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Towards Epistemic Justice: On Translation as Epistemic Disobedience, Insurrection, Resistance, and Activism

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Introduction

As a Syrian-Arab-Canadian researcher, pedagogue, and racialized Woman of Color (positioned outside of Whiteness—that is the White race, color, and language), I continue to grapple with the notion of the production of knowledge on the Arab subject and the ethics (or lack thereof) involved in this production—a knowledge that has been written by dominant Orientalist and colonial researchers and knowledge producers, and one that has come to be epistemologized, legitimized, canonized, institutionalized, and universalized (Alatrash "On Decolonizing"). As importantly, it is a knowledge that insists on creating an epistemic divide (Spivak "The Politics" 408) that Others (Said *Orientalism*), dichotomizes and polarizes Arab subjects in the West.

As importantly, I am thinking about how we, as Arabs, can engage with "epistemic activism" (Hamraie; Medina "Resisting racist") to disrupt hegemonic Western Knowledge systems in which "epistemic racism" (Mignolo "Local Histories") is rampant in academic and institutional spheres. Walter Mignolo ("Local Histories" 67) speaks of epistemic racism as "the hidden matrix that enables the exercise of imperial

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power. It operates through the pretense of universality and neutrality of Western knowledge, obscuring its own imperial roots and negating other knowledge systems as 'local' or 'ethnic','' ("Local Histories"), and Medina ("Resisting Racist") defines epistemic activism as a process that "consists in practices of interrogation and resistance that unmask, disrupt, and uproot biases and insensitivity" (1). In an effort to dismantle colonial epistemological structures and to disrupt systematic silencing of Arab voices, histories, and civilizations, I join other scholars, in part through translation, in the decolonization of epistemes by way of epistemic activism, in the act of re-writing and renarrativization (Xie) of histories, and in resisting, disrupting and questioning institutionalized hegemonic productions of knowledge on the Arab subject.

As a researcher and as a pedagogue, I continue to think about what counts as knowledge in Western academic institutions, and particularly as it inscribes and implicates the Arab subject, and how this knowledge continues to negate our humanity as Arabs and eliminates any sort of an empathetic or sentimental understanding. I am also thinking about the ways in which we can answer Foucault's (*Power and Knowledge*) call for an insurrection of subjugated knowledge and disrupt, trouble, and resist these "truth" systems (Foucault *The Politics*; *Power and Knowledge*) by offering alternate ways of knowing, understanding, and reading of the world as we work towards epistemic justice in Western academia. In this paper, I will specifically discuss the ways in which translation, or having access to translated works, can be engaged as a medium where alternative readings can come to act as counter-narratives. It is through translation that I am able to contribute to the production of knowledge about the Arab subject as embedded in specific local Arab histories, not as entangled in hegemonic patterns of knowledge production. I am concerned with, and questioning, a knowledge on the Arab subject as written by a colonial pen and language—in other words: who has written this knowledge, in what language, and how has it come to constitute or deny the

human condition of the spoken-about subject? And how is the Arab subject given agency, a reclaiming of identity, through the process of translation? Within the context of Syrian studies, I will engage in this essay my translations of Syrian narratives, past and post-revolution present, to shed light on the Syrian lived human condition as well as their diasporic experiences of displacement and exile, *as narrated and written by Syrians*, to help make sense of, and better understand, the complexities of the Syrian lived reality today.

The lack of translated Arabic texts continues to be a challenge and a limitation in Western epistemes. There continues to be an urgency for the need of translations of Arab knowledge and ways of knowing, as positioned through particular Arab historical lineage and as steeped in complex Arab geographies, literary works, and narratives. Translated works ought to be part of what informs the knowledge-making process on the Arab subject, as a way to assert the location of Arabness through an anti-Orientalist lens and pen. Edward Said ("Invention, Memory") suggests that translation ought to be engaged as a "humanistic enterprise that seeks to bridge cultures and bring them to dialogue with one another" (141), a bridge that can help us cross over where epistemic justice is the end destination. In her politics of translation, Gayatri Spivak ("The Politics of Translation") speaks to how original texts "must be made to speak English" (399) to give access to the largest numbers of activists—and it is by also bringing the Arabic text to speak in English, that I believe Arab voices, both past and present, could be given consideration at negotiation tables today and in the future.

Translation allows for the negated and abject Arab voice to express disobedience, rejection and resistance to dominant discourses, and to disrupt the colonial constructed categories of knowledge on Arab and Arabness. Translation allows for the Arab human experience to be heard through translated historical accounts, novels, stories, poetry, songs, chants, amongst other forms of arts and creative expression. It is through the act of

translation that marginalized epistemes are recentered, whereby a third space, an in-between space (Bhabha), emerges as cultures come in contact with one another, and where differences and boundaries "are constantly being negotiated and transformed" (Bhabha 37). Indeed, it is in these spaces of negotiation between different cultural and linguistic systems that new possibilities for production of knowledge, meaning, and interpretations are fostered.

Shareah Taleghani ("Vulnerability") speaks of the "poetics of human rights" as a form of "aesthetic or creative intervention" in which "sentimental poetics" ought to be engaged as representations that speak to the condition of the Arab subject today. I believe that it is what lies in these "poetics" of epistemological difference imbued through local Arab voices and their ways of knowing that can act as an antidote to hegemonic, racist knowledge systems residing in the bodies of Western academia, ones that insist on marginalizing and devaluing the Arab subject. Translated Arabic literature becomes one powerful example of sentimental poetics where the translated texts can be engaged as representations of Arab writers and critical thinkers, as forms of witnessing, and as tools of resistance, where translations become armament.

The truth of the matter is that within the contexts of Western academic institutions, we Arabs continue to come against a legacy of colonialism that enacts epistemic violence (Spivak "Can the Subaltern Speak?") on Arab bodies of knowledge; an epistemic violence that practices a silencing and an erasure of our knowledges, stripping the Arab subject of agency and voice, of their humanity, and in blatant racist and unethical ways. As in the words of Walter Mignolo ("Forward"), "racism is not a question of one's blood type . . . or the color of one's skin . . . [but] consists in devaluing the humanity of certain people by dismissing it or playing it down . . . [while] at the same time as highlighting and playing up European philosophy, assuming it to be universal," and hence the urgency for a

continuous call for "epistemic disobedience," "epistemic resistance" and "epistemic activism" (x).

As I locate myself as a Syrian-Canadian (I ought to add a privileged Syrian-Canadian) professor, I continue to look for mediums that can help me navigate my way through an academic episteme where racist portraits pigeonholing Arab identities into narrow cells have been erected by the colonial, imperial, political, and hegemonic. What makes the struggle more difficult is the lack of tools in hand, including the inaccessibility of translated Arab scholarship that could help inform an anti-Orientalist counter-narrative on the Arab subject. I deeply believe that this lack of representation happens to be yet another iteration of white supremacy, where white knowledge is grounded in the center while other knowledge add cultures are pushed to the margins—it is a form of delegitimization and sanctioning of other knowledge and other ways of knowing, of valuing one knowledge over another. And most troubling, there seems to be a concomitant reluctance to change the situation.

As Spivak ("Righting") argues, it is not only through the construction of exploitative economic links or the control of the politico-military apparatuses that domination is accomplished, but also through the construction of epistemic frameworks that legitimise and enshrine those practices of domination with gatekeepers facilitating this "epistemic violence," that is violence exerted against or through knowledge. It only takes flipping through the anthologies of world literatures taught as part of North American schools and universities to realize that there is no interest in Arabic literature, and I would even go as far as to say an interest in blocking it. Edward Said (*Culture and Imperialism*) speaks to the notion of "embargoed literature" where he asserts that colonial powers have imposed restrictions on the production and distribution of literature, preventing certain voices from being heard and certain stories from being told. Along the same lines, it also only takes one look at the names of Nobel Prize recipients in literature to note there is an almost a total absence of Arab representation and that Arab

literature remains relatively unknown, unread, and "embargoed" in the West, for as Said notes, only one Arab Egyptian novelist and short story writer Naguib Mahfouz was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1988, and no one else.

When subjugated Arab bodies of knowledge are "insurrected" (Foucault, 1980) through translation and brought to rise up in rebellion against the established systems of knowledge, they give way to a "contrapuntal" reading (Said *Culture and Imperialism*), a way of reading and interpretation of texts and cultural productions that highlight the complex relationships between different cultures, histories and social realities and challenge the binaries and hierarchies that often underlie colonialist and imperialist discourses. As part of the cultural productions, art and literature become tools of resistance against imperial domination that can be engaged with the goal of attaining justice, and, dare I say, dreaming of peace. Edward Said reminds us that we, as Arabs, are often presented "as just one large group of screaming fanatics who are practically faceless" (Said "The Arab World" par. 52), and as "herds of peoples" (Said *Reflections* 181) in urgent need of humanizing. Here, I am thinking of the recent work of Syrian sculptor Assem Al-Basha, as one example. In 2013, in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man in Syria, the original statue of Syrian Abu al-Ala al-Ma'arri, one of the greatest classical Arab poets considered to have held controversial irreligious views, was beheaded by members of Al-Nusra Front. While in exile in Spain, sculptor Assem Al-Basha created a bronze sculpture of the head of Al-Ma'arri that is 3.25 meters high and 1.25 meters wide. On the anniversary of the Syrian Revolution on March 15, 2023, the sculpture was unveiled in Montreuil, France, where it will remain until Syria is free again. It is precisely in such moments that art can bring cultures together. In the case of France and Syria, the once colonizer and colonized are able to break down barriers, build a sense of shared humanity with a common purpose of freedom and peace, and open a space for dialogue and negotiations. Here, I also believe that in the same way Al-Basha's sculpture

facilitated an *unveiling*, literally, of the face of an Arab, when it comes to knowledge production, bodies of knowledge, and knowledge formation on the Arab subject, translation has great agency in the *unveiling* and countervailing of Arab realities, in giving way to a revelation, as the voices are afforded the possibility of telling their own stories and disrupting the singular and violent representations on them in Western epistemes.

However, as I engage in the discussion of Arab realities, it is important to also note the limitation of an assumed universality that underpins Arab subjectivity as presented in Orientalist Western discourses. And so, it is important to note that for the remainder of this essay, I will shed light on the Syrian lived Diasporic reality in particular as one example of an Arab lived experience, albeit heterogeneity is also very much central to the Syrian Diasporic subject as it is constituted through different bodies, identities, experiences, and lived realities.

As I shift the discourse to Syria and the lived Syrian human condition, the words of Antonio Guteres Head of UN High Commission of refugees come to mind: "Syria is the great tragedy of this century - a disgraceful humanitarian calamity with suffering and displacement unparalleled in recent history" (Watt et al. 2013). My heart aches for my people in Syria, people who seem to have been abandoned and forsaken by a silent and apathetically disengaged humanity. In order to help elevate the Syrian human condition to the universal, and as part of my epistemic activism both as researcher and pedagogue, I have joined other scholars in translating Syrian narratives and bringing them to speak in English, two of which I will engage with in this essay by Syrian Fadi Azzam, including "If you are Syrian these days" and "This is Damascus You Sons of Bitches." I find that these two poems express a "sentimental poetics" (Taleghani "Vulnerability") that may come to disrupt the dominant representations on the Syrian human condition, to facilitate an "insurrection" of the subjugated knowledge and an unveiling of it, and to activate and actualize "a sentimental education" (Cohen "The Sentimental") in the classroom and

beyond. In the translation below for Fadi Azzam, the voice of a Syrian speaks for himself and narrates his own lived reality. As we try to make sense of the Syrian lived experience today, both within the borders of Syria and as part of the Diaspora, I engage these pieces in my classroom and research as alternate readings, as told and written by a Syrian voice and pen, with the hope that this knowledge gives way to an empathetic understanding that may become part and parcel of reading the world–a reading that may bring us to recognize an interconnectedness of all things.

In the classroom, some of the questions that we grapple with before we read these pieces include: What pre-existing knowledge do we hold on the Arab subjects, and what are its limitations?

How have colonial Orientalist epistemological impositions come to shape our ontological views on this subject, and how do narratives written *by* peoples of the Diasporas come to create new possibilities on knowing the Syrian Diasporic subject? (Alatrash "On the Lived"). What are the ways in which the Syrian Diaspora has helped us understand the Diasporic experience as a whole? What does it mean to be a Syrian Diasporic person, and what implication does their new lived reality have on their identity? How has the Syrian subject been inscribed in Western epistemes and knowledge productions, and how may these new translated readings shift our knowledge and allow for a new space to emerge, a third space that speaks a language of hope and possibilities.

I will begin with Azzam's poem "If you are Syrian these days." Azzam begins:

If you are Syrian these days,
You stand shielded and exposed,

you are the awakening and the delusion,
and the dream and the nightmare,
all in one breath.
You are a breath that freezes in the sweltering heat
and melts in the chill of this world.
If you are Syrian these days,
you are a symbol for a tent, disappointment, fear, betrayal,
and the purling of a streaming wound as it runs from your
body, the Tigris, and from your eyes, the Euphrates.
If you are Syrian these days,
you are urged to attend etiquette schools, where everyone is
there to civilize you, to advise and guide you, to speak for you
and silence you, to identify your class and where to classify
you, to put you together and disperse you, and to release and
restrain you-- schools where they teach you lessons about how
God creates heavens and things from carnage;
how the victim should ask to be pardoned by the executioner;
how a country is burnt in the name of the son;
how to kiss the hand that kills, the shot that assassinates, and
the missile that
obliterates;
and how flowers are accused of treason.

Azzam's piece may be read both as witness literature that speaks to the Syrian human condition, and as an aesthetic intervention calling for "the recognition of the human vulnerability" (Taleghani "Vulnerability" 96)--a recognition through which a sense of responsibility for others may be triggered, and where a sentiment of an interconnectedness with one another may be fostered.

Once, immediately after we read Azzam's translated lines in class, a student sent me the following email (I have asked her permission to share the following):

> Dear Dr. Alatrash,
> Today's class . . . touched my soul. I could not keep my camera on [on Zoom] because of the tears that kept filling my eyes. The poem read in the beginning of class [Azzam's piece above] struck a sensitive part of me as it gave words to emotions I have been feeling regarding my Indigenous ancestry. These thoughts are more than welcome to be shared with the author... 'the dream and the nightmare all in one breath' was one of the lines that first caught my attention, because it so directly addresses the true reality of this world for so many. There are so many people who love to be alive, myself included, but we find ourselves caught in a world that works to wipe us out of existence. I am an Indigenous woman, and I have lived in Lethbridge most of my life where racism against Indigenous Peoples is very prominent. Being part Tongan/Polynesian, I just relied heavily on that for approval from people and eradicated myself from Indigenous relations. I never wanted to be known as an Indigenous Person, I oppressed my own culture because the dominant white narrative told me I was less than for something as simple as my ancestry. I suppressed myself because of what Fadi Azzam said in his poem, 'you are encouraged to attend schools... to civilize you' ... I attended schools where I was not written in history except for in terms of a savage. I attended schools that removed Indigenous history because the law worked to assimilate my history out of existence. I believe I wrote the words down correctly that said 'even our hell is our heaven' and that brought up everything I feel. I feel so grateful to be in Canada, but I feel so much pain in being erased. I feel angry at

> 'the maker of our nothingness' while feeling gratitude for existing the way I do today. Just to bring it all together with the readings for this week, Jamaica Kincaid's chapter ended with '[e]ven if I really came from people who were living like monkeys in trees, it was better to be that than what happened to me, what I became after I met you' (1988). The readings combined with the poem . . . are truly inspiring and helpful as I navigate to find connection within myself and to allow myself to take up space in a world that has told me I am not worthy to exist.

Here, Emily's email becomes a manifestation of a third space in which the Tongan/Polynesian, the Indigenous, and the Syrian found a common ground, an in-between ground on which they met and understood one another empathetically. It is a space that yielded a language of hope and possibilities, a space that unveiled a Syrian reality through a "contrapuntal" reading that revealed an interplay between dominant and marginalized knowledge, highlighting the importance of an interconnectedness of different histories and lived realities. I shared Emily's words with Azzam. He wrote back to the student, and below is his response that I also translated:

> Dear Dr. Alatrash,
> I have a simple message for her [the student], if possible:
> Indeed, the makers of nothingness come in different languages and shapes, but they are everywhere, deeming us inferior, seeing us less civilized than monkeys, animals, and plants. They will try to kill us in every possible way, financially or morally. They will

> try to take us out of history, visit us in novels when they please, and mute our voices. They have done this for hundreds of years to you, and they are doing the same to us today on the pretext of "our terrorism."
> We have no other way but to resist and to broadcast our narrative as a middle finger. The explosions in our narratives are not induced with dynamites but with beauty, strength, reason, and knowledge. We must resist feeling inferior; we must reject their standards of beauty and the "ethical" messages of their greedy businessmen; we must contest their success models.
> We, women and men, East and West, must open the borders amongst one another and dismantle their erected walls, for the unity of goodness and truth in our effort, will indeed make their task more difficult and will help pave the way for a world that is less barbaric and unfair.
> As for you—I hope you will remain as beautiful as the spirit of your great ancestors, and rest assured that on the other side of this world are those who join their voices with yours, who bow to your pain, and who stand with you and with anyone who suffers injustice.
> Do not stop being proud of the voices of your ancestors.
> Fadi Azzam

It is in the third space (Bhabha *The Location*) as a site of cultural hybridity where Azzam and the student came into contact with one another, a space of negotiation and transformation, and as importantly, a space that could only be made possible through translation. It was through translation that a transformative process was activated, creating new meanings and cultural exchanges, and, as Bhabha suggests, translation gave way for greater visibility to help navigate meanings constituted by the complex interplay of cultural and historical forces and created new "hybrid forms of expression."

Furthermore, when it comes to the Syrian diasporic subject, particularly within the context of refugees, they are more often than not presented as "vulnerable, desperate and in need of saving" (Tyyska et al. "The Syrian Refugee" 7). In trying to show the depth of the humanitarian crisis, the media continues to remove the agency and resilience of Syrian refugees by portraying them as such (Tyyska et al. "The Syrian Refugee" 7). Aseefa Sarang of a Toronto health agency goes on to say, "We often position refugees as lacking, as a burden. Instead of recognizing their resilience, we assume their deficiencies and that we are doing them a favor" (par. 22). However, in his piece, "If You Are Syrian These Days," Fadi Azzam tells a different story about refugees. He speaks a language of resistance and resilience, and through translation, his narrative is given agency that resists categorizations or fixed meanings. Azzam writes,

> This is where I am from.
> My ill-fated and extraordinary fortune has brought me
> to hold onto a country where there is no place,
> yet I cling to the very place as the country betrays me.
> I am from Syria, an end worthy of history, and a
> beginning worth living.
> I am from an abundance of pain,
> from blood that continues to run and has not yet
> coagulated nor become sticky, and I come with an
> unexplainable arrogance.
> . . . I am from the country of a million stories and one
> ruler.
> I am from a country whose wounds are demeaned into
> laughter, and whose similes, metaphors, and rhetoric
> debased into ugly poetry.
>
> I am from a country of the utmost cruelty, of expired
> love, and a bounty of looming deaths.
> I am from Syria, my brothers and sisters; but don't you
> dare pity her,

> for in her dwells enough life to reconstruct the entire world and enough graves to accommodate all of you.
>
> I am from a country that will be loved until the end of repentance, but has been forsaken to the ends of grief. . . . O how fertile, O how majestic, O how wondrous, you are my country.

Here, I also turn to Stuart's words in his essay on cultural identity and diaspora:

> [C]ultural identity is not a mere phantasm either. It is something - not a mere trick of the imagination. It has its histories - and histories have their real, material and symbolic effects. The past continues to speak to us . . . It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a positioning (395).

I find Azzam's voice very helpful as we try to make sense of Hall's notion of identity. Through the act of writing, Azzam resists dominant representations on the Syrian diasporic person by engaging language as a means for reclaiming an identity that has been defined by others to serve their interests. Through his writing, he is able to highlight the role of discourse and narrative in the construction of identity. Azzam's Syrian identity is shaped by a history and symbolic systems of meaning and their relationship to history and memory. His language is a language of resistance that outlines the complexities of an identity, where an "insurrection" of the subjugated knowledge takes place, and where anger becomes a language of resistance. It is through translation, as put by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o ("Decolonizing the Mind"), that language becomes a bearer of culture and a carrier of history and allows for movement between cultures, histories,

and languages, and encompassing social, political, and historical factors that cannot be ignored. In his poem, "This is Damascus You Sons of Bitches," Azzam speaks in a prideful and defiant tone of Damascus, a city he explains that was drooled upon, exploited, consumed, raided, assaulted, whose marrow has been sucked out but whose youth seems to "always be renewed." He makes his anger known from the title of his poem, "This is Damascus You Sons of Bitches," maintaining this tone throughout the piece. Azzam writes,

> She is Baghdad's rival sister, Beirut's bait, Cairo's envy, Amman's dream, Mecca's conscience, Cordoba's jealousy, Jerusalem's eyes, the coquetry of cities, and a crutch for every aged caliph throughout history.
> She is Damascus, a woman with seven wonders, five names, and ten titles; she is an abode for a thousand saints, a school for twenty prophets, and an inspiration for fifteen gods.
>
> She is Damascus, the more ancient and the more orphaned, the beginning of dreams and their ends, the starting point for conquests and their convoys, the moseying of poems, and every poet's trap.
> From her balcony appeared Hisham wooing a passing Umayyad cloud after having finished irrigating her Ghouta with blood. And it was from Damascus that the Falcon of Quraysh flew dreamily until he faced his death in the Pyrenees Mountains.
>
> This is Damascus. She has tolerated everyone—the pimps and the dreamers, the petty and the revolutionaries, passers-by and residents, those addicted to biting her, those who chewed her nails, the losers, the convicts, the innocent, and the lustful.
> They fed off her breasts until her Barada dried up, and so she offered her blood, trees, and shade. And when her

> Ghouta was consumed, she offered Mount Qasioun, her beloved mole, while they drooled, raided, assaulted, and invited all kinds of bastards to take their share from her innocence.
>
> But this was Damascus, and each time they sucked her marrow, her youth was renewed.

But Azzam's patience for humanity runs out, his tone escalating to anger as a language of resistance. He rejects any sentiment of pity and raises his middle finger in the face of a disengaged, apathetic, and exploitive world:

> Light a fire under me and awaken me, for the stench of blood has put me to sleep. Bring us back less Syrian and more human.
>
> the one who laughed at us will depart;
> the deceived ones will depart;
> the one who caused us all this pain, the maker of nothingness, the one who unjustly pressed charges and distributed blood shares—
> He will depart.
> And you, O Syria, will rise like a middle finger in the face of this world!
> You will roar at those who killed you and ate baklava while your blood streamed, and you will cry out:
> I am the country who never dies.
> I am the country whose young men and women rise to its skies dancing.
> I am the country who is not fit for mourning.
> I am the country whose tailors sew, with the patience of her mothers, burial garments for every executioner.

The poem becomes a searing indictment of the forces of violence and destruction that have wrought havoc on Syria. Azzam is not

afraid to call out the perpetrators of the conflict directly, referring to them as "Sons of Bitches." He does not shy away from evoking the vulnerability of the Syrian people and their human condition, but through vivid and visceral imagery, he also captures the resilient spirit of the people. He speaks of disappointment and vulnerability, but also emphasizes forms of agency and resilience by way of a narrative that is empowered by history and cultural identity and one that breaks down misrepresentation and stereotypes. Here, translation becomes the medium that helps bridge the gap between culture and language (people's stories told in their own words), and offers a more nuanced and more authentic representation. It unveils the faces of the Syrian peoples by promoting cross-cultural exchange and becomes an act of activism with the goal of attaining empathy, understanding, and epistemic justice.

Conclusion

Often, I choose to play an interview with Syrian political activist and former political prisoner Michel Kilo (Mīshīl Kīlū) on the first day of classes where he tells the story of a child, a bird, and a tree. I pause the interview every few seconds and translate the Arabic into English as there are no subtitles. As some may be aware, the story is about a little child born in prison who does not understand Kilo's story about the bird or the tree because he had never seen one. It never fails that once Kilo's video is finished, and after a few moments of silence wet with tears, students respond with empathy and sentimentality, and notably with complete shock as to their obliviousness to the Syrian human condition and lived reality. Once, after the interview came to an end, a Canadian student raised his hand (he was Caucasian-Canadian) and asked, "Do you know what ever happened to the child?" In that moment, I ran out of words, both in Arabic and English. I took a deep breath and thought to

myself, *where do I begin?* Today, a possible answer to my own question is that a starting point may be from the third-space that emerges as part of the translation process and as a product of reading the poetics of human rights. Perhaps it is from here, from this third-space, that we can continue to unveil and humanize the Arab subject, disrupt the colonial violent knowledge production and Orientalist epistemological impositions that have come to define Arabs, and to recognize more fully their realities. Once this empathetic form of recognition is established, and once there emerges a knowing and understanding of the Other's human condition, then the hope is that we continue with our activism towards movements of social change and social justice. As an epistemic site of resistance, it is here in the third space that the possibilities of transformative work may come to fruition, and where praxis becomes possible.

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