

# Farouk Goweda's Romantic and Political Poetry in English

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**Abstract:** This paper aims at analyzing three poems of the great Egyptian poet Farouk Goweda and how the translators were able to transfer the poet's vision and voice from Arabic into English. This is a unique experience as translating poetry has always been one of the most difficult genres to translate from one language to another. But what makes this experience less difficult is that it is carried out by two poets, for me as a native speaker of Arabic in addition to writing in English and my friend and great poet Andy Fogle whose native language is English. To achieve this objective, the thematic analytic approach will be adopted in the light of the theory of cultural translation. We agreed to work on translating some poems of the great Egyptian poet Farouk Goweda as an influential figure in the Arabic and Egyptian literature. These three poems are *This My Country No Longer My Country*, *Forgetting* and *Who Said Oil Is Worth More Than Blood?* Two of them are political or realistic poems and one is romantic to see how Goweda masters both forms, and how the English reader appreciates them. These three poems were published in the United States of America in the *Anmly Magazine*, issue 28, 2018. We have been working on translating Goweda's poetry since 2015, starting with his poem *Cause*, which was published in *Rhino Poetry*, after that *"Travelers, Strangers' Cross*, and *Mirage* were published in *The Reunion: The Dallas Review*, Vol 6, 2016. In 2017 *The Image Journal* published a new translated poem of Farouk Goweda entitled, *Egypt's Grief*. We are going on translating his poems for better mutual understanding and for bridging the gap between the east and the west.

**Keywords:** Farouk Goweda, Andy Fogle, Walid Abdallah, Translation, Romantic and Political Poetry

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## 1. Introduction

Farouk Goweda is a well-known Egyptian poet, journalist, and dramatist whose over 50 works have had a significant impact on Middle Eastern literature due to their style and subject matter. He has won numerous national and international honours, and his work has been translated into English, French, Spanish, Chinese, and Persian. He represented Egypt in different conferences and international gatherings such as World Poetry Day in Paris in 1999. However, "In Al Youm Al Sabea' [6] (The Seventh Day) newspaper, issue of June 16, 2010, Gaber Asfour was reported saying that Goweda is not a first-class poet as Salah Abdel Sabour since he suffers from mediocrity." [5].

Andy Fogle is the author of six chapbooks of poetry, most recently *Elegies & Theories* [6]

. Various works have appeared in *Best New Poets 2018*, *English Journal*, *Gargoyle*, *Image*, *Mid-American Review*, and *Teachers and Writers Collaborative*, among others. He

teaches high school in upstate New York and is working on a PhD in Education. [7]

Walid Abdallah is an Egyptian writer and poet whose books include *Man Domination and Woman Emancipation* (2011), *Escape to the Realm of Imagination* (2012), *Shout of Silence* (2015), *Go ye Moon* (2018) and *My Heart Oasis* (2020). Walid's poetry translations of Farouk Goweda have previously appeared in *Image*, *RHINO*, *Reunion: Dallas Review*, and *Los Angeles Review*. He has served as a visiting professor of English language and literature in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Germany, and the United States." [1]

## 2. Methodology

In order to analyze and discuss some romantic and political poems of the great Egyptian poet Farouk Goweda, the analytical and thematic approach will be adopted in the light of the theory of cultural translation where the concentration will be focused on how the Arabic poems are translated into English with the same themes, voice and

feelings.

Cultural translation is distinguished with cultural specifics more than other kinds of translation. In political translation, for instance, it is essential to concentrate on the relationship between translation behavior and socio-cultural elements. Therefore, discourse analysis is fundamental to political translation since it decides on the correct word that should be used. On the other hand, cultural specifics are not limited to mere words, rather they encompass the whole language, which is specific to the culture it belongs to, Harish Trivedi states in "Translating Culture vs. Cultural Translation" in 2011 that:

Thus, in a paradigmatic departure, the translation of a literary text became a transaction not between two languages, or a somewhat mechanical sounding act of linguistic "substitution" as Catford had put it, but rather a more complex negotiation between two cultures [12]

El Mustapha Lahlali and Wafa Abu Hatab in their book *Advanced English – Arabic Translation* 2014 state that:

Poetry is a literary genre that has its distinctive and challenging features. Perhaps it is thought to be the most challenging to the translator. What distinguishes poetry from other genres is its reliance on figurative language, rhyme, and rhythm. To be a poet is to deviate from the usual linguistic norm of expression. To deviate is to be able to play with words and twist them to suit your needs. Such foregrounding strategies employed by poets put a lot of pressure on the translator, especially when the two languages are linguistically and culturally distant as is the case with Arabic and English. Before initiating the translation task, you should read the SL poem carefully, understand it and read about the poet, his or her ideology and most frequent metaphors, since each poet has his or her own diction that can be elicited from reading more than one poem. This will give you a basis and direction in the translation. [10]

They go on talking about the difficulties that might face the translators to translate meaning, metaphors and other figures of speech from one language to another "It has become clear that poetry is a difficult genre because it is a condensed form of language that is rich with meaning. In addition, poetry applies imagery and the use of figures of speech, especially metaphor, which makes poetry even more challenging for the translator." [11]

### 3. Discussion

Andy Fogle describes our experience in the *Anmly Journal*, issue 28, 2019 as follows:

Walid and I met as part of an international educational exchange program housed by the College of Saint Rose here in Albany New York, during which Walid regularly visited my high school classroom for about three months to observe, talk, and collaborate. After teaming a couple of lessons on political poetry from a variety of countries, we thought it would be fun to collaborate on some translations of contemporary Egyptian poetry, which has received

relatively little attention here in the U.S. Walid was particularly drawn to the work of Farouk Goweda, who is a literary giant in the Middle East.

After agreeing on the works of the Egyptian Poet Farouk Goweda, the first problem we encountered was how to transfer the poet's feelings of issues that matter people in the Middle East to the American reader, Fogle goes on saying:

Because I do not speak, read, or write any Arabic, Walid is responsible for the most important step: the initial renderings of Goweda's work into English. Parts of those initial translations need, in my view, very little or no editing or re-casting into poetic American English. I take the parts that do need reworking and edit for simple correctness, clarity, and suggestiveness. Sometimes I move lines around a bit out of their original order to emphasize certain images or progressions. I often follow up with Walid on questions about intent, clarity of meanings, allusions, historical figures, shifts in tone, and cultural symbols. I always send him final drafts for approval, and he has been in touch with Mr. Goweda, who is glad to see his work steadily and increasingly recognized in the United States.

In order to achieve this goal, we used to discuss the subject matter of the poem and how to use figures of speech that appeal to the western reader, I have been the meeting point to make points of view closer and clarify what Goweda intends behind certain metaphors, similes and personifications. The third problem was the form of the poem and this part is mainly played by Fogle as a professional poet of English. Fogle goes on talking about line and stanza breaks as follows:

Line and stanza breaks are the most consistent liberty I take (though I do take occasional ones with certain images or colloquialisms): I do not think any of the poems we've published actually follow Goweda's original lineation or stanza structures. I have approached those features searching only for a combination of line and stanza that both contains and propels the rhythm, power, and image-laden lyricism of Goweda's work. I am fond of either uniform or alternating stanza lengths, with a small range of syllables per line, but I have tried to let the content of the lines drive the shaping of the lines, so some poems have had small syllabic ranges, whereas others stretch and sprawl similar to those of Whitman or Ginsberg.

Goweda is particularly well-known for his political, religious, and love poetry. In some translations, we have occasionally allowed the distinctions between these genres to become confused. The three poems that are presented here are "Forgetting," a love poem that also laments the passing of time, and "Who Said Oil...", a critique of American foreign policy in Iraq. "This My Country No Longer My Country" memorializes a story that is common throughout the world but has been happening in Egypt since the 1980s: illegal immigrants leaving their home nations because of corruption and poverty in the hopes of finding better lives in Europe. This My Country No Longer My Country

هذه بلاد.. لم تعد كبلادي  
كم عشتُ أسأل: أين وجهُ بلادي

أين النخيلُ وأين دفء الوادي  
لا شيء يبدو في السماء أمامنا  
غير الظلام وصورة الجراد  
[8] هو لا يغيب عن العيون كأنه

All my life I have wondered: where is the face of my country?

Where are the palm trees, the warmth of the valley?

In the horizon only darkness, and the headsman's image: it never fades away. [2]

قدر.. كيوم البعث والميلاد  
قد عشت أصرخ بينكم وأناذي  
أبني فصوراً من تلال رماد  
أهفو لأرض لا تساوهم فرحتي  
لا تستبيح كرامتي.. وعنادي  
اشتتق أطفالا كحبات الندى  
يترافقون مع الصباح النّادي  
أهفو لأيام توارى سحرها  
[8] صخب الجياد.. وفرحة الأعياد

It is part of our fate, between birth and resurrection.

I live in the call that raises palaces from gray hills.

I long for my beloved land's honor of both will and drive.

I long for children dancing like drops of dew in morning.

I long for days whose magic has faded, the bustle of horses, the joy of feasts. [2]

اشتتق يوماً أن تعود بلادتي  
غابت وغينا.. وانتهت ببغادي  
في كل نجم ضلّ حلم ضائع  
وسحابة لبست ثياب حداد  
وعلى المدى أسراب طير راحل  
نسي الغناء فصار سرب جرّاد  
هذي بلاد تاجرت في عرضها  
وقرقت شيعا بكل مراد  
لم يبق من صخب الجياد سوى الأسي  
[8] تاريخ هذي الأرض بعض جياد

I miss my old country.

We moved, and it moved.

In every bright star, an orphaned dream.

Every cloud a gown of grief.

In the horizon, flocks of leaving birds forego singing, become a swarm of locusts.

This country traded in its land, fragments of the whole, subdivided for the auction.

All that remains of the hustle of horses is sorrow. [2]

في كل ركن من ربوع بلادتي  
تبوء أمامي صورة الجراد  
لمحوه من زمن يضاجع أرضها  
حملت سفاها فاستباح الوادي  
لم يبق غير صراخ أمس راحل  
ومقابر سمّت من الأجداد  
وعصاة سرفت تزيّف غيونا  
بالقهر والتدليس.. والأحقاد  
ما عاد فيها ضوء نجم شارد  
ما عاد فيها صوت طير شاد  
[8] تمضي بنا الأحران ساخرة بنا

وتزورنا دوماً بلا ميعاد  
شيء تكسر في عيوني بعدما

Our history is full of glistening horses, but now I only see

the headsman raping the valley, and a gang that twirls the blood from our eyes.

The day's cries subside, and the tombs are heavy with ancestors.

There is no light from a wandering star.

No longer a release dove's coo.

Sadness cackles past us, drops by without an appointment.

Something has broken in my eyes. [2]

ضاق الزمان بتورتي وعنادي  
أحببتك حتى الثمالة بينما  
باعت صباها الغض للأوغاد  
لم يبق فيها غير صنّج كاذب  
وصراخ أرض في لظي استعباد  
لا تسألوني عن دموع بلادتي  
عن حزنها في لحظة استشهادي  
في كل شبر من ترابها صرخة  
كانت تهرول خلفنا وتنادي  
"الأفق يصغر.. والسماء كئيبة"  
خلف الغيوم أرى جبال سواد  
تتلاطم الأمواج فوق رؤوسنا  
والريخ تلقى للصخور عنادي  
نامت على الأفق البعيد ملامح  
[8] وتجمدت بين الصقيع أياد

The times are fed up with the revolution I loved to the edge of madness.

When beauty is pimped, even the morning gets beaten.

The land is devoured by the fire of slavery.

Don't ask me about my country's tears during martyrdom, when agony hunts every acre.

In the pale distance, beyond the black mountains, I see black mountains.

I see waves breaking over our heads, feel gravel grit my skin in the wind, as the horizon's line is washed out. [2]

ورفعت كفي قد يراني غابر  
فرايت أمي في ثياب حداد  
أجسادنا كانت تعانق بعضها  
كوداع أحباب بلا ميعاد  
البحر لم يرحم براءة عمرنا  
تتراحم الأجساد.. في الأجساد  
حتى الشهادة راوغتني لحظة  
واستيقظت فجراً أضاء فؤادي  
هذا قميصي فيه وجه بُنيّتي  
ودعاء أمي.. "كيس" ملح زادي  
ردوا إلى أمي القميص فقد رأيت  
مالا أرى من غربيّتي ومُرادي  
وطن بخيل باعني في غفلة  
[8] حين اشتترته عصاة الإفساد

I raise my frostbitten hands to flag down a passerby, and see it is my mother dressed in black.

We embrace, as if saying goodbye, and the sea heaves on with its corpses.

Up until the moment of death, I will still rise with a bright heart, knowing this is my daughter's face carved on my chest. [2]

Farewell, mother—a sack of salt is all our food.

Give my shirt back to my mother, she saw what I couldn't see: the string between destiny and death, a hijacked

homeland that threw me away. [2]

شَاهَدْتُ مِنْ خَلْفِ الْخُدُودِ مَوَاكِئًا  
لِلْجُوعِ تَصْرُخُ فِي حِمَى الْأَسْيَادِ  
كَأَنَّ خَشْوَةَ الْمَوْتِ تَمْرَحُ حَوْلَنَا  
وَالْغَمْرُ يَبْكِي.. وَالْحَيْنُ يَنَادِي  
[8] مَا بَيْنَ عُمْرٍ قَرَأَ مِنِّي هَارِبًا

I see from behind the borders a parade of the hungry  
chanting for their masters' protection, and death-crowds  
cheering around the hungry.

In the middle of this weeping life, seized in the call of  
longing, the time passed me by. [2]

وَحِكَايَةُ يَزْهُو بِهَا أَوْلَادِي  
عَنْ عَاشِقٍ هَجَرَ الْبِلَادَ وَأَهْلَهَا  
وَمَضَى وَرَاءَ الْمَالِ وَالْأَمْجَادِ  
كُلُّ الْحِكَايَةِ أَتَاهَا ضَاقَتْ بِنَا  
[8] !وَأَسْتَسْلِمْتُ لِلصَّ وَالْفَوَادِ

Remember the story of a hopeful lover who left his home  
for the promise of another country?

It turns out that country had nothing to offer, could only  
bow to the pimp. [2]

فِي لَحْظَةٍ سَكَنَ الْوُجُودُ تَنَاقُزَاتٍ  
حَوْلِي مَرَايَا الْمَوْتِ وَالْمِيلَادِ  
فَدُ كَانَ آخِرَ مَا لَمَحْتُ عَلَى الْمَدَى  
وَالنَّبْضُ يَخْبُو.. صُورَةُ الْجِلَادِ  
فَدُ كَانَ يَضْحَكُ وَالْعَصَابَةُ حَوْلَهُ  
وَعَلَى امْتِدَادِ النَّهْرِ يَبْكِي الْوَادِي  
وَصَرَخَتْ.. وَالْكَلِمَاتُ تَهْرَبُ مِنْ فَمِي:  
[8] هَذَا بِلَادٌ.. لَمْ تَعُدْ كِبْلَادِي

My pulse is heavy, and all will be silent soon.

The mirror of birth and death is glass-dust, and in its  
grains I see the headsman and his gang.

And I see the river, and I see the valley, and I open my  
mouth for silence, for a country that is no more.

Although Goweda's most dominant theme has always  
been thought of as manwoman love only, his thought of  
love involves love for one's country in particular and for  
Arab nationalism in general. "This is evident in his poetry  
on Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon and Bosnia." [9]

Goweda has always advocated Arab nationalism and Islam  
by writing poetry that reveals the eternal colonialist  
intentions of changing Arab and Islamic identity. He has  
created a magical mixture of romantic and political poetry.  
His touching poetry has always been able to move the  
feelings of millions of people in the Middle East to the extent  
that some people hang his poems on the walls of their homes.

Goweda's deep ties with ordinary people made him refuse  
high positions as a minister of culture after the revolution of  
January 25<sup>th</sup> in Egypt to stay close to the people who form  
ninety percent of the Arab World to follow up their dreams  
and aspirations. His sympathy with the national issues in the  
Arab World made him an ambassador of peace and love and  
his persistence to remain on the side of the marginalized  
people made him even greater in the Arab World in general  
and in Egypt in particular.

Through thirteen chapbooks, Goweda has proved that he is  
the greatest pioneer in romantic poetry in which he  
discusses different forms of the lover who suffers alone

away from the beloved, the cruelty of a lover, or the love  
from one side, but love remained the dominant theme. It is  
worth saying that in all his poems, Goweda used words  
that express platonic love in its most sublime form and  
remained away from describing women's body as most of  
his peers do. This made Ragaa El Naqash describes his  
romantic experience as "a gentle breeze in a noisy world  
that Goweda reached through his proper innate and his  
true artistic talent in a time where all human feelings are  
deformed and disappeared in a materialistic rigid world"  
[4], and called him the poet of "Modern Romanticism",  
and went on saying that Goweda's success lies in clearness  
and simplicity of style, and this in turn makes his poetry  
available for simple ordinary people. "At this time most  
poets directed their talent to praise people in power." [4]

Forgetting

ربما أنساك

و حملت في وسط الظلام حقيبتني..  
و على الطريق تعددت أنغامي  
و أخذت أنظر للطريق معاتبًا..  
كيف انتهت بين الأسى أيامي  
[8] شرفاتك الخضراء كم شهدت لنا

I carried all I had through the tangled night, blaming the  
road

that spurred me backward to green windows, witness [2]

نظرات شوق صاخبة الأنغام

و الآن جننك و السنين تغيرت

[8] و غدوت وحدي في دجى الأيام

to the hunger of our bodies, witness to the underside of  
forever. Alone now in the road's slow night. [2]

و على الطريق هناك بعد وداعنا

رجع الفؤاد محلقة بسماك

و أتيت وحدي كنت أنت رفيقتي

[8] بالدرب يوما كيف طال جفاك؟

I re-sense the first days' blush, the flash

of your hand in mine: how do you bear all that is past? [2]

و هربت من طيف الغرام تساءلت

عيناك عنك و كيف ضاع هواك؟

و على الطريق رأيت طيفا هاربا

يجري ورائك هاتفا.. كالبكي

طيف الهوا يبكي لأنى قلتها

[8] إقد قلت يوما ربما أنساك

Such bluff inside my boast: I will forget you.

I try to move on, but a shadow slides along, chiding that  
folly. [2]

و على الطريق هناك ضوء خافت

ينساب في حزن الزهور الباكية

فأثار في قلبي حنينًا.. قد مضى

[8] للشباب عمري للسنين الخالية

Beside the road, pale light seeps into yellow tulips,

and I quicken for what is lost: youth, freedom, dreams. [2]

و على رصيف الدرب حامت مهجتي

سكرى تحنق في الربوع الغالية

فهنا غرسنا الحب يوما هل ترى..

حفظ التراب رحيق ذكري بالية؟

Aimless, I stare at the ground until dizziness takes me.

Somewhere in the dust of these empty streets where we

began:

فهنا غرسنا الحب يوما هل ترى..

حفظ التراب رحيق ذكرى بالية؟

فرايت آثار اللقاء ولم تزل

[8] فوق التراب دموع عين.. باكية

the warmth of our hands. Somewhere in this dust our  
savoring footsteps, somewhere my roving tears.

فوق التراب دموع عين.. باكية

و على الطريق رأيت كل حكايتي

هل أترك الدرب القديم ينادي

Like the endless road, my story is here and there at once.

Can I resist the was that beckons? Shall I continue alone?

و أسير وحدي والحياة كأنها

نغمات حزن صامت بفؤادي؟

طال الطريق و بالطريق حكاية

[8] بدأت بفرحي.. و انتهت.. بسهادي

As your memory strums the chord in my chest

the threads of my journey unravel, unravel.

Although verse or poetry is no longer the “Arab Diwan or epic” the different records and history of stories of Arab people, hopes, masterpieces, and wars, as it was of very old times, it still exists formatively in Arab life and thought. “It is still acclaimed by some as central to a so-called Arab frame of mind [3].

Goweda makes good use of Middle Eastern peoples’ strict convictions since he “refers to the three main religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam spoke to by the three prophets”. [10] The writer tends to the prophets and gives them a full report about the wrongdoings carried out against humankind with the expectation that the war criminals and so forth may come back to their senses. He always calls for a world of harmony and that should be proclaimed by world leaders everywhere.

Who Said Oil Is Worth More Than Blood?

من قال إن النفط أعلى من دمي؟

ما دام يحكمنا الجنون..

سنرى كلاب الصيد

تلتهم الأجنة في البطون

سنرى حقول القمح ألغاما

[8] ونور الصبح نارا في العيون

As long as we are ruled by madness, hounds will devour

fetuses still in their wombs,

mines will sprout in wheat fields, and even the crossed

light of morning will be eye-fire. [2]

سنرى الصغار على المشانق

في صلاة الفجر جهرا يصلبون

ونرى على رأس الزمان

[8] عويل خنزير قبيح الوجه

We’ll see the young hanged, wronged at the dawn prayer.

It’s an age witness to a snarling pig fouling mosques.

يقتحم المساجد والكنائس والحصون

وحين يحكمنا الجنون

لا زهرة بيضاء تشرق

فوق أشلاء الغصون

لا فرحة في عين طفل

نام في صدر حنون

لا دين.. لا إيمان.. لا حق

ولا عرض مصون

وتهون أقدار الشعوب

[8] وكل شيء قد يهون

When madness rules, there are white flowers on the ruined  
branches, emptiness in a child’s eyes, no kindness, no faith,  
no dignity held sacred. All fates futureless, [2]

ما دام يحكمنا الجنون

.. أطفال بغداد الحزينة يسألون

[8] عن أي ذنب يقتلون

everything present worthless. As long as madness rules,  
the children of Baghdad can only guess why they wander  
hunger’s thorns, [2]

.. يترنحون على شظايا الجوع

.. يقتسمون خبز الموت

ثم يودعون

شبح الهنود الحمر يظهر في صقيع بلادنا

.. ويصبح فيها الطامعون

[8] من كل جنس يزحفون

why they share the bread of death, why off

in the distance, American Indians

hover in the cold, why greed shouts them down,

every race crawling ghost hearted.

تبدو شوارعنا بلون الدم تبدو قلوب الناس أشباحا

ويغدو الحلم طيفا عاجزا

بين المهانة.. والظنون

هذي كلاب الصيد فوق رؤوسنا تعوي

[8] .. ونحن إلى المهالك.. مسرعون

Through blood-colored streets, between humiliation

and disbelief, crippled shadows creep,

and the madness-hounds howl in our minds.

We are on our way to death.

أطفال بغداد الحزينة في الشوارع بصرخون

.. جيش التتار.. يذق أبواب المدينة كالوباء

ويزحف الطامعون

أحفاد هولوكو على جثث الصغار يزمجرون

[8] صراخ الناس يقتحم السكون

The children of Baghdad scream in the streets

as Hulagu’s army pounds the city’s doors

like an epidemic; his grandchildren roar

over the bodies of our young.

أنهار دم فوق أجنة الطيور الجارحات

[8] مخالب سوداء تنفذ في العيون

The wings of wild birds are blood rivers,  
black claws claw eyes—all this cracks the silence.

ما زال دجلة يذكر الأيام

والماضي البعيد يطل من خلف القرون

.. عبر الغزاة هنا كثيرا.. ثم راحوا

أين راح العابرون؟؟

.. هذي مدينتنا.. وكم باغ أتى

ذهب الجميع

[8] ونحن فيها صامنون

The Tigris River remembers those days, so look

behind the curtain of history—how many

aggressors have passed through the centuries

of our land, and still we resist? [2]

سيموت هولوكو

ويعود أطفال العراق

أمام دجلة يرقصون  
 ..لسنا الهنود الحمر  
 حتى تتصبوا فينا المشانق  
 [8] في كل شبر من ثرى بغداد  
 Hulagu will die, and the Iraqi children  
 will dance in front of Degla. We are not  
 to be hanged from all corners of Baghdad.  
 نهر..أو نخيل..أو حدائق  
 وإذا أردتم سوف نجعلها بنادق  
 A river can be a weapon against injustice on the earth.  
 A palm can be a weapon against injustice.  
 A garden can be a weapon. [2]  
 ..سحارب الطاغوت فوق الأرض  
 بين الماء..في صمت الخنادق  
 ..إنا كرهن الموت..لكن  
 في سبيل الله نشعلها حرائق  
 ستظلّ في كل العصور وإن كرهتم  
 [8] أمة الإسلام من خير الخلائق  
 Among the water, in the silence  
 of tunnels, though we hate death,  
 for God and right we will set fire forever  
 to your refusal that Islam is holy. [2]  
 ..أطفال بغداد الحزينة  
 يرفعون الآن رايات الغضب  
 ..بغداد في أيدي الجبابرة الكبار  
 تضع مئذنة..تغضب  
 ..أين العروبة..والسيوف البيض  
 [8] والخيل الضواري..والمآثر..والنسب؟  
 Baghdad, raped by tyranny, your children  
 are raising flags. Where are the Arabs  
 and the white swords, wild horses, glorious families?  
 أين الشعوب وأين العرب؟  
 ..البعض منهم قد شجب  
 والبعض في خزي هرب  
 ..وهناك من خلع الثياب  
 ..لكلّ جَواد وهب  
 في ساحة الشيطان يسعى الناس أفواجا  
 [8] إلى مسرى الغنائم والذهب  
 Some of them were condemned, some  
 fled shameful, some stripped and gave away  
 their clothes, and some are lined up in the devil's hall  
 to get their share of the spoils.  
 والناس تسال عن بقايا أمة  
 ..تدعى العرب  
 كانت تعيش من المحيط إلى الخليج  
 ..ولم يعد في الكون شيء من مآثر أهلها  
 And people ask about a great nation's ruins,  
 but nothing remains of that shining empire  
 that spans from the ocean to the gulf. [2]  
 ولكل مأساة سبب  
 باعوا الخيول..وقايضوا الفرسان  
 في سوق الخطب  
 !!فليسقط التاريخ..ولتحيا الخطب  
 [8] ..أطفال بغداد يصرخون  
 Every calamity has its cause.  
 They sold the horses and traded in  
 the knights in the market of rhetoric:

*Down with history! Long live hot air!*  
 يأتي إلينا الموت في اللعب الصغيرة  
 في الحدائق..في المطاعم..في الغبار  
 ..تتساقط الجدران فوق مواكب التاريخ  
 لا يبقى منها لنا..جدار  
 عار..على زمن الحضارة..أيّ عار  
 [8] ..من خلف آلاف الحدود  
 Death comes to the children of Baghdad  
 in the smallest toys, in the parks, in restaurants,  
 in the dust. Walls collapse on the procession of history,  
 shame upon civilization, shame from a thousand borders.  
 ..يطل صاروخ لقيط الوجه  
 لم يعرف له أبدا مدار  
 [8] "ويصيح فينا: "أين أسلحة الدمار؟"  
 From the unknown, a missile charges,  
 "Where are the weapons of mass destruction?"  
 ..هل بعد موت الضحكة العذراء فينا  
 سوف يأتي لنا النهار  
 ..الطائرات تسد عين الشمس  
 [8] والأحلام في دمناء انتحار  
 Will daylight come again after the virgin smile  
 has been erased, after planes block the sunrays,  
 and our dreams spurt suicidal blood?  
 فبأي حق تهدمون بيوتنا  
 [8] ..وبأي قانون..تدمر ألف مئذنة  
 By what law do you demolish our homes,  
 and flood fire upon a thousand minarets?  
 وتفتت سبل نار  
 تمضي بنا الأيام في بغداد  
 من جوع..إلى جوع...ومن ظمأ..إلى ظمأ  
 وجه الكون جوع..أو حصار  
 يا سيد البيت الكبير..يا لعنة الزمن الحقيّر  
 [8] في وجهك الكذاب..تخفي ألف وجه مستعار  
 In Baghdad, days pass, from hunger to hunger,  
 thirst to thirst, under the gaze of the master  
 of the mansion, the thousand-masked face.  
 Will there never be an end to this nonsense?  
 نحن البداية في الرواية..ثم يرفع الستار  
 [8] هذي المهازل لن تكون نهاية المشوار  
 The curtain rises: we are the beginning.  
 !هل صار تجويع الشعوب..وسام عزّ وافتخار؟  
 !هل صار قتل الناس في الصلوات..ملهاة الكبار؟  
 !هل صار قتل الأبرياء..شعار مجد..وانتصار؟  
 [8] أم أن حق الناس في أيامكم..نهب..وذلل..وانكسار  
 To starve people—is this honor?  
 "To prey upon supplicants"—that's the glorious slogan of  
 victory?  
 To chase children from one house to another—the joy of  
 tyranny.  
 الموت يسكن كل شيء حولنا..ويطارد الأطفال من دار..لدار  
 [8] "ما زلت تسأل: "أين أسلحة الدمار؟"  
 These days, people have the right to humiliation,  
 submission,  
 death in every atom, and the chronic question, [2]  
 "Where are the weapons of mass destruction?"  
 أطفال بغداد الحزينة..في المدارس يلعبون  
 كرة هنا..كرة هناك..طفل هنا..طفل هناك

قلم هنا.. قلم هناك.. لغم هنا.. موت.. هلاك

[8] بين الشظايا.. زهرة الصبار تبكي

The children of Baghdad are playing in schools:  
a ball here, a ball there, a child here, a child there,  
a pen here, a pen there, a mine here, a death there.  
Among the fragments, the cactus. [2]

والصغار على الملاعب يسقطون

..بالأوس كانوا هنا

كالحمام في الفضاء يحلقون

[8] فجر أضواء الكون يوما.. لا استكان ولا غفا

There were children here yesterday,  
fluttering like pigeons in open spaces.

One of these days, dawn might lighten the universe,  
but for now the sun of justice is far below the horizon.

Despite sacrifice, there is a dark gluttony:  
some are faithful, and some are sellouts.

يا آل بيت محمد.. كم حنّ قلبي للحسين.. وكم هفا

غابت شمس الحق.. والعدل اختفى

مهما وفي الشرفاء في أيامنا.. زمن "الندالة" ما وفي

..مهما صفى العقلاء في أوطاننا.. بنر الخيانة ما صفى

..بغداد يا بلد الرشيد

يا قلعة التاريخ.. والزمن المجيد

بين ارتحال الليل و الصبح المبحج

[8] لحظتان.. موت و عيد

Oh nation of Mohammad, my heart longs for Al Hussein.

Oh Baghdad, land of Caliph Rasheed,

oh castle of history, and once-glorious age,

the two moments between night and day are death and  
feast. [2]

ما بين أشلاء الشهيد بهتز

عرش الكون في صوت الوليد

[8] ما بين ليل قد رحل.. ينساب صبح بالأمل

Among the martyrs' fragments,

the throne of the universe, shaken by a young voice.

The dark night leaves when a new day flow.

لا تجزي بلد الرشيد.. لكل طاغية أجل

طفل صغير.. ذاب عشقا في العراق

..كراسة بيضاء يحضنها.. وبعض الفلّ

بعض الشعر والأوراق

[8] حصالة فيها قروش.. من بقايا العيد

Oh land of Al Rasheed, don't lose hope, every tyranny  
ends:

a child adores Baghdad, holds a white notebook and  
flowers,

paper and poetry, some piasters from the last feast.

دمع جامد يخفيه في الأحداق

..عن صورة الأب الذي قد غاب يوما.. لم يعد

وانساب مثل الضوء في الأعماق

..يتعانق الطفل الصغير مع التراب

[8] يطول بينهما العناق

Behind his eyes, a tear that won't break

but flows like light deep in his heart: the picture  
of his father who left one day and never returned.

The child embraces ashes and stays a long time.

..خيوط من الدم الغزير يسيل من فمه

يذوب الصوت في دمه المراق

تخبو الملامح.. كل شيء في الوجود

يصيح في ألم: فراق

والطفل يهمس في أسي:

..اشتااق يا بغداد تمرك في فمي

[8] من قال إن النفط أغلى من دمي

A thread of blood runs through his mouth;

his voice and shed blood are one.

His features washed out; all of this world is separation.

The child whispers, *I long for Baghdad's day.*

Who said oil is worth more than blood?

..بغداد لا.. لا تتألّم

مهما تعالت صيحة البهتان في الزمن العمي

[8] فهناك في الأفق يبدو سرب أحلام.. يعانق انجمي

Don't ache, Baghdad, don't surrender.

Although there is dissent in this blind time,  
there is, in the far horizon, a wave of visions.

مهما توارى الحلم عن عينيك.. قومي.. واحلمي

ولتنتري في ماء دجلة أعظمي

[8] فالصبح سوف يطلّ يوما.. في مواكب مأتمي

Although the dream is distant, it rises. Rise,

and spread my bones in the Tigris River,

so daylight will one day rise over my funeral procession.

الله اكبر من جنون الموت.. والموت البغيض الظالم

بغداد.. لا تستسلمي.. بغداد.. لا تستسلمي

[8] لمن قال إن النفط أغلى من دمي؟

God is greater than the madness of death.

Who said oil is worth more than blood?

Goweda is particularly renowned for his political, religious, and love poetry; occasionally, at specific points in some translations, we have allowed those borders to be blurred. The two love poems "Who Said Oil..." and "Forgetting," of the three included here, are critiques of American foreign policy in Iraq. "This My Country No Longer My Country" eulogises a tale that is common throughout the world but has been happening in Egypt since the 1980s: illegal immigrants leaving their home nations in search of a better life in Europe because of corruption and poverty.

## 4. Conclusion

This paper proves that differences which occur between Arabic language and culture on the one hand, and English, and any other, language and culture on the other, makes it necessary for a translator to give extreme care when translating texts that contain core values and traditions of a people. Culture specifics are part and parcel of the language and culture they belong to. It also proves that it is not impossible to translate Arabic poetry into English poetry with its meaning and its cultural implications.

The claim that poetry is untranslatable lies in the difficulty/impossibility of transferring the sound system, the form, the style, and the content. In fact, poetry is translatable, only when creatively transposed. However, the absence of cultural equivalence makes it inevitable to provide explanatory notes for the readers. When culture- specifics take the form of cultural concepts or experiences, the task is more difficult. Legendary and historical figures are culturally problematic when it comes to translation. They cannot be

approximated to figures from target culture since cultures are not the same. Poetry should receive a special kind of translation. Eugene Nida states a similar point of view: "It must be recognized that in translating poetry there are very special problems involved, for the form of expression (rhythm, meter, assonance, etc.) is essential to communicating the spirit of the message to the audience. But all translating, whether of poetry or prose, must be concerned also with the response of the receptor; hence the ultimate purpose of the translation, in terms of its impact upon its intended audience, is a fundamental factor in any evaluation of translations" [11].

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