

Representing, Narrating, and Translating  
the Syrian Humanitarian Disaster in  
*The Guardian* and *The New York Times*

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***Abstract:***

Many scholars have attempted to understand certain aspects of translation and its fundamental role in constituting reality and representing the Other during media news coverage of international events. However, translation is often an invisible activity during such coverage. The relationship between translation and representation of the Other in the global media and news texts raises ethical questions about translation and textual manipulation. This dilemma is reinforced by the media's selection of specific quotations and narratives for translating and publishing. It also imposes the question of media responsibility and translators' ethics towards representing the Other, especially when the media deal with international events. The majority of media codes of ethics do not mention translation as a fundamental factor in ensuring and maintaining news accuracy and objectivity as well as fair representation of the Other. This paper scrutinizes media responsibility and translation ethics based on *The Guardian* and *The New York Times'* representation of the Syrian humanitarian disaster (SHD) as embedded in the translated quotations and narratives told by Syrian citizen journalists (residents, refugees, protesters, eyewitnesses, and activists). To do so, it draws on Mona Baker's narrative theory, on Stuart Hall and Edward Said's theory of representation, and on media responsibility and translation ethics theoretical approaches. Accordingly, the corpus consists of 326 news texts distributed as follows: 177 news texts from *The Guardian* and 149 news texts from *The New York Times*. This represents a three-year timeframe of the SHD, from March 2011 to February 2014. The findings provide further understanding of the media's responsibility in representing the events of the Other and translation ethical practices in the text.

**Keywords:** Media Responsibility; Representation of the Other; Syrian Humanitarian Disaster; *The Guardian*; *The New York Times*; Translation Ethics

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**Résumé:**

De nombreux chercheurs ont tenté de comprendre certains aspects de la traduction et son rôle fondamental dans la constitution de la réalité et la représentation de l'Autre lors de la couverture médiatique des événements internationaux. Toutefois, la traduction est souvent une activité invisible pendant une telle couverture. La relation entre la traduction et la représentation de l'Autre dans les médias et les textes d'actualité soulève des questions éthiques sur la traduction et la manipulation textuelle. Ce dilemme est renforcé par la sélection médiatique de citations et de récits spécifiques pour la traduction et l'édition. Elle impose également la question de la responsabilité des médias et de l'éthique des traducteurs à la représentation de l'Autre, surtout lorsque les médias traitent des événements internationaux. La majorité des codes d'éthique des médias ne mentionnent pas la traduction comme un facteur fondamental pour assurer et maintenir l'exactitude et l'objectivité des nouvelles ainsi que pour une représentation équitable de l'Autre. Le présent article examine la responsabilité des médias et l'éthique de la traduction en se basant sur la représentation du *The Guardian* et du *New York Times* de la catastrophe humanitaire syrienne (SHD) dans les citations et récits traduits par des journalistes citoyens syriens (résidents, réfugiés, manifestants, et activistes). Pour ce faire, l'article s'appuie sur la théorie narrative de Mona Baker, sur la théorie de la représentation de Stuart Hall et de Edward Said ainsi que sur les approches théoriques de la responsabilité médiatique et de l'éthique de la traduction. En conséquence, le corpus se compose de 326 textes d'information distribués comme suit: 177 textes de nouvelles de *The Guardian* et 149 textes de nouvelles du *New York Times*. Cela représente une période de trois ans du SHD, de mars 2011 à février 2014. Les conclusions du document fournissent une meilleure compréhension de la responsabilité des médias dans la représentation des événements de l'Autre et les pratiques éthiques de traduction dans le texte.

**Mots-clés:** Catastrophe humanitaire syrienne; Éthique de la traduction; Responsabilité médiatique; Représentation de l'Autre; *The Gardien*; *The New York Times*

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## Introduction

Many studies have explored the crucial role translation plays during the media news coverage of international events and the representation of the Other (e.g., Eid, 2003; 2004; Gambier, 2006; Harding, 2012; van Doorslaer, 2009; van Leeuwen, 2006); however, only a few have examined media responsibility and translation ethics in representing the Other in the global media. Translators and interpreters are supposedly involved as “neutral” and “faithful” language mediators in representing the Other during the media news coverage of international events. Yet, this neutrality and fidelity have been challenged and debated when the global media outlets and news translators are involved in representing and narrating events of international crises, conflicts, wars, and humanitarian disasters. Also, the translators’ decisions, translation strategies, and the choice of specific lexical items impose ethical dilemmas with regards to fair representations of the events of the Other.

As a matter of fact, the global media have relied on Arab citizen journalists who have often provided first-hand accounts and information about the events of the Arab uprisings since 2010. These citizen journalists send messages, information, and images about the events to global media who, in turn, select and translate specific quotations and narratives for publication and circulation. The global media also continue to rely on Syrian citizen journalists as primary news sources during their representation of the Syrian humanitarian disaster (SHD) events. This humanitarian disaster has captured the attention of global media, which continue to play a decisive role in narrating and representing this event through relying and translating Syrian citizen journalists’ quotations and narratives as their primary news sources.

The ongoing conflict in Syria has caused the world’s largest humanitarian disaster since World War II and the Rwanda genocide in 1994. According to a published report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on August 22, 2014, there have been 191,369 identified victims of the Syrian conflict between March 2011 and April 2014. In addition, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees announced that the number of refugees grew to more than 3.1 million during 2013. Neighbouring countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Turkey host most of the Syrian refugees. The United Nations has also reported widespread attacks on civilian populations, massacres, crimes against humanity, and violations of human and children’s rights, torture, rape, and massive destruction of infrastructure. Furthermore, the European Commission—Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Directorate General—has published the most recent factsheet and figures about the ongoing SHD as of September 2016. The report estimates there are 13.5 million Syrian people in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria, 4.6 million people in hard-to-reach or besieged areas, 6.6 million people internally displaced, over 11 million people having fled their homes both inside Syria and to neighbouring countries, and over 4.8 million registered and awaiting registration refugees.

This paper aims to investigate the ways *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* represent and narrate the SHD as embedded in the translated quotations told by Syrian citizen journalists. It also questions media responsibility and translation ethics of the two Anglo-American newspapers. Accordingly, this study scrutinizes the Syrian citizen’s translated quotations in 326 news texts from both *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*. The purpose of the analysis is to provide further understanding of the media’s responsibility in representing and narrating the events of the Other, and translation ethical practices in news texts. In view of that, the following theories and approaches mesh together to constitute the paper’s theoretical framework: narrative theory, representation of the Other, and media responsibility and translation ethics.

## Narrative Theory

The paper's theoretical framework relies on Mona Baker's narrative theory. Baker defines narratives as "public and personal 'stories' that we subscribe to and that guide our behaviour. They are the stories we tell ourselves, not just those we explicitly tell other people, about the world(s) in which we live" (2006: 19). She indicates the importance of using narrative theory as a theoretical framework in translation studies' academic and professional studies because "[t]ranslation is thus understood as a form of (re-)narration that *constructs* rather than *represents* the events and characters it re-narrates in another language" (2014b: 159, *emphasis in original*). According to Baker, narrative theory allows us to examine the function of translation and the role of translators in situations of conflicts and wars, and in the elaboration of competing narratives of the same event as embedded in the target text. In fact, translators and interpreters play a significant role in the process of narrative formation because the events of most conflicts, wars, and disasters are communicated by the media to global audiences with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Baker distinguishes four types of social narratives: ontological, public, conceptual, and meta-narrative. Ontological or personal narratives are interpersonal and social stories in which individuals tell ontological narratives about their position in the world and their own personal experience and history. This type of narrative is dependent on collective narratives that are situated in a particular social and cultural context, and transmitted to audiences through different channels such as the media. The second type, named public narratives, is a group of ontological narratives that are elaborated and circulated by social institutions such as the media. Public narratives are also narratives about national and international events, individuals who become public figures, a movement, or an ideology. These narratives circulate in any society and culture, and can change drastically over time in response to political and social changes. In effect, translation can play a decisive role in the survival of public narratives through the circulation and articulation of these narratives within different cultural and linguistic boundaries. The third type of narrative is conceptual or disciplinary narratives, which consist of stories and explanations that academic scholars and professionals elaborate for themselves and others about their object of inquiry. The last kind of narrative is meta- (or master) narratives that are shared across different cultures and countries. Meta-narratives can travel beyond geographical, cultural, and linguistic boundaries of any society because of the media and due to the direct involvement of translators and interpreters. Meta-narratives can be about capitalism versus communism, the individual versus society, and barbarism/nature versus civility.

According to Walter Fisher (1985), the main function of narrative is to assist in interpreting and assessing human communication and pragmatic effects of texts that in turn determines whether or not a particular discourse provides a reliable and trustworthy guide to events in the world. Thus, the rationale behind adopting narrative theory in the theoretical framework is because it allows us to know and understand the SHD discourse as narrated by the Syrian citizen journalists and represented by both *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*. Also, narrative theory identifies how the selected and translated quotations by the two Anglo-American newspapers constitute the SHD public narrative and the participants' identities whether they are represented in positive or negative representations.

## Representing the Other

Using particular linguistic and translational choices during the global media's representation of the Other can impose ethical dilemmas since they represent different humans, races, religions, and civilizations. In this sense, Western media represent and sometimes stereotype Eastern cultures and societies as inferior in comparison to Western cultures and societies. They emphasize "the West's" political, economic, and cultural domination over "the East". Western media represent the Other to their Western audiences through the use of different terminologies implicitly or explicitly, such as the use of "us" versus "them" (e.g., Cesari, 2014; Eid, 2014a; Farina, 2014). However, scholars within various disciplines have attempted to understand the relationship between translation as a constitutive agent of reality and representation of the Other. Translation "is one of the core practices through which any cultural group constructs representations of another" (Baker, 2014a: 15). In effect, news media organizations are major vehicles for circulating the dominant discourses through shaping words and images that emphasize the conflict and "crisis of representation" between the Self and the Other, especially when dealing with the relationship between Western and Muslim societies (e.g., Eid & Karim, 2014; Eid & Khan, 2011; Hafez, 2000; Jiwani, 2014; Karim & Eid, 2014; Perigoe & Eid, 2014; Poole, 2002). This paper uses Stuart Hall's and Edward Said's theory of representation because their theoretical approaches are significant to uncovering ethical implications of the use of language and translation in representing the culturally-different Other, especially during the media news coverage of international events.

To begin with, Hall defines the concept of representation as "the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language" (1997b: 17). Representation also links between concepts and language that we use to refer to either real objects, people, and events, or to imaginary worlds of objects, people, and events. According to Hall, representation connects meaning and language to culture; it is "an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It *does* involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things" (*Ibid*: 15, *emphasis in original*). In view of that, Hall suggests three broad types of approaches in order to explain how the concept of representation connects meaning and language to culture.

First, the reflective approach looks into language as simply a reflection of an existing meaning about an object, person, idea, or event in the real world. In contrast, the second approach to meaning in representation is the intentional approach, which posits language as a medium to express and communicate the speaker's or the writer's intended and unique meaning of the world and things. Nevertheless, Hall (1997b) argues that intended and unique meanings must be ruled by shared and common rules, codes, and conventions of language in order to understand the intended meaning. The final approach, named the constructionist or constructivist approach to meaning and representation through language, assumes that things and the material world around us do not convey meaning; we construct meanings of things and the material world through our language and representational system, that is, concepts and signs.

Furthermore, Hall (1997b) proposes two systems of representation. The first system, which is the system of concepts and images, includes objects, people, and events that are associated with concepts or mental representations in our heads and through them we are able to understand the meaning of the world and things around us. The second system of representation is language, which constructs meaning. Through a common language we are able to represent or exchange concepts and meanings about the world with written words, spoken sounds, or visual

images. Hence, language here includes the writing system, the spoken system, and visual images. Hall identifies the term that we use for words, sounds, or images, which carry meaning as “signs”.

These signs represent concepts in our head and the conceptual relations between them, and together they form the “meaning-systems” of the common culture. In effect, signs are structured into languages and common languages and meaning systems “enable us to translate our thoughts (concepts) into words, sounds or images, and then to use these, operating as a language, to express meanings and communicate thoughts to other people” (Hall, 1997b: 18). As a result, the process which connects things, concepts, and signs together is called “representation”, and this process lies within the production of meaning in language. In turn, concepts form a system of mental representation that classifies the material world into meaningful categories, while signs form the language that makes us communicate the meaningful world to others. Yet, signs can only convey meanings if they are ruled by codes and allow the translation of concepts into language and vice versa. These codes are the result of different social conventions and agreements. According to Hall, social actors can use linguistic, representational, and conceptual systems to construct meanings about material things in order to communicate a meaningful world to others.

In addition, Hall (1997a) examines the relationship between representation and stereotype and pays particular attention to the representational practices or “stereotyping” of the Other in Western popular culture and the mass media. On the one hand, Hall claims that “[r]epresentation is a complex business and, especially when dealing with ‘difference’, it engages feelings, attitudes and emotions and it mobilizes fears and anxieties in the viewer” (1997a: 226). On the other hand, he asserts that “[s]tereotyping reduces people to a few, simple, essential characteristics, which are represented as fixed by Nature” (Ibid: 257). Hall also suggests that stereotypes reduce everything about a specific person or group to a few simple and memorable traits and norms, then exaggerate and simplify those traits, and fix them without any change. Hall concludes, “stereotyping reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes ‘difference’” (Ibid: 258).

Indeed, stereotyping uses a strategy of “splitting”. It excludes everything that does not fit into the normal and acceptable category such as an acceptable behaviour in a specific culture. In other words, stereotyping expels the Other and his/her traits and everything different from the Self. According to Hall (1980), stereotyping occurs where there are inequalities of power—that is, where the powerful Self-stereotype and represent the weak Other who belongs to a different culture. In effect, the relationship between representation and stereotyping is reflected in texts which “do not express a meaning (which resides elsewhere) or ‘reflect reality’: they produce a representation of ‘the real’ which the viewer is positioned to take as a mirror reflection of the real world” (Ibid: 149).

Furthermore, Said’s (1994; 1997) approach to the representation process of the Other is elaborated from his examination of how the Occident or Western literature, writers, and the media represent the Other or the Orient. Said posits that Western knowledge about the Orient was not based on reality, rather it was established based on information and ideas that were repeated, translated, and transmitted from one text to another. He adds that the main aspects of modern Orientalism cannot be understood as related to objective knowledge about the Orient, “but as a set of structures inherited from the past, secularized, redisposed, and reformed by such disciplines as philology. . . . In the form of new texts and ideas, the East was accommodated to these structures” (Said, 1994: 122).

The Orientalists in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries represented the Orient through translating specific texts and by constructing a series of representative textual fragments of the Orient that were republished as an Oriental literature and knowledge discourse for future Western generations and audiences. As well, Said examines the Islamic Orientalism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, arguing that the Islamic Orientalist conveyed his ideas in a way to stress his/her “*resistance* to change, to mutual comprehension between East and West, to the development of men and women out of archaic, primitive classical institutions and into modernity” (1994: 263, *emphasis in original*). In this vein, Islam has been misrepresented in Western societies because representations are “embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer” (*Ibid*: 272).

Said argues that representations as formations or deformations that are embedded in the language aim to accomplish one or many tasks. He provides examples about representations of Arabs and Muslims who became subjects of “caricatures” in the American culture, academia, policy planners’ agendas, and the media. According to Said, the Arab citizen had been translated and represented in the American media in many negative lexical items such as “murderer”, “violent”, “slave trader”, “camel rider”, and “a hater of the Jews and Israel”. These media organizations started to translate, stereotype, and represent the Orientalized Islam as a “new empire of evil” since the demise of the Soviet Union. As a matter of fact, the American media disseminated, distorted, and stereotyped representations of Islam as a religion of “terrorism”, “violence”, and “tyranny”. Said confirms that Orientalism’s objective discoveries “are and always have been conditioned by the fact that its truths, like any truths delivered by language, are embodied in language, and what is the truth of language” (1994: 203).

It is relevant to point out to the relationship between narrativity and representation. In effect, narrativity can be defined as a representational form and as a mode for representing reality and truth in which different social groups and their identities and events can be represented and constituted in the media among other institutions, and via selecting particular narratives that uncover certain aspects of any event. In view of that, this paper explores the ways *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* constitute reality and represent the SHD narrative through selecting and emphasizing certain textual representations as narrated by the Syrian citizen journalists. Hence, the media’s representations of the SHD events are related to media responsibility and translation ethics.

### **Media Responsibility and Translation Ethics**

The media’s representation and translation of the Other during news coverage of international events raises the issue of media responsibility and translation ethics towards this represented Other with regards to the selection of specific quotations, information, and facts for translation and publishing. In fact, communication is integral to the translation and transmission of knowledge, and knowledge translation is a communicative process among individuals, groups, and cultures (Eid & Basalamah, 2012). In this respect, Eid considers that media ethics are vital for an effective process of communication. Yet, media responsibility during news coverage of wars, conflicts, and disasters includes the dilemmas of labeling actors (whether freedom fighters, retaliators, or terrorists) and choosing whether to cover the events or not (Eid, 2014b).

On the communication side, Eid theorizes “a media decision-making model that contributes to rendering the performance of the media decision-makers *effective*, as a consequent result of being *rational and responsible*” (2008: 265, *emphasis in original*). In effect, he explains

media responsibility toward the Self and the Other in his model “Crisis Decision-Making Model for Media Rational Responsibility” (CD\_M<sup>3</sup>\_R<sup>2</sup>), which is comprised of four main components: rational thinking, responsible conduct, crisis decision-making, and final acts. According to Eid (2008), the media’s responsible conduct consists of four cyclical tasks and each one includes many actions: 1) balancing various responsibilities and interests; 2) emphasizing ethical principles; 3) dealing with major effects on decision makers; and 4) focusing on facts. He also proposes nine ethical principles for media decision-makers: integrity, serving the public interest, accuracy, fairness, independence, truth, objectivity, balance, and maintaining context. In this sense, Eid mentions that media decision-makers should emphasize these nine ethical principles during the media news coverage of international crises and conflicts. He discusses that a fair, accurate, and balanced news story should include enough information and facts about the event, as well as it should contain quotes from different news sources and adversarial parties. Eid also notices that many scholars and media codes of ethics stress truth telling as a primary and important ethical principle for journalists and as an indicator for media responsibility towards their audiences.

The relationship between translation and representation of the Other in media texts illuminates the ethical aspect of translation. In this direction, Baker argues that translators and interpreters encounter ethical choices and decisions with every translation process. They can either “reproduce existing ideologies as encoded in the narratives elaborated in the text or utterance, or to dissociate themselves from those ideologies” (Baker, 2006: 105). This selection of translating and publishing specific quotations, information, and facts imposes the question of both journalists’ and translators’ responsibility towards their audiences, especially when dealing with crises, conflicts, wars, and disasters. Baker (2007) also examines news translations in the context of the Middle East conflict. She explores how translators accentuate specific aspects of the narrative in source texts, as well as specific framing strategies used in translations. Baker provides many examples to show how the selection of frames (e.g., manipulation of titles, naming groups or persons, and images with suitable captions) leads to “frame narratives” in a predetermined way. News translation organizations, such as the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) and Watching America can change the title of an Arabic text in order to frame and represent a translated narrative of Arabs and Muslims as “extremists” or as “discursively aliens”. According to Baker, MEMRI selects those specific frames and narratives as part of meta-narrative of the War on Terror.

On the translation side, Anthony Pym proposes five principles for the translator’s ethical responsibility in a communication act. In fact, he posits several ways to answer the following question: “Why translate?”. One way is to focus on ethics of content, which leads us to distinguish between “*what you should or should not translate*” (2012: 8, *emphasis in original*). Pym assumes that the answer to this question forms the basis for translation codes of ethics, and translators’ responsibility should be focused on their own space and in relation to their target readers.

According to Pym, the translator’s ethical responsibility resides in his/her decisions with regard to what parts and aspects of the source text should be translated, represented, and reproduced, as well as what lexical and syntactical choices should be made. Pym stresses that ethics “is only there to help or direct the choices that arise from the translator’s thought processes” (2012: 69). He adds that “the receiver *believes* the translation fully represents an anterior text. This belief—illusion, or indeed lie—is often false or ideologically quite easily manipulated. Yet that is what the translator is partly responsible for” (*Ibid*: 76, *emphasis in*

*original).* Subsequently, Pym suggests three types of translator's ethical responsibility: responsibility to the matter, responsibility to the client, and responsibility to the profession. In effect, these translator's ethical responsibilities resemble the task of "balancing various responsibilities" in Eid's (2008) CD\_M<sup>3</sup>\_R<sup>2</sup> model, which emphasizes eight fundamental responsibilities for media decision-makers toward: the self, colleagues, subjects, sources, the public, profession, employers, and authorities.

Pym (2012) explains that responsibility to the matter means to improve the translation product through correcting mistakes when the text is retranslated. The translator should be faithful to the matter—that is, to the message and primary information of the source text—while responsibility to the client focuses on the relationship between the translator and his/her client. The translation product should fulfill the client's demands and the requirements of the target language. Finally, responsibility to the profession includes the translator's ability to make all necessary decisions during the translation process. The master and professional translator should be able to decide what, why, and how to translate regardless of the instructions of the client, and in this case, the translator is responsible for his/her decisions and choices.

As a result, Pym (2012) recommends five general principles for translators' ethical responsibility. First, translators should assume ethical responsibility for their translations, decisions, and choices when they proceed with the translation process. Second, translators are responsible for the possible effects of their translations such as the motivator for a translation, the costs of translating, and the impact on target receivers. Third, translators should not be involved in favouring cultures, societies, languages, or social classes. Fourth, translation costs should not exceed the total benefits of the corresponding cooperative interaction. Finally, translators are responsible for the contribution of their translations to long-term and stable cross-cultural cooperation, which includes trust, respect of the Other, and minimization of communicative suffering.

Furthermore, Basalamah (2014) demonstrates three conditions for the translation process to achieve a knowledgeable and understandable representation of the Other: knowledge, reciprocal, and external and internal signs. According to Basalamah, the translator should know and understand the Other before translating and representing this Other and his/her culture, and to avoid relying on social stereotypes and biased perceptions. Also, translation should be reciprocal to reach a mutual understanding between the Self and the Other, as well as to reduce existing stereotypes and biased images of the Other. Finally, it is crucial to recognize the cultural, religious, social, and political "external" signs of otherness, while adhering to the representational, emotional, psychological, and symbolical internal signs of otherness.

Basalamah clarifies that translation is not just about understanding the Other, it is also about "reforming" and "transforming"; "*acting upon the relation* that sets us against the otherness and even going beyond the awareness of elements of common values, meanings that had not been understood before, and textual and contextual knowledge that constitutes the precondition" (2014: 198, *emphasis in original*). Basalamah assumes that the media's economic interests have a powerful influence on representing the Other that imposes an ethical responsibility during news coverage of international events. Indeed, journalists are "cultural translators" when covering international news as they perceive external cultural motives and interpret them within the local culture. This bears a risk of misunderstanding due to biases, stereotypes, and insufficient knowledge of cultural contexts. Basalamah concludes that the media can choose between two positions when representing the Other. On the one hand, they can "present a rigid stance that fails to translate otherness" (*Ibid: 205, emphasis in original*), and by

doing so they choose to represent the Other based on a system of stereotypes. On the other, the media can translate otherness in a way to show respect to the Other's culture, difference, and specificity.

It is worth noting that Darwish (2009) conducted a survey of more than 370 codes of ethics and codes of practice adopted by different global media. He observes that none of these surveyed codes mentions translation as a fundamental factor in ensuring accuracy and objectivity. Darwish also confirms that none of these codes of ethics of journalism and media associations in developed countries pay attention to translation in the news production process. In view of that, there is an urgent need to give more weight and attention to translation ethics and merge them within media codes of ethics and codes of profession.

## Methodology

This paper utilizes a qualitative narrative analysis research design. The rationale behind choosing a qualitative narrative analysis research design is because the analyzed corpus of the case study consists of translated Syrian citizen journalists' quotations in two selected Anglo-American newspapers within a specific timeframe. The corpus is compiled from the online archives of *The Guardian* (British media outlet) and *The New York Times* (American media outlet). The choice of these two media outlets relies on the following criteria: 1) their commitment to international news coverage on a daily basis, especially the ongoing conflict in Syria and the SHD; 2) their high daily circulation; and 3) their reach to a wide range of global audiences. Accordingly, the corpus consists of 326 news texts distributed as follows: 177 news texts from *The Guardian* and 149 news texts from *The New York Times*, and this represents three-year timeframe of the SHD, from March 2011 to February 2014. The selection of news texts relies on keywords that clearly point out to the SHD in each news text's headline; words such as victims, refugees, ruins, shortage of food, water, and medications.

Following the data collection, a systematic analysis is conducted on the translated Syrian citizen journalists' quotations as embedded in the 326 news texts. This analysis is guided by Mona Baker's narrative theory, Stuart Hall and Edward Said's theory of representation, and media responsibility and translation ethics theoretical and conceptual approaches. It is worth mentioning that the analysis process considers the translated Syrian citizen journalists quotations in both forms: direct and indirect quotations. In effect, these translated quotations of the SHD events include a direct involvement and mediation of translators because the Syrian citizen journalists' accounts are mostly narrated in Arabic.

## Data Analysis and Discussion

### ***Syrian People and Refugees are Represented as Victims in the Translated Narratives***

The examination of the selected and translated SHD narratives by *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* uncovers the general trend of each newspaper in terms of representing the SHD events. In addition, it allows identifying the narrators of the SHD and the themes and contents of the translated narratives and quotations, and in what ways the SHD participants' identities are constituted. Accordingly, the paper analyzes the Syrian citizen journalists' ontological narratives as embedded in the translated direct and indirect quotations, as well as the SHD public narrative as translated and published by the two Anglo-American newspapers.

The analysis process of the translated quotations in 177 news texts of *The Guardian* reveals many insights in terms of the Syrian narrators and the content of their ontological narratives. Most ontological narratives, in the beginning of the SHD in March 2011, were narrated by local Syrian citizens and eyewitnesses who participated in protests in different Syrian cities and towns, especially those protests organized after Friday praying. For example, many of *The Guardian's* translated quotations include naming of Fridays' protests such as "Dignity Friday جمعة الكرامة", and "children's Friday", in addition to religious and anti-Syrian regime slogans such as "there is no God but Allah لا إله إلا الله", and "down with the regime فليسقط النظام".

The translated quotations also include ontological narratives that represent the brutality of the Syrian security forces against Syrian protesters, and describe the scattered bodies of Syrian protesters and residents who were shot by Syrian security forces. It is also noticeable that *The Guardian* positioned some translated quotations in its headline, especially quotations that narrate the brutality of the Syrian security forces. By doing so, *The Guardian* newspaper intends to represent the brutality of the Syrian security forces and draw the attention of its readers to a particular aspect of the SHD and to emphasize the dominant ontological narratives which narrate the suffering of Syrian residents as a result of the Syrian regime's brutal actions against Syrian citizens and protesters.

In addition, *The Guardian* frequently selected and translated ontological narratives told by Syrian refugees in different refugee camps between August 2012 and February 2014. Most of these ontological narratives represent the refugees' suffering and shortages of food and water. In effect, the Syrian narrators in *The Guardian's* translated narratives and quotations are represented as victims of the Syrian regime and its brutality, which is dominated in most of the SHD narratives. In addition, the selection and translation of particular ontological narratives and the repetition of the contents in the selected Syrian personal stories aims to emphasize the dominant narrative of the SHD that blames the Syrian regime and its security forces for the suffering of Syrian residents and refugees. In effect, *The Guardian's* selected and translated narratives and quotations to establish the relationship between the causes of the SHD, which are represented by the regime and its security forces, and its effects which are represented by the very high number of causalities and the suffering of millions of Syrian residents and refugees.

Furthermore, the Syrian citizen journalists' ontological narratives as embedded in *The Guardian's* translated quotations constitute the SHD public narrative. Accordingly, the majority of the translated ontological narratives include similar contents and themes that narrate certain aspects and events of the SHD such as the brutal violence, refugees' suffering, and shortages of food and water. The representations of Syrian people as victims are emphasized in the selection of lexical items and terminologies, which frequently portray Syrian citizens and protesters as "victims" and "martyrs". While the representations of Assad, the Syrian regime, and Syrian security forces are stressed in negative words and phrases which frequently portray them as "brutal dictators", "Assad's gangs", "killers of children", "Shabiha", "armed gang", "ghosts", and "thugs". Moreover, the Syrian regime's attacks against Syrian residents and protesters are represented in the translated narratives and quotations as "genocidal attacks", "massacre", "slaughtered like sheep", and "buried alive".

In terms of *The New York Times*, most of the translated ontological narratives and quotations are narrated by Syrian protesters, eyewitnesses, and residents in different Syrian cities and towns. In these ontological narratives, the Syrian narrators describe the violent attacks of Syrian security forces against protesters in many Syrian cities. In addition, *The New York Times'* ontological narratives represent the fatalities that resulted from the brutal engagement of the

Syrian security forces. As of July 2012, *The New York Times* selected, translated, and circulated Syrian ontological narratives and quotations which are narrated by two types of narrators: first, eyewitnesses and residents whom their stories narrate the Syrian regime's airstrikes and the causalities and damages in properties resulted from these airstrikes. Second, the Syrian refugees whom their ontological stories tell about their daily suffering in refugee camps, and the harshness of the winter. It is also observable that some translated ontological narratives represent the violent attacks and brutality of some anti-regime and al-Qaeda affiliated groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Jabhat Al-Nusra.

In addition, the American newspaper used negative lexical items to represent Assad and his regime such as "Mokhabarat" (Arabic word for Intelligence), "horse", and "donkey". The analysis process also shows that some English words used by *The New York Times* are Arabic words written in English letters although there are English semantic equivalents for them (e.g. Mokhabarat). Moreover, the SHD public narrative as translated and published by *The New York Times* emphasizes the aspects and events of the SHD that represent the suffering of the Syrian residents and refugees and that blame the Syrian regime and its security forces for the ongoing SHD, as well as legitimizing empathy with Syrian protests, residents, and refugees.

As a result, the examination of *The New York Times'* translated ontological narratives and quotations reveals that the primary news sources quoted in the news texts have changed during different chronological periods of the SHD in terms of the type of Syrian narrators and citizen journalists and the content of their ontological narratives. The American newspaper selected and translated ontological narratives which are first told by Syrian protesters and residents in the beginning of the SHD, and then ontological stories which were narrated by Syrian refugees. With regard to the contents and themes of the ontological narratives, the emphasis had changed from a SHD aspect to another. On the one hand, *The New York Times* selected and translated ontological narratives that accentuate the violent actions of Syrian forces against protesters and residents in different Syrian cities. On the other hand, the American newspaper selected and translated ontological narratives that narrate the refugees' suffering during the winter and the shortages of food and water in refugee camps.

As can be seen from the above analysis, narrative theory is used as an analytical and conceptual tool to describe the Syrian citizen journalists' narratives of the SHD, and to explore how each of the two Anglo-American newspapers emphasize various aspects and participants of the SHD events through selecting and translating quotations narrated by Syrian citizen journalists and communicating these narratives to their Anglo-American target readers. Also, applying narrative theory on the SHD as a case study allows us to gradually follow the structuring of the SHD public narrative through the combination of common and similar Syrian citizens' ontological narratives. As well, it sheds light on the importance of narrators and their personal narratives in the configuration of the SHD public narrative.

### ***Representing the SHD Victims and Refugees***

The analysis process examines whether or not the Syrian victims and refugees of the SHD are fairly represented in the selected and translated narratives and quotations. With regard to *The Guardian*, the selected and translated quotations and narratives frequently represent the Syrian causalities and victims who were shot by Syrian security forces during peaceful protests in different Syrian cities during the three-year timeframe of the SHD. As well as, the translated narratives and quotations fairly represent the refugees' suffering in refugee camps in the

neighbouring countries because the majority of the analyzed narratives and quotations contain sufficient accounts and information about the Syrian victims (e.g., protesters, civilians, and children), how they are killed, and who is responsible. The selected and translated narratives and quotations also provide target readers with information and accounts about different aspects of Syrian refugees' suffering and their daily life in different refugee camps. In addition, most of the quoted Syrian citizen journalists and eyewitnesses are either identified by first name, different names, or their identity kept anonymous "for fear of reprisals" (e.g., *The Guardian* on April 9, 2011). The British newspaper indicates at the end of most of its news texts "Name changed for security reasons" (e.g., *The Guardian* on July 25, 2013).

Although most of the real names and identities of Syrian citizen journalists are unknown, the facts and information in the translated quotations and narratives can be considered reliable and verified because the majority of these quotations and narratives include common and similar information and facts about aspects, events, or key narrative elements of the SHD. Moreover, some of the lexical items in the translated quotations include patterns of religious stereotypes which encourage the readers to relate some events and participants of the SHD to Islam and imply that some of the SHD's participants are Muslims. These patterns of religious stereotypes are noticeable in many lexical items such as "There is no God but Allah", "There is no God but God", "God is great", "God is greatest", and "Allahu Akbar".

Furthermore, the most represented SHD participants in *The Guardian*'s translated quotations and narratives are Syrian citizens and protesters are those who were killed or injured by Syrian security forces during peaceful protests. The majority of these quotations are narrated by anti-regime Syrian protesters who participated in the protests against Assad and his regime. Yet, when the Syrian refugee's aspect of the SHD developed into a global crisis, *The Guardian* frequently represented the Syrian refugees who described their situation and suffering in refugee camps. Moreover, some translated quotations represent anti-regime groups as "Mujahedeen", a word that is usually associated with Islam and the religious notion of "Jihad". In terms of the SHD's participants and voices, the American newspaper more openly represents the voices of anti-regime Syrian protesters who were brutally assaulted and killed by Syrian security forces.

In terms of *The New York Times*, the translated quotations and narratives also fairly represent the protests and the Syrian victims because numerous news texts contain narratives and quotations about the brutal and violent confrontations of Syrian security forces against protesters, and the victims who were shot and killed by Syrian security forces. While the American newspaper did not give the same attention to the Syrian refugees as its British counterpart even though when the refugee aspect dominated other aspects of the SHD and developed into a global crisis. Additionally, most of the quoted Syrian refugees are fully known and identified because their accounts are narrated from outside the borders of the censoring strongholds of the regime, and their quotations include common and similar facts and information about aspects and events of the SHD. This repetition of facts and information seeks to assure the validity and reliability of the translated quotations and narratives, and to maintain a knowledgeable representation of the aspects, events, and key narrative elements of the SHD.

### ***Media Responsibility towards Representing the SHD***

The following section examines how ethical the selection criteria were with regard to narrating and representing the aspects and events of the SHD and whether or not the selected and translated narratives and quotations serve the public interest in terms of informing target readers

about the SHD events, especially the SHD victims and the Syrian refugees' sufferings. An examination of *The Guardian's* selection criteria shows that the selected and translated narratives and quotations convey sufficient information about SHD victims and refugees' suffering. Hence, the English newspaper provides the target readers with newsworthy and valuable information through selecting and translating different narratives and accounts that contain information and details about the brutal and violent attacks of the regime and its security forces against Syrian citizens and how these attacks have led to a vast number of casualties and have scattered millions of Syrian refugees around the world.

With regard to *The New York Times*, the translated quotations and narratives convey information about Syrian casualties inside Syria and the brutality of Syrian security forces. By doing that, the American newspaper serves the target readers' interest when it offers them information and narratives which describe the loss of human lives during protests and those who were killed or injured by Syrian security forces' attacks and airstrikes. In addition, the level of accuracy and fairness of *The New York Times'* translated quotations is close to that of *The Guardian* because the majority of its quotations and narratives contain common information about the events and aspects of the SHD.

It is relevant to mention that some news texts in *The New York Times* include Syrian citizen journalists' narratives which contain quotations and phrases that show ethnic tensions such as "we are going to kill them [referring to the Alawites] with our knives", "I hate the Alawites and the Shiites", "All the Alawites are security agents. After the revolution, we want to kill them", and "Sunnis are Muslims, and Shiites and Alawites are the ones who kill us", and the repetitions of words "Sunnis", "Alawites", and "Shiites". By selecting and translating these particular quotations, *The New York Times* represent the narrative of "ethnic tensions" as another aspect and narrative of the ongoing Syrian conflict and the SHD as narrated by Syrian citizen journalists.

In terms of labeling and naming key events and actors of the SHD as embedded in the translated quotations and narratives, the two Anglo-American newspapers label and name the Syrian protests, residents, and refugees as "martyrs", "heroes", and "free revolutionaries". While they label and name Assad, the Syrian regime, and Syrian security forces and their attacks against protesters as "massacre", "brutal", "bloody", "bloodshed", and "slaughter". Also, Assad is frequently labeled as "dictator", "idiot", "horse", "donkey", "tyrant", "the child killer", "A doctor in London, a butcher in Syria", and his supporters are labeled as "shabiha", "ghosts", "gangs", "government's armed gangs", "the only killer is the Assad regime", "Assad's gangs", "killers of children", "armed gang", "gangs of Bashar al-Assad", "thugs", and "terrorists". These labels represent the two sides of the SHD: the Syrian protesters, residents, and refugees as the victims of the ongoing Syrian conflict and the regime's attacks against them; and Assad and his regime as the main cause of the ongoing SHD, the falling of thousands of victims, and the sufferings of millions of Syrian refugees. In effect, these labels can be explained as frames that the two newspapers adopted while representing the SHD. Thus, the frames can be divided into two groups based on the above mentioned labeling: 1) the Syrian people are framed as "victims"; and 2) Assad and his regime are framed as "killers" and "torturers".

## Conclusion

This study has examined media responsibility and translation ethics during *The Guardian* and *The New York Times'* representations of the SHD as embedded in the translated quotations and

narratives told by Syrian citizen journalists. It demonstrates that media responsibility and translation ethical practices in the text mesh together during the global media's representation of international events. In fact, the examination of the two newspapers' selected and translated Syrian citizen journalists' quotations and narratives determines the Anglo-American media responsibility and translation ethics in representing the SHD. This media and translation ethical aspect is essential for communicating and reporting on the SHD events to the target readers.

In short, the findings show that the selected and translated Syrian citizen journalists' narratives and quotations in the news texts of both *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* ethically represent different aspects of the SHD through narrating the suffering of the Syrian people and refugees, relating it to the regime's violent attacks against protesters and civilians, as well as to the regime's siege and airstrikes on different Syrian cities. In addition, the two Anglo-American newspapers adhere to media and translation ethics and follow main media responsibility and translation ethics principles such as serving the public interest, fairness, truth, and reporting and translating the events in knowledgeable and understandable representations. This conclusion is drawn from a variety of the Syrian citizen narrators and themes of their narratives and quotations, which represent various aspects of the SHD events, and clearly identify to the target readers who are the "victims" vis-à-vis the "killers" and "torturers".

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