a Canadian organization or a group of organizations to promote the

Canadian values and enhance Canada's presence on the global stage as a country that is known for its immediate response to human rights abuses.

7.2.2. Promoting Poetry

The study has revealed the role of translation in promoting and circulating poetry as a universal language. The results of the study suggest directions for a project that may archive poetry writings from different languages and make them available to readers from as many languages as possible. Such a project would reinforce the multiculturalism or pluralism of a society that incorporates various cultures and seeks to offer interactive spaces for individuals with different linguistic backgrounds. The archives of such a program could be used for educational purposes to introduce learners to literary and artistic practices from a wide range of languages and literary perspectives.

The above-listed implications contribute to building an environment that is diverse in its scope of work and that welcomes literary contributions from around the world. The structure of this environment could well affect the type of literature promoted on global spaces, the exchange of knowledge between different cultures, and the shape of universal discourse about literary works as both cultural productions and important sources of information about world events.

7.3. Limitations

The study has a number of limitations that may have negatively affected the conclusions drawn from its results. The first limitation regards the method of data collection. The keyword technique used to collect Syrian poetry from the Internet may have excluded other important translation projects that deal with the Syrian crisis, and this could affect the analysis of the

recurrent themes and the networks of translation agents involved in the production and dissemination of the analyzed translations.

The second limitation relates to the motivations driving the translators of the examined projects. These motivations were elicited from interviews available in the textual data, which featured a limited number of translation agents. The questions presented in these interviews may not be sufficient to draw conclusions about the motivations of these agents. Similarly, the motivations of the websites were drawn from the mission statements and scope of work published there, which may not reflect a website's motivation to feature online translations of Syrian poetry of witness. In other words, there may be other reasons that move a website or an individual to feature a certain poet or poetic text from Syria.

The third limitation is associated with the websites on the Internet that keep updating their contents. The links to the projects provided in the body of the dissertation can change, or the content of the project itself can be updated—the date of a published article or its content may undergo changes due to updating activities. Some websites, especially the personal websites, may provide inaccurate information about the translated texts and their translators. Links can change or even disappear. The translation practices on the websites may change, too.

The fourth limitation has to do with the description of the cyberspace of each country covered by this study. The description is based on the projects collected for this study and on the dissemination of Syrian poetry circulating on the Internet. Further studies are required to determine the communicativeness of a particular cyberspace. A study conducted on poetry from different languages might turn up different results altogether.

The fifth limitation concerns the quality of the translations examined in the study. The fact that all the results were based on the target text may have influenced the interpretations

drawn from the textual data. The study did not provide comparisons between the source and target texts. It rather focused on how the websites present and use the translations. A target text may have included meanings that were not expressed in the source text.

Last but not least, there is a limitation that has to do with my personal experience. As a person who was born and raised in Syria and whose family members and friends were severely affected by the Syrian crisis events, my interpretations of the analyses used in this study may have affected its results. Although I have done my best to distance myself from the crisis and the accounts of the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, my subjective take on the crisis may well have influenced the reported results of the study.

7.4. Suggestions for Future Research

The study offers several avenues for future research. The study results have demonstrated that the responses to stories from the Syrian crisis and its poetry are associated with how the websites publishing them are oriented. Similar studies can be conducted on poetic texts from other zones of conflict and thus explore whether such global spaces would focus on the same themes as those I found in the collected translations.

The results also revealed a desire to bear witness to the suffering of the victims. This desire is inferred from the analysis of the poetic texts, the orientations mentioned in the “About” sections or mission statements of the websites from which the texts were collected, and a limited number of interviews with Syrian writers and translators. A survey-based study could be conducted to investigate the attitudes of the translation agents towards the production and dissemination of translations of Syrian poetry.

Another study could be designed to compare the websites in the Arab World with websites in the West, for example, in order to look into issues pertinent to the structure of these

websites, their orientations, their affiliations and the type of content they promote on the Internet. It could also compare the online productions to in-print productions in both types of websites and examine the role of translation in filtering out/in certain aspects of literary works. Researchers could also investigate the role of the second or third generations living in the diaspora in connecting their cultures of origin with the cultures and perspectives in their new places of residence, in promoting cultural dialogues, in developing an internationalized vision of the world, and so forth. The function of poetry as a form of diagnosis and remedy for the victims of human-made conflicts could also be researched in studies that wish to focus on the suffering of victims in dire situations.

7.5. Conclusion

This qualitative research study is novel in that it has attempted to explore the responses of translation agents to the Syrian crisis and the new phenomenon coming out of it, that is, Syrian poetry of witness, which has been circulating on the Internet in translations from Arabic into English. The study results have shown poetic content that focuses on the multiple forms of suffering Syrian people have been subjected to and includes several communicative strategies that highlight these forms of suffering; these poetic content and communicative strategies imply that the act of bearing witness in and to zones of conflict requires a language and an approach that focus the attention on the forms of suffering and on the victims affected.

The results have also revealed that the dynamics of the dissemination of certain poetic themes is contingent on the availability of websites that welcome international poetry, the ways work is oriented in a particular website, the website's openness to sharing its contents with other websites, and on the active participation of the translation agents involved in the processes of dissemination; it has been demonstrated that the act of disseminating a poetry translation may

involve only one individual or a complex network of agents working from different parts of the world. It has also been explained that the examined translations are disseminated by diverse websites—some focus on literary translations and others with quite different orientations (e.g. the websites of news agencies and humanitarian organizations). The results suggest that a poetic text featured on a humanitarian or news-oriented website circulates more flexibly and readily on the Internet than texts published on literature-oriented websites and that the inclination of the translation agents to translate poetry appears to be a response to both the suffering of the victims of the Syrian crisis and the orientations of the websites featuring these translations.

The analysis finally indicated that the examined translations can be seen as ethical acts that are in line with my definition of the ethical engagement of translation in times of conflict in that they highlight the struggles of vulnerable voices for change, the suffering of the victims of military actions, the hardships facing displaced Syrians, and the devastating impact of conflicts on humanity. I also explained that these ethical acts are contingent on the environment or habitat of websites publishing the translated texts and providing interactive platforms for the translation agents to showcase products of ethical initiatives; in disseminating a poetic text of witness, the translation agent responds to the zones of conflict and, most importantly, to the ethical principles promoted in a certain cyberspace and the ways work is oriented in the websites where a poetry translation appears.

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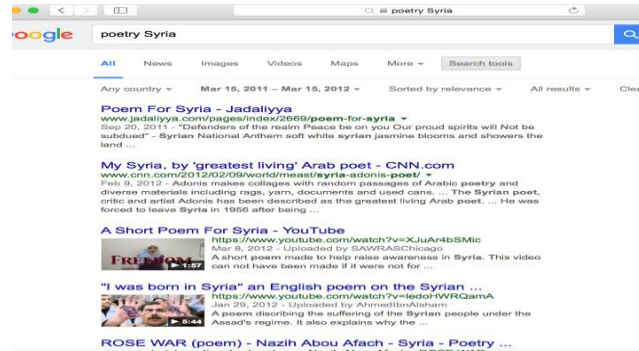
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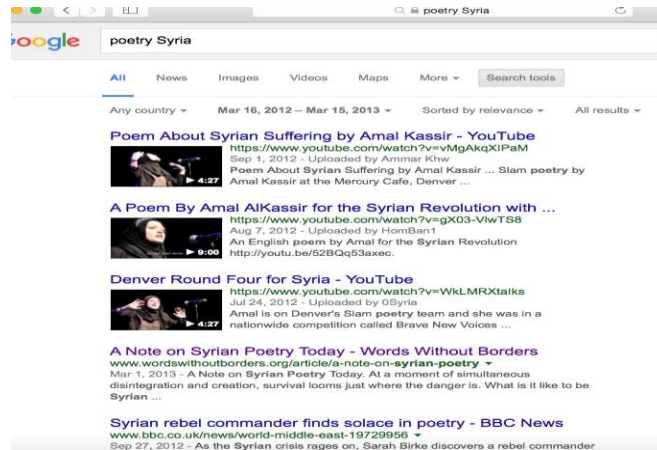
Appendix A: Search Procedures

I- Screenshots that show the search parameters used in collecting the data:

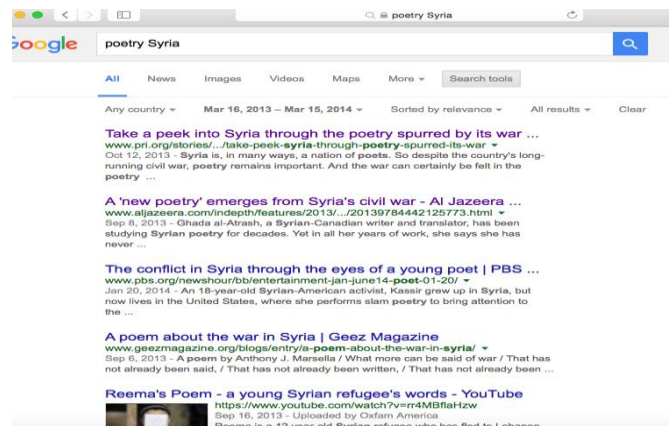
First Year:



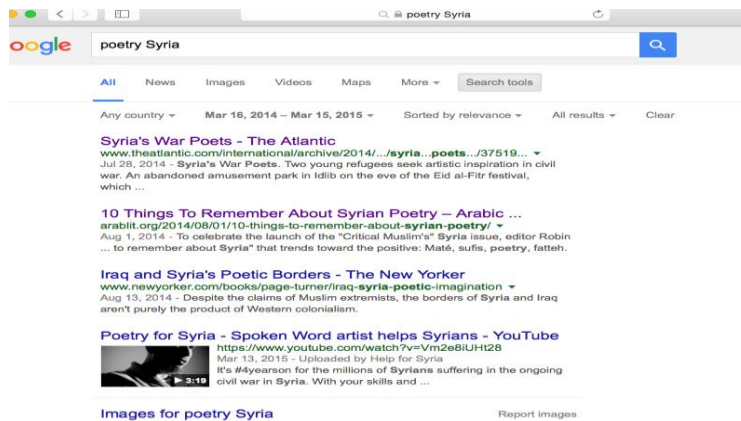
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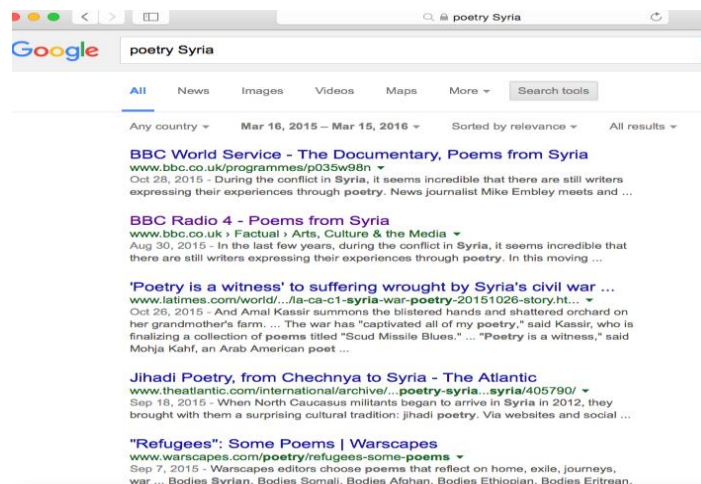
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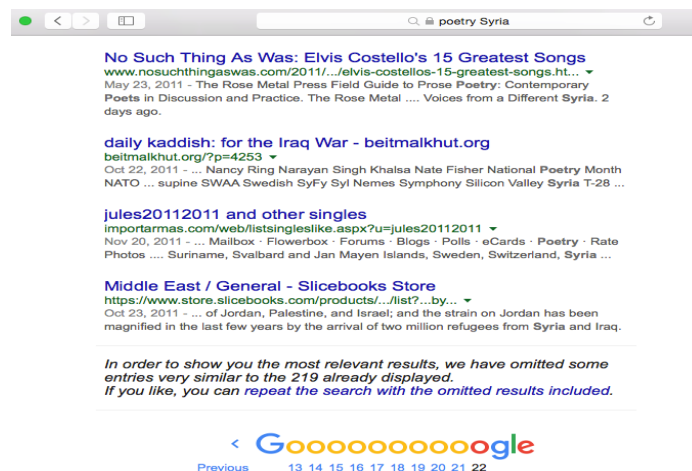
Fourth Year:



Fifth Year:



II- A screenshot that shows the end of search message:



Appendix B: List of Websites

I- Number of the projects and website locations:

No	Website	Location	#of projects collected
1.	Arabic Literature (in English)	Cairo, Egypt	6
2.	Poetry International Web	Rotterdam, the Netherlands	4
3.	Oxfam	Boston (USA), London (UK), Dublin (Ireland)	4
4.	PEN International	London UK), Stockholm, Sweden	3
5.	Words without Borders	154 Christopher Street, Ste. 3C New York, NY	2
6.	Poetry Translation Center	London, UK	2
7.	Moving Poems	Pennsylvania, USA	2
8.	Aljazeera	Doha, London	2
9.	Guernica	112 W 27 th St. Ste 600, New York, NY	2
10.	The Guardian	London, UK	2
11.	Truthdig	Santa Monica, CA	1
12.	Brian Sponsor	Ireland	1
13.	Sampsonia Way	Pittsburgh, PA, USA	1
14.	Universe of poetry	1501 Dewey St Evanston, IL	1
15.	THE New York Times	New York City, USA	1
16.	Freemuse	Copenhagen, Denmark	1
17.	Voices Compassion Education	Bainbridge Island, Washington State, USA	1
18.	Everitte	Beirut	1
19.	Lyrikline	Berlin, Germany	1
20.	Chez Chiara		1
21.	Ben East	Manchester, UK	1
22.	Griffin Poetry Prize	Oakville, Canada	1
23.	Arabiaana	She lives in Egypt	1
24.	Andy Worthington	London, UK	1
25.	Day Press	Damascus	1
26.	The Jerusalem Post	Jerusalem	1
27.	Bangor to Bobbio	Bacolod City, Negros Occidental, Philippines	1
28.	Banipal:	London	1

29.	Writing without Paper	Washington, DC, USA	1
30.	Tell Brak Films	Edinburgh, Scotland (unidentified)	1
31.	The Nation	Lahore, Pakistan	1
32.	Writing Center at PCCC	Paterson, New Jersey	1
33.	Kalamu	New Orleans	1
34.	HuffingtonPost	New York, USA	1
35.	MTLS	Ottawa, Canada	1
36.	Vimeo	Check who posted the film	1
37.	15: Lyle Mook	East Greenwich, Rhode Island	1
38.	The Washingt	Washington, USA	1
39.	France 24	Paris, France	1
40.	Transparent Language	Nashua,NH USA	1
41.	Jadaliyya	Washington and Beirut	1
42.	Author Calendar	Finland	1
43.	Recovery from Mormonism	2145 Melton Rd Roseburg, OR	1
44.	The Times of Israel	Jerusalem, Israel	1
45.	24: City Tourism	Cricklewood Broadway London	1
46.	25: Haaretz	Jerusalem, Israel	1
47.	26: The Brown Daily2	Providence, RI (Rhode Island, USA)	1
48.	PRI	North, Suite 500, Minneapolis, MN 55401	1
49.	Deborah Bird Rose 3	Sydney Australia	1
50.	8: the Rumpus 3	Check: New York or Los Angels	1
51.	9: Good Speaks 3	Washington, DC	1
52.	10: mhpbooks	Brooklyn, New York	1
53.	The 12 th ST	New York, NY	1
54.	15: TES Global	TES Global, London, UK	1
55.	New York Daily News	New York, NY	1
56.	Heinrich Boell Foundation	Berlin, Germany	1
57.	WNYC	New York, NY, USA	1
58.	Global voices	Amsterdam, The Netherlands	1
59.	BOMB Magazine	Brooklyn, NY	1

60.	Jihat al-Shi'r	Manama, Bahrain	1
61.	Thaqafamagazine	Unidentified	1
62.	Arab American News	Dearborn, Michigan	1
63.	The New Yorker	New York, NY, USA	1
64.	Scottish Poetry Library	Edinburgh, Scotland	1
65.	New Directions	New York, NY, USA	1
66.	Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese	Englewood, NJ, USA	1
67.	Alakhbar	Beirut, Lebanon	1
68.	The Caravan	Delhi, India	1
69.	Global Times	Beijing, China	1
70.	Artist	Alaska, USA	1
71.	1: The Atlantic	Washington, DC, USA	1
72.	Euphrates	Redding, CA, USA	1
73.	Bruzz	Elsene, Brussels, Belgium	1
74.	7: Children of Syria (UNICEF)	UNESCO or Hatay, Turkey	1
75.	International Literature Festival	Chausseestraße 5, 10115 Berlin, Germany	1
76.	9: Asymptote :4	Taipei City 10444, No. 84, Section 1, Zhongshan North Road,	1
77.	Highlight Art/Reel Festival	Edinburgh, Scotland	1
78.	Save the Children Australia	Melbourne, Australia	1
79.	Virginia Quarterly Review (VQR)	Charlottesville, VA, USA	1
80.	Cold Front	Missoula, Montana, USA	1
81.	Blue Flower Arts	Millbrook, NY, USA	1
82.	Proletarian Poetry	St Albans, Hertfordshire, England	1
83.	The Conversation	745 Atlantic Ave. 8th Floor Boston, MA	1
84.	DOAM	Unidentified	1
85.	Qunfuz	Scotland, UK	1

86.	History Answers	Bournemouth, UK	1
87.	Angry Animator:	Unidentified	1
88.	Catholic Exchange	Bedford, Hampshire, USA	1
89.	Almohajer	Windsor, Canada	1
90.	The New York Review of Books	New York, NY	1
91.	Middleeast Revised	Zagreb, Croatia	1
92.	The Independent	London, UK	1
93.	Orthodox Christian Network	Lauderdale, FL, USA	1
94.	Muftah	Washington Dc	1
95.	TabSir	<i>Yemen</i>	1
96.	THE BBC	London, UK	1
97.	Los Angeles Times	Los Angeles, USA	1
98.	Their World: A World at School	London, UK	1
99.	ICORN	Barcelona, Spain	1
100.	Resistance Words	Mexico	1
101.	La Chat's Online Newspaper	Geneva, Switzerland	1
102.	Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)	Arlington, VA, USA	1
103.	Books And Company	Hellerup, Denmark	1
104.	The Prairie Schooner	Lincoln, Nebraska, USA	1
105.	The ABC Treehouse	Amsterdam, Netherlands	1
106.	The Art of Protest	<i>England, UK</i>	1
107.	BuzzFeed	<i>New York, USA</i>	1
108.	CityBooks: Almadhoun	Brussels, Belgium	1
109.	Tabitha Ross	Beirut, Lebanon	1
110.	Qantara	Berlin, Germany	1
111.	Ideastream	Cleveland, Ohio, USA	1
112.	Cleveland People	Cleveland, Ohio, USA	1
113.	DW	Berlin	1
114.	The Indian Express	Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India	1

II- Links:

No	Website	Link
1.	Arabic Literature (in English)	https://arablit.org
2.	Poetry International Web	http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net
3.	Oxfam	https://www.oxfamireland.org
4.	PEN International	https://www.englishpen.org
5.	Words without Borders	http://www.wordswithoutborders.org
6.	Poetry Translation Center	http://www.poetrytranslation.org
7.	Moving Poems	http://movingpoems.com
8.	Aljazeera	http://www.aljazeera.com
9.	Guernica	https://www.guernicamag.com
10.	The Guardian	https://www.theguardian.com
11.	Truthdig	http://www.truthdig.com
12.	Brian Sponsor	http://brianjohnspencer.blogspot.ca
13.	Sampsonia Way	http://www.sampsoniaway.org
14.	Universe of poetry	http://www.universeofpoetry.org
15.	THE New York Times	http://www.nytimes.com
16.	Freemuse	http://freemuse.org
17.	Voices Compassion Education	http://voiceseducation.org
18.	Everitte	https://everitte.org
19.	Lyrikline	http://www.lyrikline.org
20.	Chez Chiara	http://www.chezchiara.com
21.	Ben East	http://beneast.com
22.	Griffin Poetry Prize	http://www.griffinpoetryprize.com
23.	Arabiaana	http://arabiaana.blogspot.ca
24.	Andy Worthington	http://www.andyworthington.co.uk
25.	Day Press	http://www.dp-news.com
26.	The Jerusalem Post	http://www.jpost.com
27.	Bangor to Bobbio	http://bangortobobbio.blogspot.ca
28.	Banipal:	http://www.banipal.co.uk
29.	Writing without Paper	http://writingwithoutpaper.blogspot.ca
30.	Tell Brak Films	https://tellbrakfilms.com
31.	The Nation	http://nation.com.pk
32.	Writing Center at PCCC	http://pcccwriting.blogspot.ca
33.	Kalamu	http://kalamu.posthaven.com
34.	HuffingtonPost	
35.	MTLS	http://www.mtls.ca
36.	Vimeo	https://vimeo.com/45782256

37.	15: Lyle Mook	http://lylemook.com
38.	The Washingt	https://www.washingtonpost.com
39.	France 24	http://observers.france24.com
40.	Transparent Language	http://blogs.transparent.com
41.	Jadaliyya	http://www.jadaliyya.com
42.	Author Calendar	http://www.authorscalendar.info
43.	Recovery from Mormonism	http://exmormon.org
44.	The Times of Israel	http://blogs.timesofisrael.com
45.	24: City Tourism	
46.	25: Haaretz	http://www.haaretz.com
47.	26: The Brown Daily2	http://www.browndailyherald.com
48.	PRI	http://www.pri.org
49.	Deborah Bird Rose 3	http://deborahbirdrose.co
50.	8: the Rumpus 3	http://therumpus.net
51.	9: Good Speaks 3	http://www.goodspeaks.org
52.	10: mhpbooks	http://www.mhpbooks.com
53.	The 12 th ST	http://www.12thstreetonline.com
54.	15: TES Global	https://www.tes.com
55.	New York Daily News	http://www.nydailynews.com
56.	Heinrich Boell Foundation	https://lb.boell.org
57.	WNYC	http://www.wnyc.org
58.	Global voices	https://globalvoices.org
59.	BOMB Magazine	http://bombmagazine.org
60.	Jihat al-Shi'r	http://www.jehat.com
61.	Thaqafamagazine	https://thaqafamagazine.com
62.	Arab American News	http://www.arabamericannews.com
63.	The New Yorker	http://www.newyorker.com
64.	Scottish Poetry Library	http://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk
65.	New Directions	http://www.ndbooks.com
66.	Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese	http://www.antiochian.org
67.	Alakhbar	http://english.al-akhbar.com
68.	The Caravan	http://www.caravanmagazine.in
69.	Global Times	http://www.globaltimes.cn
70.	Artist	

71.	1: The Atlantic	http://www.theatlantic.com
72.	Euphrates	http://euphrates.org
73.	Bruzz	http://www.bruzz.be
74.	7: Children of Syria (UNICEF)	http://childrenofsyria.info
75.	International Literature Festival	http://www.literaturfestival.com
76.	9: Asymptote :4	http://www.asymptotejournal.com
77.	Highlight Art/Reel Festival	http://highlightarts.org
78.	Save the Children Australia	https://www.savethechildren.org.au
79.	Virginia Quarterly Review (VQR)	http://www.vqronline.org
80.	Cold Front	http://coldfrontmag.com
81.	Blue Flower Arts	http://blueflowerarts.com
82.	Proletarian Poetry	https://proletarianpoetry.com
83.	The Conversation	
84.	DOAM	http://www.doamuslims.org
85.	Qunfuz	https://qunfuz.com
86.	History Answers	https://www.historyanswers.co.uk
87.	Angry Animator:	
88.	Catholic Exchange	http://catholicexchange.com
89.	Almohajer	http://www.almohajer.com
90.	The New York Review of Books	http://www.nybooks.com
91.	Middleeast Revised	https://middleeastrevised.com
92.	The Independent	http://www.independent.co.uk
93.	Orthodox Christian Network	http://myocn.net
94.	Muftah	http://muftah.org
95.	Tabsir	http://tabsir.net
96.	THE BBC	http://www.bbc.co.uk
97.	Los Angeles Times	http://www.latimes.com
98.	Their World: A World at School	http://www.aworldatschool.org
99.	ICORN	http://icorn.org
100.	Resistance Words	https://resistancewords.wordpress.com
101.	La Chat's Online Newspaper	https://thelachatupdate.com
102.	Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)	http://www.pbs.org
103.	Books And Company	http://www.booksandcompany.dk
104.	The Prairie Schooner	http://prairieschooner.unl.edu

105.	The ABC Treehouse	http://www.abc.nl
106.	The Art of Protest	http://www.artofprotest.com
107.	BuzzFeed	https://www.buzzfeed.com
108.	CityBooks: Almadhoun	http://www.citybooks.eu
109.	Tabitha Ross	https://medium.com
110.	Qantara	https://en.qantara.de
111.	Ideastream	http://wviz.ideastream.org
112.	Cleveland People	
113.	DW	http://www.dw.com
114.	The Indian Express	http://indianexpress.com

Appendix C: Sample Worksheets

I- A worksheet for coding the poetry translations that have no text surrounding them (unmediated poetry translations).

Text	Code 1	Code 2
Poem 1: ROSE WAR Never, I don't want to die And it doesn't cheer me to see you dead. Now, since we are afraid and unable to forgive, Now, since no one wants to die And no one can win, Now is now. Come, let's call on all that's not hatred and death Come, let's fight with rose petals. © Nazih Abou Afach From: <i>Dam'u Al-Yamaam (The Dove's Tear; forthcoming)</i> © Translation: 2011, John Peate Publisher: First published on PIW, 2011	[1] Invitation to fight with roses instead of weapons	[1] Universal; futility of war

II- A worksheet for poetry translations that are embedded in other text (mediated translations):

Text	Code 1	Code 2
Article Title : Syria's Jailed Poet... An article about Faraj and his literary activism. The article relates the story of his imprisonment (the poet spent 14 years in prison). The poet says that he experienced "the horrors of torture and solitude in the world's most notorious jails." He was released following an International Campaign. The interview includes the poet's opinion about his poetry and his views on the current events in Syria. The article shows 5 poems		

Poem 1: BLACK MIRRORS (Link to PEN) The following is new poetry by Faraj Bayrakdar, translated by John Asfour [1] This is how it is: prison is a time you jot down on the walls in the early days and in the memory in the following months. But when the years turn into a long train tired of its own whistles and exhausted by the stations, you try something else similar to forgetfulness. * [2] I hide inside the poem and look for myself outside it. But we conspire sometimes. It invites me to bed and I agree. It takes off its clothes and I undress. Then, the poem wears me yet I remain naked. * [3] After one gasp or two, one cupful of longing adulterated and shattered. After beseeching one god, a dog or a tyrant, my mother will enfold fourteen skies with my absence.	[1] Memories in Prison: writing memories on walls [2] Intimacy between the poet and the poem in prison [3] Reference to time spent away from the poet's mother	[1] Prison testimonies [2] Prison testimonies [3] Prison testimonies
---	---	--

* [4] I am he, I am his pronoun. He who is absent, who has returned from the impossible and has gone back to it.	[4] Continued suffering from long Absence	[4] Prison testimonies
* [5] Black mirrors are unable to see. The white ones do not remember. Polished mirrors conjure the color of detachment. Mirror of rain, I wish my heart were made of basalt.	[5] Even mirrors are saddened for his suffering [6] Mirrors sympathizing with the poet	[5] Prison testimony [6] Prison testimony
* [6] The mirrors weep, wipe their tears and wrap me, woman, with what is not absence.		
* [7] Four cigarettes I would like to smoke now all at once: birth, love, freedom and death. Kind jailer, let us smoke and continue our conversation.	[7] Craving/ Longing for 4 things	[7] Prison testimony
* [8] Not to be partial, not to be boastful, there is no other cemetery in this life	[8] The poet's country is a big grave yard / prison	[8] linked to Arab Spring issues: Country is a

nor in the afterlife wider than the one I call my country. * [9] Now I measure my age with forty-six dances at the edge of a precipice and my poems do not articulate me any more than an arrow articulates the bird to which it sails. * [10] A little while ago I squeezed an orange that looked like my heart. I added a bitter alcohol that tasted like the past to the juice. I took a deep breath and lit a long thin cigarette, its smoke resembled the memory of a woman I never knew then I smiled to surprise myself. Good evening life, good evening friends, good evening me. I have invited you for the opening of the treason- teenth year of his imprisonment. Who of you will cut this barbed metallic ribbon? Do not mistake me for my grief. I am not sad for me, I am not sad at all. I am only ruminating. How plentiful are those born now and how I wish to toast them all and cry in a way similar to longing.	[9] Even poems can't express pain [10] Celebrating release yet thinking of other prisoners	big prison [9] Prison experience. [10] Prison experience.
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Appendix D: Results of the Inter-rater Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)

	Total Number of codes	Missing codes	Reliability
Lama (Second Coder)	47	2	.761
Hassan (First Coder)	47	0	

Inter-rater Reliability Test	Total Number of codes	Excluded codes	Number of coders	Reliability
Cronbach's Alpha	47	2	2	.761

Appendix E: Projects per Country

No	Country	# of projects
1.	The United States	52
2.	England	18
3.	Egypt	7
4.	The Netherlands	6
5.	Germany	5
6.	Scotland	4
7.	Canada	3
8.	Lebanon	3
9.	Israel	3
10.	Denmark	2
11.	Ireland	2
12.	Australia	2
13.	Belgium	2
14.	Qatar	2
15.	India	2
16.	Sweden	1
17.	Syria	1
18.	The Philippines	1
19.	Pakistan	1
20.	France	1
21.	Finland	1
22.	China	1
23.	Bahrain	1
24.	Taiwan	1
25.	Croatia	1
26.	Yemen	1
27.	Turkey	1
28.	Spain	1
29.	Switzerland	1
30.	Mexico	1
31.	Unidentified	5
Total		133