Proverbs, Modified Proverbs and Curses in Two Novels of the Syrian Coast

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to the loving Heavenly Father, whose grace is unending and whose love is unfailing. I thank God for giving me four beautiful daughters. I dedicate this thesis to my lovely daughters – Dina, Diana, Rama and Rimonda. Through them I experienced the gift of patience and the power of true love.

1 Corinthians 13:4 "Love is patient and kind."

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Abstract

This thesis considers proverbs, modified proverbs and curses in two novels of the Syrian coast: *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* by Yūsuf al-Maḥmūd, and *Anājīl al-Xarāb* by Naufal Nayouf. Chapter two presents the theories of proverbs put forward by different scholars. It discusses how can proverbs be either literal or figurative. It also explains what the components of the figurative proverb are. Chapter three applies this theoretical framework to the proverbs selected from both novels. Chapter four presents different theories about the formation of modified proverbs, focusing on Partington's classification, and applying his categories to modified proverbs in the two novels. Chapter five reviews different scholarly perspectives on curses. Curses in these two novels are then categorized and discussed in accordance with these perspectives.

Proverbs are very common in both novels, with 521 proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and 127 proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. A number of formal features are particularly prominent: assonance and alliteration and morphological and lexical repetition. Figuration is important in both novels, metaphor being the dominant figure of speech. The dominant cultural feature in proverbs in both novels is domestic life. Most proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* are used on the Syrian coast only, giving the novel a very local orientation. In both novels the great majority of modified proverbs originate from folklore. The commonest social function of modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* is practical advice, while the commonest social function in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* is human nature/life/emotion. Rephrasing and substitution are common modified proverb formation techniques in both novels. The dominant semantic relationship of modified proverbs to their original counterparts in both novels is synonymy.

While there are a significant number of curses in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, there are only a few curses in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. God is a very important cultural feature of curses in both *Anājīl al-Xarāb* and *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, and wishing people harm is also fairly significant in curses in both novels.

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Transliteration

The following system of transliteration is adopted in this thesis.

Arabic letter	ا	ب	ت	ث	ج	ح	خ	د	ذ	ر	ز	س	ش	س	ط	ظ	ع	غ	ف	ق	ك	ل	م	ن	ه	و	ي
Trans-literation	ʾ	b	t	ṯ	j	ḥ	x	d	ḏ	r	z	s	š	ṣ	ḍ	ṭ	ḏ̣	ʿ	ġ	f	q	k	l	m	n	h	w	y

The *ḥarakāt*, *fatḥa*, *kasra* and *ḍamma* are transliterated as *a*, *i*, *u*. A *šaddah* results in a geminate (consonant written twice), except in the case of the article, which is in all cases written as *al-*. An *ʾalif* marking [aː] is transliterated as *ā*, *tāʾ marbūṭa* (ة) as word-final *-ah* or *-at*. *ʾalif maqṣūra* (ى) appears as *ā*, rendering it indistinguishable from *ʾalif*. Long vowels [iː] and [uː] are transliterated as *ī* and *ū*. *Aw* and *ay* are used for the two Standard Arabic diphthongs. The *nisba* suffix appears as *-iyy-*, and nunation is ignored in transliteration. A hyphen - is used to separate morphological elements, notably the article and prepositions.

Where transliterations are made by other authors, I have kept these in the forms given by these other authors. Where Arabic words have a standard, or fairly standard, English transliteration-type form, I have retained this standard or fairly standard English form in my text.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis considers proverbs, modified proverbs and curses in two novels of the Syrian coast: *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* by Yūsuf al-Maḥmūd, and *Anājīl al-Xarāb* by Naufal Nayouf. Chapter two presents the theories of proverbs put forward by different scholars. It discusses how can proverbs be either literal or figurative. It also explains what the components of the figurative proverb are. Chapter three applies this theoretical framework to the proverbs selected from both novels. Chapter four presents different theories about the formation of modified proverbs, focusing on Partington's classification, and applying his categories to modified proverbs in the two novels. Chapter five reviews different scholarly perspectives on curses. Curses in these two novels are then categorized and discussed in accordance with these perspectives. Chapter six presents conclusions and recommendations.

This chapter is a general introduction to the thesis. It provides a statement of the research gap (Section 1.2), a discussion of the aims of the thesis and research questions (Section 1.3), a discussion of the theoretical models used in the thesis (Section 1.4), an overview of the thesis (Section 1.5), and a conclusion to the chapter (Section 1.6).

1.2 Statement of the Research gap

There is a significant research gap in the study of proverbs in novels in general, and in Syrian novels in particular. Although many scholars are interested in proverbs, little has been written about the use of proverbs in novels, in general, and in Syrian literature in particular. While many articles have been written about Yūsuf al-Maḥmūd and his novel *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, nobody has studied this novel in terms of its use of proverbs, except Nazīh ᶜabd al-Ḥamīd, who mentioned a few of the colloquial proverbs used in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* in his book, *Amṯāl wa-taᶜābīr aš-šaᶜbiyyah fī minṭaqat al-sāḥil al-Sūrī ᶜumūman wa-Ṣāfītā khuṣūṣan*.

Naufal Nayouf's novel, *Anājīl al-Xarāb* has hardly been studied at all (the only study that deals with this novel is by Muḥammed Bū ᶜazzah in his article, *Jadal ar-ru'ā wa*

tafkīk al-waᶜy fī Anājīl al-Xarāb (1996 ،مجلة الآداب). Unfortunately, I could not get hold of this.

1.3 Aims of the study

This thesis aims to fill the research gaps identified in the previous section. It takes a broad approach to proverbs in the novels *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, considering proverbs from various perspectives in chapters 2 and 3, modified proverbs in chapter 4, and curses in chapter 5.

1.4 Theoretical Models

This thesis makes use of a broad range of theoretical models and approaches in order to address the broad range of issues relating to proverbs which it deals with. These include models (definitions) for proverbs themselves (Chapter 2), alliteration/assonance and rhyme (Chapter 2), structural semantic features (Chapter 2), figures of speech (Chapter 2), modified proverbs (Chapter 4), and curses (Chapter 5).

1.5 Thesis Overview

This thesis consists of six chapters. The first chapter is an introduction and covers the following points: statement of the research gap (1.2), aims of the study (1.3), theoretical models (1.4) and an overview of the thesis (this section).

The second chapter considers definitions of proverbs by different scholars (section 2.2), views about the historical origins and aspects of proverbs (section 2.3). Sections 2.4-2.4.1.3 discuss the formal features of proverbs – phonic features, alliteration and assonance, rhyme, and poeticity respectively. Sections 2.4.2-2.4.2.2 present other formal features of proverbs such as archaicness (section 2.4.2.1) and figurativeness (2.4.2.2). Sections 2.5-2.5.5 consider the structural-semantic features of proverbs with their sub-categories – equational structure (section 2.5.1), antithesis (section 2.5.2), valuation (section 2.5.3), cause and effect (section 2.5.4), and finally, repetition (section 2.5.5).

Sections 2.6-2.6.2.6 considers the semantics of proverbs with its two sub-divisions - proverbs as multi-word units (section 2.6.1) and figuration in proverbs (section 2.6.2). This latter sub-section consists of five further sub-sub-sections - definition of metaphor (section 2.6.2.1), definition of synecdoche (section 2.6.2.2), definition of metonymy (section 2.6.2.3), definition of hyperbole (section 2.6.2.4), definition of personification (section 2.6.2.5), and finally, definition of irony (section 2.6.2.6). Section 2.6.3 discusses the differentiation of proverbs from other tropes.

Sections 2.7-2.7.2 consider non-standard types of proverbs – imported proverbs (section 2.7.1) and modified/adapted/anti proverbs and anti-proverbs (section 2.7.2). Cultural features of proverbs are discussed in section 2.8, and further explanation of this point is provided in the following sections - bond with nature and domestic life (section 2.8.1), traditionality of content (section 2.8.2), features of proverbs in different cultures (section 2.8.3), and potentially localized nature of proverbs (section 2.8.4). The last sections (2.9-2.9.4) tackle the social functions of proverbs in general, considering specific areas such as the functions of proverbs in everyday life (section 2.9.1), in education (section 2.9.2), the functions of proverbs in political speeches (section 2.9.3), and in literature (section 2.9.4).

Chapter three looks at proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anajīl al-Xarāb.* It begins with an introduction providing biographical information about Yūsuf al-Maḥmūd, followed by a summary of his novel *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, and then biographical information about Naufal Ali Nayouf, followed by a summary of his novel *Anajīl al-Xarāb*.

Section 3.4 presents the number of proverbs, curses, invocations and other similar features in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*. Section 3.5 presents the number of proverbs, curses, invocations and other similar features in *Anājīl al-Xarāb.* Section 3.6 talks about formal features of the proverbs. Section 3.6.1 considers alliteration and/or assonance in the novels. Section 3.6.2 considers rhyme in the novels. Section 3.6.3 considers archaicness in the novels.

Sections 3.7-3.7.5 consider structural-semantic features of the proverbs: equational structure (Section 3.7.1), antithesis (Section 3.7.2), valuation (Section 3.7.3), Cause and

effect (Section 3.7.4) and repetition (Section 3.7.5), with its variant types: (i) root repetition, (ii) pattern repetition, and (iii) lexical. Sections 3.8-3.8.9 discuss figurative usages in the two novels – metaphor, metonomy, simile, hyperbole, metaphor/hyperbole, irony and euphemism. Section 3.9 considers the standardness of the proverbs – standard proverbs taken from written sources (poems, the Quran, etc.), modified proverbs (adaptations of existing, established proverbs), general Syrian/Shami proverbs (i.e. found in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan), local only (found only in the village which is the focus of the novel), proverbs found in the wider Arab World, local proverbs with non-local variants, and proverbs found on Syrian coast only.

Sections 3.9-3.9.1.4 consider the language of the proverb: Standard Arabic vs. Colloquial Arabic – with the sub-categories including : Standard Arabic from original Standard Arabic, Standard Arabic from Standard Arabic, Standard Arabic from Unidentified, colloquial Arabic from colloquial Arabic. Some of these are given in their original colloquial Arabic form, while others are modified. Section 3.9.1.4 deals with Mixed Standard and Colloquial proverbs.

Section 3.10 deals with religious orientations of the proverbs. This section discusses in detail proverbs which relate to each specific religious sub-category: Quranic, Biblical, Hadith, Imam ᶜalī's sayings, semi-religious proverbs, and anti-religious: Section 3.11.1. deals with agriculture. Section 3.11.2 deals with agriculture and traditionality of content. Section 3.11.3 deals with animals. Section 3.11.4 deals with animals and nature. Section 3.11.5 deals with domestic life. Section 3.11.6 deals with both domestic life and household. Section 3.11.7 deals with domestic life and the human body. Section 3.11.8 deals with domestic life and nature. Section 3.11.9 deals with domestic life and traditionality of content. Section 3.11.10 deals with the household. Section 3.11.11 deals with household and animals. Sub-section 3.11.12 deals with household and traditionality of content. Section 30.11.13 deals with the human body. Section 3.11.14 deals with the human body and nature. Section 3.11.14 deals with the human body and traditionality of content. Section 3.11.16 deals with nature. Section 3.11.17 deals with nature and the household. Section 3.11.18 deals with nature and traditionality of content. Section 3.11.19 deals with traditionality of content. Section 3.11.20 deals with the weather and nature. Sections 3.12-3.12.15 deals with relationship to traditional activities and crafts (animal rider, blacksmith, blacksmith and shoemaker, knight, musician,

reapers, peasants, ploughing, knights-fighters-peasant, merchants, hunters, begs and sheikhs, sheikhs, fortune telling, and the mayor and policeman: sections 3.12.1-3.12.15).

Chapter four considers modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. It defines modified proverbs (Section 4.2), considering the place of these modified proverbs in literature (Section 4.3). It presents the modified proverbs which are used in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb* showing how these fit into various different patterns (Section 4.5), in relation to their origins (Section 4.5.1), cultural features (Section 4.5.2), social functions (Section 4.5.3), and formation (Section 4.5.4). Section 6 provides a conclusion.

Chapter five looks at curses in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. It first reviews definitions of curses by different scholars and shows their motifs (Section 5.2). It considers curses in Mesopotamian literature (Section 5.3), the Bible (Section 5.4), Ancient Greece (Section 5.5), and the Quran, Hadith, Islam and Arab culture (Section 5.6). Then taking a modern example of a Mediterranean society which is fairly similar to Syria, it reviews cursing in Modern Greece, especially on the Island of Karpathos (Section 5.7). It presents the curses used in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* showing how these fit into various different categories (Section 5.8), in relation to the views of different scholars, followed by a statistical analysis of curses in the novel (Section 5.8.1). It then presents curses in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (Section 5.9), followed by a statistical analysis of curses in the novel (Section 5.9.1). It finally presents a discussion of statistical analysis of curses in the two novels (Section 5.10). Section (5.11) provides a conclusion.

Chapter six considers the findings and recommendations of this study.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a general introduction to the thesis – covering a statement of the research gap (Section 1.2), the aims of the thesis and research questions (Section 1.3), the theoretical models used in the thesis (Section 1.4), and an overview of the thesis (Section 1.5). In the following chapter, I will consider the definition and essential features of proverbs.

Chapter 2: Definition and essential features of proverbs

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will present an overview of different definitions of proverbs by different scholars (section 2.2). Then I will present multiple views about the historical origions and aspects of proverbs (cf section 2.3). Section 2.4 with its sub-sections (2.4.1, 2.4.1.1, 2.4.1.2, 2.4.1.3) will talk about the formal features of proverbs - phonic features, alliteration and assonance, rhyme, and poeticity respectively. Section 2.4.2 presents other formal features of proverbs such as archaicness (section 2.4.2.1) and figurativeness (cf. 2.4.2.2). Section 2.5 presents the structural-semantic features of proverbs with its sub-categories – equational structure (section 2.5.1), antithesis (section 2.5.2), valuation (section 2.5.3), cause and effect (section 2.5.4), and finally, repetition (section 2.5.5).

Section 2.6 will consider the semantics of proverbs with its two sub-divisions - proverbs as multi-word units (section 2.6.1) and figuration in proverbs (section 2.6.2). This latter sub-section consists of five further sub-sub-sections - definition of metaphor (section 2.6.2.1), definition of synecdoche (section 2.6.2.2), definition of metonymy (section 2.6.2.3), definition of hyperbole (section 2.6.2.4), definition of personification (section 2.6.2.5), and finally, definition of irony (section 2.6.2.6). Section 2.6.3 discusses the differentiation of proverbs from other tropes.

Section 2.7 considers non-standard types of proverbs with their two sub-divisions – imported proverbs (section 2.7.1) and modified/adapted proverbs and anti-proverbs (section 2.7.2). Cultural features of proverbs will be discussed in section 2.8, and further explanation of this point will be presented in the following sections - bond with nature and domestic life (section 2.8.1), traditionality of content (section 2.8.2), features of proverbs in different cultures (section 2.8.3), and potentially localized nature of proverbs (section 2.8.4). The last section (2.9) will tackle the social functions of proverbs in general. The discussion will narrow down to specific areas such as the functions of proverbs in everyday life (section 2.9.1), the functions of proverbs in education (section 2.9.2), the functions of proverbs in political speeches (section 2.9.3),

and the functions of proverbs in literature (section 2.9.4). In Section 2.10 I will provide a list of key criteria for identifying Arabic proverbs.

2.2 General Definitions

This section provides a number of general definitions of proverbs. It is intended to give an idea of the variety of ways in which different writers have viewed proverbs. More detailed definitions of the different aspects of proverbs will be provided in subsequent sections.

Baldick (2008, p. 274) defines a proverb as follows:

> A short popular saying of unknown authorship, expressing some general truth or superstition:' Too many cooks spoil the broth'. Proverbs are found in most *cultures*, and are often very ancient. The Hebrew Scriptures include a book of proverbs. Many poets—notably Chaucer—incorporate proverbs into their works, and others imitate their condensed form of expression: William Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell' in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (1973)* are, strictly speaking, aphorisms, since they originate from a known author.

In *The Wisdom of Many: Essays on the Proverb,* Wolfgang Mieder and Alan Dundes introduce numerous essays written by different writers explaining their views about proverbs. The first essay is written by Archer Taylor: "The Wisdom of Many and the Wit of One", in which he defines the proverb as follows: "A proverb is wise; it belongs to many people; it is ingenious in form and idea; and it was first invented by an individual and applied by him to a particular situation" (Mieder and Dundes, 1994, p.3). Mieder and Dundes mention that Lord John Russell has defined a proverb by saying that it is "One man's wit and all men's wisdom" (Mieder and Dundes, 1994, p. 3).

Honeck defines proverbs from a linguistic point of view: "A proverb is a phonological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and, some would add, a semiotic (complex sign) entity" (Honeck, 1997, p.11). In *Preaching Proverbs: Wisdom for the Pulpit,* Alyce. M. Mckenzie defines the proverb as "A winged word, outliving the fleeting moment" (Mckenzie, 1996, p. xvii.). In the first chapter of his *Proverbs: A Handbook,* "Definition and Classification", Mieder mentions that Stephen D.Winick in "Intertextuality and Innovation in a Definition of the Proverb Genre" says that "a text becomes a proverb upon its creation" (Mieder, 2004, p. 5). But Mieder confutes this, confirming that

proverbs should retain the aspect of "traditionality" and that phrases which look like proverbs do not make them "folk proverb[s]" (Mieder, 2004, p. 5). Mieder (2004, p. 9) then goes on to speak about new forms of proverbs: "Today, with the incredible power of the mass media, a newly formulated proverb-like statement might become a bona fide proverb". Mieder says that: "Proverbs fulfil the human need to summarize experiences and observations into nuggets of wisdom that provide ready-made comments on personal relationships and social affairs. There are proverbs for every imaginable context, and they are thus as contradictory as life itself" (Mieder, 2004, p. 1).

In *al-Mu'allaf wa al-Musawlaf Fi al-Ṯaqāfah al-Šaʿbiyyah al-Lubnāniyyah,* Kamal Xalīl Naxlah and Šauqī Anīs ʿAmmār, say:

المثل هو: "تاريخ حياة الناس مع الناس بكل تفاصيلها الكبيرة و الصغيرة، بما في ذلك أنماط عيشهم وحالاتهم الانسانية: الفرح، القلق، الوجع، الفطنة، الطرائف، الأخلاق، الخ" (نخلة وعمّار، ج1،1988، ص16).

Al-maṯal huwa:"tārīx ḥayāti annāsi maʿa annāsi bikulli tafāṣīlihā al-kabīrati wa aṣ-ṣaġīrati bimā fī ḏalika 'anmāṭi ʿayšihim wā ḥālātihim al'insāniyyati: al-faraḥ, al-qalaq, al-wajaʿ, al-fiṭnah, al-ṭarā'if, al-'āxlā, ilax"

The proverb is "the history of people's life with people with all its small and big details, including their life styles and their human states: joy, anxiety, pain, wit, jokes, ethics, etc"[1].

F. P. Wilson says that James Howell regards the proverb as "A slippery thing, and soon slides out of memory" (Mieder and Dundes, 1994, p. 175). However, Finnegan perceives that what defines proverbs is their ability to be applied to a multitude of contexts: "There is the oblique and allusive nature of expression through proverbs which makes it possible to use them in a variety of effective ways" (Mieder and Dundes, 1994, p. 27). Another scholar, Ellen F.Davis, gives a different perspective on proverbs. According to her, "[proverbs are] essentially oral literature; they circulate by word of mouth" (Davis, 2000, p.12). Richard Chenevix Trench (1854, p.2) argues that proverbs reflect the mores and morals of the community, and one single proverb may exist in different communities and countries. Trench (1854, p.2) says:

> The fact that they please the people, and have pleased them for ages – that they possess so vigorous a principle of life, as to have maintained their ground, ever new and ever young, through all the centuries of a nation's existence – nay, that many of them have pleased not one nation only, but

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[1] All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

many, so that they have made themselves an home in the most different lands.

Mary Cowden Clarke (2004, p.35) articulates how Howell defines a proverb: "Sense, shortness and salt". Then she declares how Trench criticises the incompleteness of this definition: "Errs alike in defect and excess" (Clarke, 2004, p. 35). For Trench, Howell overlooks the most pivotal elements in the proverb: "Popularity, acceptance and adoption on the part of the people" (Clarke, 2004, p. 35).

Norrick (1985, p. 12) mentions that Abraham (1968b; 1969) "defines the proverb as a traditional conversational genre along with the curse, taunt, boast etc". Neal Norrick goes on to demonstrate a German point of view: "According to Seiler, proverbs must be self-contained sayings (in sich geschlossene Spruche), by which he means that none of their essential grammatical units may be replaced" (Norrick, 1985, p. 32). Palacios (1996) argues that the spread of a proverb beyond the borders of the community in which it first appeared is a vital measurement of its liveliness and survival. He says: "Good proverbs achieve such success that they transcend the boundaries of time and space, being transmitted from one generation to the next and being found in the most diverse cultural traditions" (Palacios, 1996, p. 76).

For William Camden: "Proverbs are concise, witty, and wise speeches grounded upon long experience, containing for the most part good caveats and therefore profitable and delightful" (Adeeko, 1998, p. 30). For Topilkayyar, "The proverb is 'an old saying containing depth of knowledge, brevity, clarity and simplicity as its special characteristics and it will come as a quotation in a given situation'" (Adeeko, 1998, p. 30).

For Lawrence Boadi, "Proverbs are primarily manners of elegant speech and not simple kernels of wisdom" (Adeeko, 1998, p. 31), while "Populists propose that 'wisdom' fits the proverb because, by definition, the expression has passed the test of time" (Adeeko, 1998, p. 31). Another description is highlighted: "Norrick's more recent work confirms the communal dimension of Trench's views. Norrick says that in speech the proverb user cites not 'an individual author; he quotes the linguistic community itself'" (Adeeko, 1998, p. 31). Like Richard Chenevix Trench, the Nigerian novelist, Chinua Achebe,

makes a link between proverbs and their traditional content. He says: "[proverbs] represent 'Our Great Tradition'" (Adeeko, 1998, p. 51). The same idea about traditionality as a component of proverbs is reiterated by the African writer and folklorist, Hampate Ba, who insists on the African "Oral" (Pettersson, 2006, p. 255) heritage: "The use of traditional sayings accentuates his [Hampate Ba] image as a traditionalist" (Pettersson, 2006, p. 255). However, the Lebanese writer Frayha gives this definition of a proverb: "(Mathal) (proverb) is from a common Semitic root signifying simile or comparison" (Frayha, 1953a, p. IX). Frayha goes on to define the proverb as follows:

> In general, a proverb is a terse didactic statement suggesting a course of action, or passing judgement, or stating a fact. It may be a condensation of an experience or a pungent criticism of life. Some proverbs breathe a lofty spirit, while others are trite sayings which appeal to the baser side of human nature (Frayha 1953a p. IX).

Robert M. Harnish in "Communicating with Proverbs," defines proverbs as follows: "bromides and homilies. A bromide is a 'trite saying', and a homily is 'an admonitory or moralizing discourse'" (Harnish, 1993, p. 265). Whiting (1977, p.xx) differentiates between two types of proverbs:

> popular proverbs and learned proverbs, the latter frequently called sentences or sententious remarks. A popular proverb is one which has no known or presumed particular point of origin, and which circulated orally among the unlettered both before and after it was written down. An excellent descriptive phrase for a popular proverb is "an old said saw" since it indicates antiquity and oral currency. It must be admitted that "saw" was used in the sense of "proverb" centuries ago, but even so, the etymology suggests something oral rather than written.

According to Che Chi (2011, p.222), "The proverb comes from the Latin word, *proverbium*". "Pro-" is, meant for, made for, that accompanies, that goes with; "-verbium" means, speech, or discourse. "Proverb" would then mean, "that linguistic item that goes with, as a stylistic and semantic auxiliary of speech" (Mbu, 1981: 27). Different African groups have different perspectives on proverbs. In Somali, "Proverbs 'put spice into speech'" (Yankah, 2012, p. 30); whereas, the Yoruba tribe perceive "the proverb" (Yankah, 2012, p. 30) as "The horse of conversation; when the conversation droops, the proverb picks it up" (Yankah, 2012, p. 30).

Mieder (2004, p.3) cites Taylor's view of proverbs. He says: "Let us be content with recognising that a proverb is a saying current among the folk. At least so much of a definition is indisputable".

Perhaps the most detailed definition of proverbs is provided by Norrick, who defines proverbs as "self-contained, pithy, traditional expressions with didactic content and fixed, poetic form" (Norrick, 1985, p. 31). Reviewing this definition, Norrick identifies five basic features that can be used to distinguish proverbs from other forms of literary genres. These five features are self-containedness, pithiness, traditionality, didactic intent, fixed form and poetic features like prosody and figuration. I will consider these features further in Chapter 3.

2.3 Historical Origins and Aspects of Proverbs

Mieder alludes to the history of proverbs: "The earliest proverb collections stem from the third millennium B.C. and were inscribed on Sumerian cuneiform tablets as commonsensical codes of conduct and everyday observations of human nature" (Mieder 2004: xii). It is not only proverbs but also playing with proverbs that goes back to very early ages: "Proverb-like statements also appear in a Babylonian source of about 1,440 BC (Beardslee 1970). Later uses in the Hebrew and Christian Bibles are well known" (Honeck, 1997, p.4).

According to Šqīr:

"وأوّل من جمع الأمثال فيما نعلم سليمان الحكيم بن داود كتبها بالعبرانية في القرن العاشر قبل الميلاد وضمّت إلى أسفار التوراة" (شقير، 1995، ص19).

Wa 'awwalu man jamaᶜa al-amṯāla fīmā naᶜlamu Sulaymānu al-Ḥakīmu Bin Dā'ūd katabahā bil-ᶜibrānyyati fī al-qarni al-ᶜāširi qabla al-mīlādi wa ḍummat 'ilā at-tawrāti

The first person who collected proverbs, as far as we know, was Solomon [Sulaīmān Al-Ḥakīm bin Dāwud]. He wrote them in Hebrew in the tenth century B.C., and they were added to the books of the Bible [Torah].

Perdue claims that "proverbs originated in South Syria" (Perdue, 2008, p. 111) and that "The so-called 'proverbs' of Ahikar represent a collection of genuine Aramaic wisdom

sayings, which were common among the Aramaeans of South Syria during the 8th century B.C.E" (Pedrue, 2008, p. 111). He goes on to say that:

> Old copies of the Babylonian period, treated by Miguel Civil, and Jacob Klein, indicates that this is really a collection of female insults. In this case the proverbs or proverbial phrases were not collected or cited with the intent of expressing 'wisdom', but rather they were simply examples of apt rhetorical phrases useful in specific traditional situations, mostly entertaining dialogues, in which indecent accusations may have provoked great laughter among an audience. Since the collection opens with a quotation from a female dialogue, it indirectly testifies to the existence of orally performed disputations between two women as a literary type as early as the Fara period (Perdue, 2008, pp. 55-6).

Clifford (1999, p.8) talks about the history of proverbs "Father–son instructions are attested as far back as the third millennia both in Mesopotamia and in Egypt, and proverbs are well-nigh universal. In Mesopotamia, more than twenty-eight collections of Sumerian proverbs are attested (third and second millennia) as well as Akkadian collections".

In *Proverbs Speak Louder than Words,* Wolfgang Mieder (2008, p. 121) also speaks about the history of proverbs:

> Proverbs contain the wisdom and insights that humankind has gained through observation and experience, and as so-called "monumenta humana" they are the everyday and common –sense philosophy of all people. This has been the case for millennia, as the earliest extant proverb collections on Sumerian cuneiform tablets show. Some proverbs like 'Big fish eat little fish' have been traced back to the earliest written records.

Mieder goes on to tell the reader about the roots of proverbs: "Greek and Roman antiquity as well as the Bible have been the source for many proverbs that are known in identical wording and form in a multitude of languages through loan translations" (Mieder, 2008, p. 122). "According to Hulme, many proverbs arose in the leisurely and sententious East and there found their way to the widely spreading colonies of Greece and Phoenicia, and in due course to Rome, where there was an even greater area of diffusion" (Hwang, Lamb and Sigel, 1996, p. 76).Trench speaks about Aristotle's employment of proverbs: "He [Aristotle] is said to have been the first collector of them" (Trench, 1854, p. 2).

Mieder also gives an example of a proverb which has survived despite its oldness: "It is hardly surprising that the classical proverb 'where there's smoke, there's fire' is still very much in use today in many languages, often in its traditional wording and straight-forward meaning based on a natural phenomenon" (Mieder, 2008, p. 122).

Davis speaks about the motivation behind the emergence of proverbs in a certain community: "If the crisis of the rise of kingship prompted the first proverb collections in Israel, then it is likely that the second crisis of the monarchy's collapse led to consolidation of this literary tradition, the formation of the book of proverbs" (Davis, 2000, p. 16).

Mieder mentions that certain proverbs no longer exist with the passage of time: "Thus the once well-known sixteenth-century proverb 'Let the *cobbler* stick to his last' is basically dead today since the profession of the *cobbler* is disappearing" (Mieder, 2004, p. xi).

In *Erasmus and the Age of Reformation,* John Huizinga refers to the fact that Erasmus's "*Adagia* increased from hundreds to thousands, through which not only Latin, but also Greek, wisdom spoke" (Huizinga, 2008, p. 58). In *The Hegemony of Common Sense: Wisdom and Mystification in Everyday Life,* Deane Wolfe Manders mentions that "Max Weber called the phrase 'Time is money' the single most telling expression of the spirit of capitalism" (Manders, 2007, p.xxi). He also comments: "Proverbial wisdom is developed, produced, reproduced and revised in response to..., 'everyday-historical' circumstances" (Manders, 2007, p. xii).

2.4 Formal Features of Proverbs

Dickins, Hervey and Higgins define the formal features of a text as consisting of the phonic/graphic level, the prosodic level, the grammatical level, the sentential level and the discourse level. They state that "we can think of the phonic/graphic level as being at the bottom of the hierarchy, followed further up by the prosodic level, the grammatical level, the sentential level, the discourse level, and at the very top the intertextual level. These features constitute the formal matrix" (Dickins, Hervey and Higgins, 2002, p.79).

2.4.1 Phonic features

Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002, p. 80) argue that "Language is nothing without the sounds of the utterances we hear, or the shape on the page of those we read: every text is a phonic/graphic configuration". Dickins goes on to explain that oral language consists of "phonemes [which are] speech sounds" (Dickins, 2010, p. 37). These may be identical in two different languages as in "English 'd' and Arabic د (ḍ)" (Dickins, 2010, p. 37), or they may be unique and have no existence in the other language, such as ض (ḍ) in Arabic. A number of phonemes with a vowel situated in the middle constitute a syllable (Dickins, 2010, p. 37), and a number of syllables share constitute a foot (as a technical linguistic term, rather than simply in poetry) (Dickins, 2010, p. 37). Dickins mentions that in Arabic there is a close correspondence between graphemes, i.e. letters on the page and phonemes in Arabic, such that "the grapheme د (d) corresponds to the phoneme 'd'" (Dickins, 2010, p. 37).

2.4.1.1 Alliteration and assonance

Dickins, et al give the following definition of alliteration: "The recurrence of the same sound or sound-cluster at the beginning of words, as in 'two tired toads'" (Dickins, Hervey and Higgins, 2002, p. 81). They go on to define assonance as: "The recurrence, within words, of the same sound or sound-cluster, as in 'a great day's painting'" (Dickins, Hervey and Higgins, 2002, p. 81). Alliteration is an important aspect of proverbs. For example, "Who swims in sin, shall sink in sorrow" (Trench, 1854, p. 21), and "Frost and fraud both end in foul" (Trench, 1854, p. 21).

2.4.1.2 Rhyme

Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002, p. 81) define rhyme in English as follows: "We shall say that two words rhyme where the last stressed vowel, and all the sounds that follow it, are identical and occur in the same order, as in 'bream/seem'" (Dickins, Hervey and Higgins, 2002, p. 81). Rhyme is a characteristic of the proverb. For example,

"who goes a borrowing, goes a sorrowing" (Trench, 1854, p. 20), and "Truth may be blamed, but cannot be shamed" (Trench, 1854, p. 20).

2.4.1.3 Poeticity

More generally, proverbs may be described as 'poetic' in nature. "A proverb wastes no words. Proverbs are written in poetic form, and poetry in general is compact language" (LongmanIII, 2002, p. 38).

Mary Cowden Clarke notes that proverbs "may be exquisitely poetical, like the Indian proverb, 'The sandal tree perfumes the axe that fells it'" (Clarke, 2004, p. 43). Its equivalent in Arabic is كن كشجر الصندل تعطر الفأس التي تقطعك *kun k-šajari al-ṣandal tuᶜaṭṭiru al-fa'sa al-llatī taqṭaᶜuka.*

According to Weeks (2007, pp. 67-8), "Poetic language is often, of course, characterized by the intensified use of figurative devices found in other types of discourse, and such devices play an important role in Proverbs 1-9 [an ancient form of Jewish wisdom literature and an integral part of Jewish scripture]". See below, section 3.2.2.

2.4.2 Other formal features

The following sections consider other formal features of proverbs: archaicness of language (section 2.4.2.1), and figurativeness (section 2.4.2.2).

2.4.2.1 Archaicness of language

Palacios (cited in Huang, Lamb and Sigel, 1996, p. 78) say of proverbs: "In form, they are traditional not only in their frequent use of archaic forms of expression." Erasmus (cited in Wesseeling, 2002, p. 85) also mentions the idea of oldness as a key feature of the proverb: "The remote and archaic origin of a saying enhances its [proverbial] value, for age lends charm and prestige to words, just as it does to wine". This archaicness of origin is frequently reflected in the use of archaic words and/or grammatical structures.

2.4.2.2 Figurativeness

For Trench, it is not necessary for the proverb to take the form of "a figurative expression" (Trench, 1854, p. 17), for example, "Haste makes waste" (Trench, 1854, p.17) and "Honesty is the best policy" (Trench, 1854, p. 17). According to Mckenzie (1996, p. 7), "Literal proverbs are often called maxims, while proverbs that picture metaphorical scenes will be referred to as scenic proverbs".

Figures of speech are the pivotal characteristics in Ghanaian proverbs:

> In Akan cultures phrases get into the proverb inventory only if they contain striking imageries. When Boadi asked his informants to evaluate the proverbial stature of the biblical statement 'Hear the instruction of thy father and forsake not the law of thy mother' and the secular sayings 'Honesty is the best policy' and 'A friend in need is a friend indeed', none passed the Akan test because none contains any striking imagery (Adeeko, 1998, p. 30-1).

The typical figure of speech found in proverbs is metaphor. It is also possible, however, to find other figures, such as hyperbole (exaggeration). For example, the Arabs say: "Fling him into the Nile, and he will come up with a fish in his mouth" (Trench, 1854, p. 23), its Arabic equivalent being: (فريحة 1953أ ص38) "ارميه بالبحر بيطلع و بتمّه سمكة". The trasliteration of this is: *Irmīh bi-l-baḥir biyiṭlaᶜ wa b-tummuh samkeh*. It indicates his skill in saving "himself even of a misfortune" (Frayha, 1953a, p.38). A similar proverb is used by the Germans, but in another structure: "if he flung a penny on the roof, it would come down to him a dollar" (Trench, 1854, p. 23). The figurativeness of proverbs will be considered in more detail in Section 5.2.

2.5 Structural-semantic features of proverbs

There are a number of recurring structural-semantic features of proverbs, which will be discussed in the following sections.

2.5.1 Equational structure

Dundes explains that proverbs have different structures. One of them is "The equational proverb" (Mieder and Dundes, 1994, p.53) in which there seem to be "No contrastive or oppositional features" (Mieder and Dundes, 1994, p. 53). He argues that this equation

may take one of the following forms: "A=A", "A=B", "He who A is B", or "Where there's an A, there's a B" (Mieder and Dundes, 1994, p. 53). The following examples are arranged to illustrate the above equations: "Enough is enough", "Time is money", "He who laughs last laughs best", and "Where there's a will, there's a way" (Mieder and Dundes, 1994, p. 53).

Abrahams mentions proverbs presenting "Four structural types":

1. Positive equivalence-e.g.-"Time is money"
2. Negative equivalence-e.g.-"Money is not everything"
3. Positive causational-e.g.-"Haste makes waste"
4. Negative causational-e.g.-"Two wrongs don't make a right" (Abrahams, 1972, p.121).

2.5.2 Antithesis

Westermarck speaks about the idea of antithesis in proverbs: "A typical form of [antithetical] valuation is to say that one thing is better than another" (Westermarck, 1931, p. 3). For instance, the following proverbs embody the notion of comparison and contrast:

Your friend who is near is better than your brother who is far away (Westermarck, 1931, p. 3)

The supposition of the wise man is better than the certainty of the ignorant (Westermarck, 1931, p. 3)

The wound caused by words is worse than the wound of the bodies (Westermarck, 1931, p. 3).

In an essay called "Proverbs in Africa", Ruth Finnegan talks about how rich Africa is in the use of proverbs by all its different tribes: "Yoruba proverbs, for instance, are said often to come in couplets with antithesis between the two lines, noun answering to noun and verb to verb: 'Ordinary people are as common as grass, /But good people are dearer than the eye'" (Mieder and Dundes, 1994, p.22).

2.5.3 Valuation

Westermarck speaks about another type of proverbs: "A valuation is also implied in those very numerous proverbs that speak of the consequences of certain events: 'Obedience to women makes one enter hell'; 'Patience is the key of all well-being'"

(Westermarck, 1931, p. 3). In the second example the event and the consequence are not as self-evident as in the first; but we can, however, see the nexus of patience and well-being, i.e. you are well if you are patient.

2.5.4 Cause and effect

LongmanIII argues that "The paradigm of 'cause and effect' or 'deed-consequence nexus', found in many proverbs, argues in favour of complying with the moral principles of the social order" (LongmanIII, 2002, p. 82). The same idea is re-iterated "Often the Biblical writers will state a cause and then state the effect of the cause" (Duval and Hays, 2005, p.33). Then they go on to support their view by giving this example: "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Duval and Hays, 2005, p.33).

Westermarck's 'valuation' and Longman's 'cause and effect' can be equated with Abraham's 'causational' ('positive causational' and 'negative causational'). It is also possible to identify an additional category of 'double negative equivalence', where both of the equivalent elements are negative (an example from *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* is ما ليس في بلدك، ليس لك و لا لولدك *mā laīsa fī baladik, laīsa laka wa lā li-waladik* (What is not in your own country, is neither yours nor your son's). Accordingly, the above categories can be reduced to the following categories:

1. Positive equivalence: e.g. "Time is money"
2. Negative equivalence:e.g. "Money is not everything"
3. Double negative equivalence [*no example in original text*]
4. Positive causational: e.g. "Haste makes waste"
5. Negative causational: e.g. "Two wrongs don't make a right" (Abrahams, 1972, p.121).
6. Better than ('Better than' structure – with optional antithetical elements)
7. Other

2.5.5 Repetition

Finnegan discusses repetition in relation to African proverbs: "Repetition also occurs effectively in the form 'Quick loving a woman means quick not loving a woman'" (Mieder and Dundes, 1994, p.22).

2.6 The semantics of proverbs

In the following sections, I will consider the semantics of proverbs.

2.6.1 Proverbs as multi-word units

In *How Proverbs Mean: Semantic Studies in English Proverbs,* Neal Norrick defines proverbs: "Like simplex words and idioms, proverbs are form-meaning units which must be included in any complete language description" (Norrick, 1985, p. 2). For him "Proverbs occur in larger texts such as everyday conversations, newspaper editorials and sermons; and they occur as texts complete in themselves, e.g. as group slogans, house inscriptions and along with other sayings in anthologies" (Norrick, 1985, p. 3).

2.6.2 Figuration in proverbs

In the following sub-sections, I will consider figuration in proverbs, as an aspect of their semantics.

2. 6.2.1 Definition of metaphor

Metaphor is traditionally regarded as a figure of speech. Baldick (2008, p. 130) defines a figure of speech as follows:

> An expression that departs from the accepted literal sense or from the normal order of words, or in which an emphasis is produced by patterns of sound. Such figurative language is an especially important resource of poetry, although not every poem will use it; it is also constantly present in all other kinds of speech and writing.

'Metaphor' can be defined, along fairly traditional lines, as "a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is used in a non-basic sense, this non-basic sense suggesting a likeness or analogy (whether real or not […]) with another more basic sense of the same word or phrase" (Dickins 2005, p. 228). Goatly regards metaphor as consisting of three elements: the topic which is the entity referred to; the vehicle which is the notion to which this entity being compared; and the grounds which are the respect in which this comparison is being made (Dickins, 2005, p. 230). Goatly gives the following example as an illustration of his concept: "*The past is another country; they do things differently there"* (Dickins, 2005*,* p. 231). Dickins explains that "'the past' is the topic", "'another country' is the vehicle", and "'they do things differently' is the grounds" (Dickins, 2005, p. 231). Dickins differentiates between two categories of metaphor. The first category is

lexicalized metaphor, which involves the use of metaphorical meaning which is relatively fixed in a certain language such as 'rat' which metaphorically means 'a person who deserts his friends and associates'. The other category is non-lexicalized metaphor in which the metaphorical meaning is not fixed; on the contrary, it is changeable according to the context. Dickins (2005, p. 232) gives as an example of non-lexicalized metaphor: 'a tree' in 'A man is a tree'. This example may mean that the human being is likened to the tree in terms of hiding a part of his personality i.e. the unconscious, and revealing the other part i.e. the conscious. But this is not the only possible metaphorical meaning of 'a tree' in 'A man is a tree', simply because in another context when tackling the similarity between the life stages of a tree and the life stages of the human being in terms of growing up, developing, and blossoming or bearing children; a total different metaphorical meaning is given to 'a tree'.

2.6.2.2 Definition of synecdoche

Synecdoche is also recurrent in proverbs. Baldick defines synechdoche as follows:

> A common figure of speech (or trope) by which something is referred to indirectly, either by naming only some part or constituent of it (e.g. hands for manual labourers) or – less often – by naming some more comprehensive identity of which it is a part (e.g. the law for a police officer). Usually regarded as a special kind of metonymy, synecdoche occurs frequently in political journalism (e.g. Moscow for the Russian government (Baldick, 2008, p. 329).

Norrick presents various types of figuration in proverbs such as the "species-genus synecdochic pattern" (Norrick, 1985, p. 113) exemplified in "'The early bird catches the worm'" (Norrick, 1985, p.113) which can be applied to "students" (Norrick, 1985, p.113) to encourage them to work hard and hand in their dissertation as soon as possible. So, "The level of generality on which birds hunting for worms corresponds to students, papers and university terms must be quite high" (Norrick, 1985, p. 113).

2.6.2.3 Definition of metonymy

Baldick defines metonymy as:

> A figure of speech that replaces the name of one thing with the name of something else closely associated with it, e.g. the bottle for the alcoholic drink, the press for jounalism, skirt for woman (Baldick, 2008, p. 206.)

Nolan defines metonymy as: "Use of the name of one thing for that of another of which it is an attribute or with which it is associated, for example: 'lands of the 'crown' to mean royal lands" (Nolan, 2005, p.72).Goatly (2007) defines metonymy as a relationship between meanings based on contiguity in experience, or, linguistically, on deletion rather than substitution. We might say for example 'I drank two bottles of wine' as shorthand for 'I drank the contents of two bottles of wine'. And this deletion depends upon the fact that bottles are a container for wine and therefore the concepts are contiguous in our experience" (Goatly, 2007, p. 15). Fass (1997, p.48) says that "Gibbs suggests the "is like" test for distinguishing between metaphor and metonymy. The acceptability of "is like" suggests a metaphor; unacceptability suggests a metonymy".

Hayajneh says that metonymy is sometimes used euphemistically to replace 'obscene' expressions with 'eloquent' ones. He goes on and mentions that in Arabic, there is another metonymy format, where the expression begins with either abu (the father of) followed by the name of the son. For example, أبو ايوب *abū ayyūb* (the father of Ayyūb) to refer to the جمل *jamal* (male camel); or with *umm* (mother of) followed by the name of the son. For example: أم الرذائل *umm al-raḏā'il* (the mother of all vices) to refer to جهل *ğahl* (ignorance). Hayajneh also mentions other interesting kinds of metonymy: the forms that begin with ابن *'ibn* (the son of). For example: إبن الليالي *'ibn al-layālī* (the son of nights) to refer to القمر *al-qamar* (Moon). and بنت *bint* (the daughter of), illustrated by this example: بنت الشفّة *bint aš-šifa* (the daughter of lips) to refer to الكلمة *al-kalima* (word). Hayajneh says that for al-ᶜAlawī, metonymies concerning structure can take two shapes:

1. Adjectival metonymies: where they describe a trait or distinguishing quality. For example: ناعمة الكفين *nāᶜimat al-kaffayn* ('smooth of the palms') to refer to a woman who is rich.
2. Attributed metonymies: where a context is necessary to understand them. An example, طاولة رقم خمسة تريد الفاتورة [...] is *ṭāwila raqam xamsah turīd al-fātūra* where طاولة *ṭāwila* cannot be used to refer to the customers sitting around the table, but must be used for the person who is paying for the meal (Hayajneh, 2010, p. 109).

Norrick goes on to speak about another sub-type of figuration: "instrument-function metonymy" (Norrick, 1985, p. 128). This "involve[s] human body parts and their associated functions" (Norrick 1985: 129). For example, "'Far from eyes, far from heart'" (Norrick,1985, p.129). Norrick here clarifies that "eyes" (Norrick, 1985, p.129) and "heart" (Norrick, 1985, p. 129) refer to "sight" (Norrick, 1985, p. 129) and "emotions" (Norrick, 1985, p.129) respectively.

2.6.2.4 Definition of hyperbole

Monye defines hyperbole: "Hyperbole or gross exaggeration simply means blowing up an object or idea much more than its normal size or proportion" (Monye, 1996, p. 67). Hayajneh (2010, p. 113) defines hyperbole "[It] encompasses the polarity of saying much greater or much lesser, much better or much worse". In Arabic, *hyperbole* corresponds roughly to مبالغة *mubālaġa 'exaggeration'*, which is defined by al-Qazwīni as:

> أن يدعى لوصف بلوغه في الشدة او الضعف حداً مستحيلاً او مستبعداً (القزويني، 2003، ص275).
> *'ān yudᵃ̄ li-waṣfi bulūġihi fi al-šiddah 'au al-ḍaᶜif ḥaddan mustaḥīlan 'au mustabᶜadan.*
> To state things very strongly or very weakly in order to achieve or reach an impossible or very far-fetched situation.

In my study, I will adopt al-Qazwini's definition of hyperbole as it is more comprehensive than Monye's definition.

2.6.2.5 Definition of personification

Monye defines personification as follows: "It is a figure of speech in which some ideas or inanimate objects are given human attribute" (Monye, 1996, p. 66). This rhetorical figure has been used by politicians' speeches: "Hitler personifies a variety of non-human entities in *MK,* such as music and architecture, both of which he termed '*die Königin der Künste' [the queen of the arts]*" (Rash, 2006, p. 82).

2.6.2.6 Definition of irony

Baldick defines irony as follows:

> A subtly humorous perception of inconsistency, in which an apparently straightforward statement or event is undermined by its context so as to give it a very different significance. In various forms, irony appears in many kinds of literature, from the tragedy of Sophocles to the novels of Jane Austen and Henry James, but is especially important in satire, as in Voltaire and Swift. At its simplest, in verbal irony, it involves a discrepancy between what is said and what is really meant, as in its crude form (Baldick, 2008, p. 174).

An example is 'What a beautiful day!', said in the context of foul, driving rain. Irony is embedded in a conversation when there is an incongruity between the apparent meaning

of the transmitted message and the intended meaning. When employed in a text, whether political or literary, irony releases a special sense of humour.

2.6.3 Differentiating Proverbs from Other Tropes

In sections 2.5.2.1-2.5.2.5, I discussed the differences between metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy, hyperbole, personification and irony. In this section, I will list the differences between proverbs and i. Aphorisms, ii. Maxims, iii. Adages, iv. Sayings.

Proverbs vs. Aphorisms

Aphorisms can be looked at as a special type of proverbs. Baldick (2008, p. 20) defines an aphorism as follows:

> A statement of some general principle, expressed memorably by condensing much wisdom into few words: 'Give a man a mask and he will tell you the truth' (Wilde); 'The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom' (Blake). Aphorisms often take the form of a definition: 'Hypocrisy is a homage paid by vice to virtue' (La Rochefocaud).

Samiuddin (2007, p. 68) says that "Aphorism is a terse saying embodying a general truth, as 'Art is long, and life is short'". Dundes notes that: "Some scholars may prefer to call literal proverbs by some other term, e.g., aphorism" (Mieder and Dundes, 1994, p.53). In my study I will use Dundes' view as it is broader than the other definitions. In this case, it is not necessary for an aphorism to take the form of a definition. For instance, if we take the proverb: تغدّى و تمدّى *tġaddā wi- tmaddā* (have lunch and lie down). This proverb does not have the structure of a definition but it is literal.

Proverbs vs. Maxims

According to Smiuddin (2007, p. 68), "A maxim is a brief statement of a general and practical truth, especially the one that serves as a rule of conduct or precept: 'It is wise to risk no more than one can afford to lose'" There is a slight difference between a proverb and a maxim: "Wilson differentiates them on the grounds that a proverb originates in folk culture while a maxim is linked to a specific sage" (Kirk, 1998, p. 91).

Morales (2003, p. xxvi) considers the difference between the two tropes to be that: "Where the aphorism states a fact of human nature, a maxim advises a certain course of

action. The aphorism is written in the indicative, the maxim is in imperative mood." Clarke (2004, p. 57) argues that the difference between 'aphorism' and 'maxim' is "That the aphorism 'relates rather to speculative principles... than to practical matters'; while the maxim 'suggests a lesson more pointedly and directly'".

Proverbs and idioms
 According to Harnish (1993, p. 270), proverbs and idioms are similar for having a specific structure and for their importance in literary works. However, idioms seldom appear as full sentences.

Proverbs vs. sayings
Harnish (1993, p. 271) argues that sayings: "are sentential, have a fairly fixed form and are often repeated, but they lack any literary value. Other forms have the peculiarity of not being sentential—or if they are sentential, they are extremely irregular".

Proverbs vs. adages
According to Baldick (2008, p. 3), an adage either a proverb or a maxim. Erasmus (cited in Calder, 2001, p.32), gives a more specific definition of an adage. For him, an adage is compact frame of speech with compressed meaning and involves figures of speech as well. In this thesis, I will adopt Erasmus' definition, given that its greater precision and specificity.

2.7   Non-standard types of proverbs

In the following sections, I will look at various kinds of non-standard proverbs.

2.7.1 Imported Proverbs

Westermarck (1931, p. 48) tackles the issue of "imported proverbs", confirming that it is a rule that the taken proverb should have a slight relatedness to the new culture in which this proverb will be used "But above all, it should be noticed that a foreign proverb is scarcely adopted by a people unless it is in some measure congenial to its mind and mode of life; that is apt to be modified so as to fit in its new surroundings" (Westermarck, 1931, p.48-9). The death of the new proverb in the new atmosphere may

happen if the inhabitants of this new culture could not be affected by the new guest. Westermarck says "if it does not succeed in being acclimatized in its adoptive country, it will wither and die" (Westermarck, 1931, p.49). Mieder speaks about a similar issue, saying that certain proverbs become totally ignored or even forgotten due to the fact that they no longer fit the present time. Mieder says: "Thus the once well-known sixteenth-century proverb 'Let the cobbler stick to his last' is basically dead today since the profession of the cobbler is disappearing" (Mieder, 2004, p. xi). However, certain recent sayings may become proverbs such as "Theodore Roosevelt's 'speak lofty and carry a big stick' spoken on September 2, 1901, at the Minnesota State Fair" (Mieder, 2004, p. xiii). This idea is echoed by Davis (2000, p.14):

> Sayings become proverbial when they have passed indiscriminately through many mouths. New 'wisdom sayings' arise from time to time, sometimes created or fixed in everyday lore by famous public figures. A modern example is John Kennedy's 'Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country'. Such a saying survives not as a conscious quotation, but because it enters the language and is repeated over and over. We gradually forget who said it, just because it has come to represent the best intentions and aspirations of a whole people.

Proverbs may be used not only in ordinary conversation but in other areas such as political debate. According to Shirley L. Arora (cited in Mieder, 2008, p.23), certain imported proverbs play a pivotal role in specific contexts such as politics. Arora probed the successive use of an old proverb in new environments:

> Shirley L. Arora (1989) scrutinized the intriguing role that the Greek proverb 'The fish rots from the head first' with its major variant 'The fish begins to stink at the head' played during the American presidential campaign in the summer of 1988 in the mass media" .

2.7.2 Modified/Adapted proverbs and Anti-Proverbs

Norrick points out that Shakespeare employs proverbs in his literary works. Being a holder of erudition and general conviction, he seizes the chance to apply them to his drama. But surprisingly the proverbs' identities do not change. According to Norrick (1985, p. 22), "proverbs retain their fundamentally evaluative character even in allusions and otherwise alienated forms." Norrick (1985, p.24) goes on and gives an example of changing the form of the proverb in order to serve the user's purpose. A

person who has been in a position of   political   prestige in Germany uttered the following proverb: "We may be on the verge of having our cake and eating it too". It appears to be the turned shape of the original proverb which is "You cannot have your cake and eat it" (Norrick, 1985, p. 24). The source proverb has that sense of denial while the transposed one has the form of fantasy status. But although it is transformed, the position of the proverb is preserved.

Honeck argues that the modifications that are practised on the proverbs have their justifications; "The human mind seems naturally inclined to seek change" (Honeck, 1997, p. 182). Mieder encourages scholars to write down the new, invented forms of the traditional proverbs. He says: "We must register new proverbs, or we will as scholars fall into the trap ourselves of thinking that the age of proverb is coming to an end" (Mieder, 2008, p. 113). So, he mentions a number of anti- proverbs juxtaposed by their antitheses:

A condom a day keeps the doctor away (coined in 1987).
An apple a day keeps the doctor away (Mieder, 2008, p.113).

Necessity is the mother of convention (1985).
Necessity is the mother of invention (Mieder, 2008, p.114).

He who laughs last, lasts.
He who laughs last, laughs best (Mieder, 2008, p.114).

Chaste makes waste (1971).
Haste makes waste (Mieder, 2008, p. 114).

Mieder believes that proverbs have that flexibility of appearing and hiding: "There is clearly a steady coming and going of proverbs" (Mieder, 2008, p. 121-2):

Variety is the spice of love (ca. 1960).
Variety is the spice of life (Mieder, 2008, p. 115)

The lack of money is the root of all evil (19th century).
The love of money is the root of all evil (Mieder, 2008, p. 114).

Mieder used the term "anti-proverbs" to refer to "proverb parodies" (Mieder, 2008, p. 116). Mieder and Litovkina (2002, p.128) present the following proverb: "Life is not a bed of roses", with its various parodies. To illustrate, I will mention only the following three new forms: "Life is like a bed of roses – full of pricks". (Kilroy 1985: 70),

"Marraiage is a bed of roses – Look out for the thorns". (Kilory 1985: 420), and "Life is a bed of ruses" (Safian 1967: 47). Commenting on this idea, Mckenzie says: "They [proverbs] are also being used in an innovative way, that is, they are changed and twisted until they fit the demands of our contemporary age" (Mckenzie, 1996, p. 14).

2.8 Cultural features of proverbs

2.8.1 Bond with nature and domestic life

Proverbs often have an intense bond with elements of nature and domestic life, etc.; according to Hulme, proverbs are saturated with rustic elements: rustic humour, rustic customs, rustic remedies (Hwang, Lamb and Sigel, 1996, p. 78). Sohn mentions the deep connection between Korean culture and Korean proverbs: "Commonly used vocabulary items in proverbs include dog, dung, water, cow, house, person, rice, language, foot, and rice cake, reflecting both vulgarity and commonness.Of these ten words, the most frequently used words are *dog* and *dung*" (Sohn, 2006, p. 75).

2.8.2 Traditionality of content

Palacios (cited in Hwang, Lamb and Sigel, 1996, p.78) explicates the traditional dimension of proverbs. For him, proverbs are traditional when they reflect the habits, mores and conventions of a certain community:

> In their content, proverbs are traditional because they tend to ensure conformity with the community's cultural norms that come from remote times and that have been able to remain stable throughout generations and generations.

2.8.3 Features of proverbs in different cultures

Finnegan argues that the name of an African individual may be a part of a proverb: "Thus among the Ovimbudu a woman may be called '*Sukuapanga'* ('God willed') from the proverb 'God willed; Death unwilled' (*Suku wa panga; kulunga wa pangulula)"* (Mieder and Dundes, 1994, p. 22). Vritually the same idea is reiterated by another African tribe: "A similar tendency is noted among the Ganda who often prefer to leave a

proverb to be completed by the hearer: names are sometimes the first word of a proverb, and even the title of a book appear as just 'A tanayila' (from the proverb '*Atanayita atenda nyina okufumba'*-'The untravelled man praises his mother's cooking'" (Mieder and Dundes, 1994, p. 22).

Trench mentions the characteristics of Spanish proverbs: "So rich in humour, so double-shotted with homely sense" (Trench, 1854, p.52). As noted earlier, concerning Italian proverbs, Trench says: "I think every tenth proverb in an Italian collection is some cynical or some selfish maxim" (Trench, 1854, p.54). In Vietnam, in dialogue exchange, people keep employing proverbs; but in a harmless mode particularly upon dealing with the person's worries: "Proverbs are often effective in therapeutic communication" (Nguyen, Foulks and Carlin, 1991, p. 312). Kuntsmann (1939/1981) (cited in Hwang, Lamb and Sigel, 1996, p. 76), shows how the proverb 'It is a fool bird that fouls its own nest', originated in the Egypto-Semitic Orient. In the Middle Ages, members of the church gave it its metric form and enhanced its moralizing character" (Hwang, Lamb and Sigel, 1996, p. 76). As an example of the ability of the proverbs to live behind their geographical demarcations: "A study by Dorn demonstrated the current preservation of medieval Spanish proverbs in a community of Turkish Jews in Istanbul" (Hwang, Lamb and Sigel, 1996, p. 77).

2.8.4 Potentially Localized Nature of Proverbs

There are a lot of proverbs that have not acquired a comprehensive national identity, but remained entrapped within the confines of the village or the region like اتنين، حبن وغمض عينيك: سيارة الداتسون، و كمال بيك *tnīn ḥubbun w- ġammiḍ ᶜinīk: sayyarit al-Datsaun w- Kamāl Bīk* (two, love and close your eyes: the Datsun car and Kamal Bik). This can be explained as follows:

> قالها أحد الفكاهيين عندما ربح كمال جنبلاط المعركة الإنتخابية و فازت في العام نفسه سيارة الداتسون بجائزة أفضل سيارة في العالم، و كان هذا الشخص قد صوت لكمال بيك، و اشترى سيارة داتسون، فجرت عبارته مثلاً (نخلة و عمّار، 1988، ص22).
> *Qālahā 'aḥad alifukāhiyyīn ᶜindamā rabiḥ Kamāl Jumblāṭ al-maᶜrakata al-'intixābyyata wa fāzat fī al-ᶜāmi nafsihi sayyārata al-Dātsaun bi-jā'izati 'afḍali sayyāratin fī al-ᶜālami, wa kāna haḏa al-šaxsu qad ṣawwata li Kamāl Bīk, wa ištarā sayyārata Dātsaun, fa-jarat ᶜibāratuhu maṯalan.*

> A humorist said this when in the same year Kamal Jumblatt won the electoral contest and the Datsun car won the prize as the best car in the world. This person

voted for Kamal Jumblatt and bought a Datsun car. So, his expression became a proverb.

According to Davis (2000, p. 13), culture may be reflected in proverbs. Accordingly the native people of Hawai try to protect their cultural identiy by preserving the proverbs of their community against American influence. Davis goes on to give an example about the necessity of understanding the native Hawaiian culture in order to be able to decode their proverbs: "'when the *bala* is in bloom, the *wana* is fat'. This saying is meaningless to someone outside the culture. But to 'insiders'— specifically, those who can identify the blooming bala plant and know where the sea animal *wana* can be found— it conveys crucial information about the right season to go diving for seafood!" (Davis, 2000, p. 13).

2.9 Social Functions of Proverbs

2.9.1 Functions of proverbs in everyday life

In *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco,* Edward Westermarck (1931, with the assistance of Shereef 'Abad-al-Salam al-Baqqali) says that "The use of an appropriate proverb may serve to cool the rage, stop the quarrel, and make those who were cursing each other a moment before rejoice and shake hands with each other". Moreover, Westermarck says that it is not necessary for proverbs to have figurative language, "though some feature of speech may generally be found in the most popular proverbs that contain no such ornament at all" (Westermarck, 1931, p. 2). For him, "Proverbs have become proverbs only by being used in definite concrete situations" (Westermarck and al-Baqqali, 1931, p.2).

Westermarck says that "One of the chief aims of proverbs is to influence people's conduct" (Westermarck, 1931, p. 10). For Westermarck, the essential characteristic that contributes to the "popularity to a proverb" (Westermarck, 1931, p. 32) is "shortness" (Westermarck, 1931, p. 32). Westermarck talks about the spread of proverbs from one culture to another due to "the uniformity of human nature, which makes men in similar situations think and feel alike" (Westermarck, 1931, p. 46). Westermarck says that "It is a traditional view that the proverbs of a people are a safe guide to its character and temperament, opinions and feelings, manners and customs" (Westermarck, 1931, p. 48). He confirms his idea through introducing Bacon's similar view "the genius, wit, and

spirit of a nation are discovered by their proverbs" (Westermarck, 1931, p. 48). Jayakar (1987, p.9) says that proverbs "are mostly couched in the familiar words and thoughts of ordinary daily life".

In *Preaching Proverbs: Wisdom For the Pulpit,* Mckenzie states that "The proverb's usefulness in new situations is referred to as its "openness to experience or its hermeneutical openness" (Mckenzie, 1996, p. 5). Moreover, she says that "The proverb's unique contribution is this: that while it has arisen out of an originative situation, it transcends that situation to serve as an ethical spotlight on certain circumstances in contemporary life" (Mckenzie, 1996, p. xvii).

Ruth Finnegan confirms that African proverbs are characterized by their repeated use: "While among the Bambara, proverbs are honoured to such an extent that they tend to use a proverb every two or three phrases even in everyday conversation" (Mieder and Dundes, 1994, p. 33). She reiterates the same idea of the excessive use of proverbs: "Unlike many other prose forms, proverbs are not normally used specifically for entertainment but are more involved in everyday situations" (Mieder and Dundes, 1994, p. 34). However, Finnegan believes that entertainment and the use of proverbs may be connected: "Lestrade writes of the South African Bantu that proverbs are sometimes used in a regular game similar to that of riddle asking" (Mieder and Dundes, 1994, p. 34).

The commonality of the majority of known proverbs has led many critics to disapprove of them, pretending that proverbs are not used by the illuminati: "Chesterfield said, 'No man of fashion ever uses a proverb;' and Shakespeare with a happy touch of nature makes the patrician Coriolanus sneer at the plebeians" (Clarke, 2004, p. 44). In "Tension in Proverbs: More Light on International Understanding", Raymond says: "The tension-reduction role of many proverbs may be understood in terms of their function as social safety valves for marked social restraints" (Raymond, 1956, p. 154).

Hwang, Lamb and Sigel mention the centrality of proverbs in people's daily life: "It can also be said of proverbs that they carry out a normative and cohesive social function, facilitating the homogeneity of points of view and consequently, diminishing the occurrence of social conflict" (Hwang, Lamb and Sigel, 1996, p. 78).

Commenting on Chinua Achebe's prolific use of proverbs in his novel Arrow of God, Adeleke Adeeko confirms that proverbs are a good device for preachiong and entertaining at the same time. Adeeko (1998, p. 51) analyses the essence of Achebe's proverbial rhetorics: "The proverb is deemed to be such a good friend of the teacher-novelist because it is an oral and rural manner of speaking, is highly pragmatic, and is unavoidably didactic." Adeeko (1998, p. 51) supports his view by citing Eira Patnaik, who says: "The proverb, Eira Patnaik says, penetrates to the heart of the situation and character, lending, at the same time, to succinct thought a freshness of expression and ingeniousness of idea" (Adeeko, 1998, p. 51).

Elle F. Davis confirms the necessity of the communal spirit in the evolving of the proverb: "For, as we have learned from cultural anthropologists, the use of proverbs is one important way that a traditional people identifies itself as a community" (Davis 2000: 13). However, Penfield and Duru exemplify how proverbs are used by certain classes of people: "Proverbs are most typically used to age group peers or between others that view themselves as somewhat equal in status" (Penfield and Duru, 1988, p. 125). In On Russian proverbs, as illustrating Russian manners and customs. Long says, "To know something, however, about the Russian people, you must not go merely to the pages of the historian, you must seek them in their proverbs, which express the salt, sense, and wit of the multitude" (Long, 1876, p. 6).

In "Relations between Muslims, Jews and Christians as Reflected in Arabic Proverbs", Khayyat presents how diversity in religions and their convictions towards each other may be reflected in speech acts. Khayyat gives the following proverb as an example of view of other religious groups, mainly Arab Muslims about Jews:

> "Yahūdī ū-ḍarabūh b-ilbit laban qāl w-dīnī mištaḥīha", 'They threw a pailful of yoghurt over the Jew, and he said, 'By my religion, I like it' – said of a person who is insulted but does not realise it or of one who turns a loss into a profit (Khayyat, 1985, p. 192).

Khayyat goes on to give another example that presents the Arab Christian viewpoint of Arab Muslims:

> *Mitl mu'aḏḏin ḥumṣ binabbih in-nās ʿal-ṣalāt ū-birūḥ la-šuġhlūh* 'Like the muezzin of Homs, who calls the people to prayer, but himself goes of on his private

business'—the people of Homs are mostly Muslims, and this proverb is of Christian origin (Khayyat, 1985, p. 198).

Khayyat mentions another example of the intermingling between proverbs, religion and everyday life among people with different faiths:

> *Il-nōm aḥsan min al-ṣalāt wi-l-ṣōm*, 'Sleeping is better than fasting and praying'. Apparently composed by Lebanese Christians to ridicule the Muslim call to prayer early in the day. An imitation of the Muslim declaration made twice in the ʿaḏān of early morning, after the words 'Come to salvation,' *Al-ṣalātu xayrun mina l-nawmi*, 'Prayer is better than sleeping' (Khayyat, 1985, p. 199).

2.9.2 Functions of proverbs in education

Davis mentions how proverbs memorized at an early age may become engrained in the whole life of the learner: "Even as late as the nineteenth century, the sophisticated essayist and art critic John Ruskin would say that the four chapters of proverbs his mother had him memorize as a small child were 'the one essential part of all my education'' (Davis, 2000, p. 11). She also suggests that "They can serve as a starting point for Christian teaching, not only with the young but also with the disaffected. Teaching people to chew these sayings and thus internalize them is an invitation into a distinctive way of looking at the world, an invitation into the community of faith" (Davis, 2000, p.12-3).

Davis shows the essentiality of learning proverbs in certain countries: "West Indians hold proverb-telling sessions at wakes" (Davis, 2000, p. 13). Penfield and Duru claim that: "In child rearing, proverbs are usually used correctively as indirect comments on behavior with the intent to correct or alter the child's behavior" (Penfield and Duru, 1988, p. 125).

For the Akan and the Yoruba, the blessed descendant is the one who is skilful in "Proverbial language" (Yankah, 1989, p. 334) .

> وللأمثال، من ناحية ثانية، وظيفة تربويّة، إذ، بما تتضمّنه من حكم هي خلاصة التّجربة الإنسانيّة،تساهم في تهذيب الأجيال، و تقويم الأخلاق، وإرشاد النّاس إلى الطّريق المستقيم. وربّ مثل يفعل في النّفس ما تعجز عنه مئة محاضرة في الأخلاق والمثل العليا (يعقوب، ص16).
>
> *Wa l-l'āmṯāli, min nāḥyyah ṯānyyah, waḏīfah tarbawyyah,'iḏ, bimā tataḍammanahu min ḥikam hī xulāṣatu al-tajribati al-ʿinsānyyati, tusāhimu fi tahḏībi al-ʿajyāli, wa taqwīmi al-ʿāxlāqi, wa ʿiršādi al-nnāsi ʿilā al-ṭarīqi*

*al-mustaqīmi. Wa rubba maṯal yafᶜalu fi al-nafsi mā taᶜjazu ᶜanhu mi'ati
muḥāḍarah fi al-'āxlāqi wa al-muṯuli al-ᶜulyā.*

And proverbs, from another side, have an educational task since with what they
include of wisdom which is the outcome of human experience, they contribute to
the discipline of the generations and the straightening out of morals, and the
instruction of people in the right way. It is possible that a proverb may have more
effect on the self than one hundred lectures in morals and high principles are able
to do.

2.9.3 Functions of proverbs in political speeches

Mieder says that Barack Obama has been influenced by the religious language of the
Bible, and this becomes apparent in his discourse and books, "repeatedly basing his
arguments on the Bible proverb 'A house divided against itself cannot stand'" (Mieder,
2009, p. 14). He says: "Most of Obama's use of folk speech comes in the form of
proverbial phrases without any claim to wisdom or truth. He uses these metaphorical
phrases to add a certain expressiveness, emotion, colour, imagery, and colloquialism to
his writings and speeches" (Mieder, 2009, p. 3).

In *The Politics of Proverbs,* in the first chapter which is entitled: "As If I Were the
Master of the Situation": Proverbial Manipulation in Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf",*
Mieder confirms the idea of the authority and hegemony practised through using
proverbs by politicians: "Hitler's use of proverbs serves the important role of
convincing the readers of *Mein Kampf* and above all the listeners to his speeches of the
absolute and final wisdom of National Socialism. Their use for the purpose of
propaganda is blatantly clear" (Mieder, 1997, p. 32). He also says: "There is no way to
deny the effectiveness of *Mein Kampf.* It found its readers one way or the other, just as
Hitler lured people in droves to listen to his speeches. The book together with his oral
rhetoric helped Hitler to gain ultimate power, and his manipulative and shrewd (mis)use
of folk speech with its proverbs and proverbial expressions played a considerable role in
this process" (Mieder, 1997, pp.14-5).

In the second chapter: "Make Hell While the Sun Shines: Proverbial Rhetoric in
Winston Churchill's The Second World War", Mieder says: "George B. Bryan and I
have shown that Churchill employed 3,300 proverbial utterances in his entire published
corpus of 36,917 pages" (Mieder, 1997, p. 43). Furthermore, he shows that Churchill

has been fully aware of the overwhelming power of the style of verbal discourse which made him employ certain proverbs "To keep Stalin from siding with Hitler" (Mieder, 1997, p. 64).

"During tense United Nations debates, the former Soviet Union delegate, Andre Vishinsky, supported many arguments with proverbs" (Raymond, 1956, p. 154).

2.9.4 Functions of proverbs in literature

Honeck (1997, p. 27) says that "Perhaps the fundamental reason why proverbs appear in literary sources is that they pack an emotional and aesthetic punch". Wendy Pfeffer (1997, p. 34) says that certain poets before 1150 used proverbs which were "incorporated into lyric poetry even at the earliest stages of Occitan literary history". Pfeffer (1997, p. 34) adds: "The first troubadour, Guilhem de Peiteus, used proverbs with a mastery." She goes on: "What we see in Guilhem's use of proverbial material is that he plays with it and that he is the master of its manipulation" (Pfeffer, 1997, p. 36). Pfeffer (1997, p. 37) says that another medieval poet, Marcabru, employs proverbs into his poems: "As the poem develops, we can appreciate Marcabru's use of proverbial materials to underscore the nature of the protagonists and the development of their conversation."

Norrick notes that Shakespeare employs proverbs in his literary works. Although, most often, Shakespeare does not use the full form of the proverb, the reader can still identify the proverb's original form. Norrick (1985, p. 22) attests that "proverbs retain their fundamentally evaluative character even in allusions and otherwise alienated forms." Trench (1854, p. 3), points out to the fact that using a language fraught with proverbs may either signal out the social status of the one who is speaking in them or bridge the gap of linguistic communication between them. He goes on to give an example how in *Coriolanus*, Shakespeare makes the aristocratic man, Coriolanus, scold the low-born people by using proverbs, which are supposed to be the language of the unennobled people:

Hang'm!

They said they were an hungry, sighted forth proverbs;-

That, hunger broke stone walls; that, dogs must eat;

That, meat was made for mouths; that, the gods sent not

Corn for the rich men only;--with these shreds

They vented their complaining.

Adeleke speaks about the prolific use of proverbs by the novelist Chinua Achebe: "Numerous works have shown that Achebe uses proverbs to add distinctively local shade to his settings, to depict the speech patterns and conventions of Igbo characters" (Adeeko, 1998, p. 51); however, "Studies in the sociology of language use in Achebe's fiction reveal that women and children do not quote proverbs in Achebe's Igboland and that 'educated' people often misuse proverbs" (Adeeko, 1998, p. 51). So, he confirms that only a special category in society uses proverbs: illiterate men. Wolfgang Mieder nearly speaks about the same idea when mentioning how Chesterfield used to advise his son against employing proverbs in his speech: "Proverbial expressions and trite sayings are the flowers of the rhetoric of a vulgar man" (Mieder, 2000, p. 25).

In Spanish literature, *Don Quixote* is loaded with proverbs: "Sancho can cite proverbs both as a form of verbal foolery and in order to substantiate his judicious reflections" (Close, 1973, p. 350).

Prahlad mentions the employment of proverbs in "blues lyrics" (Prahlad, 1996, p. 91) and how "the proverb's religious connotations" (Prahlad 1996: 91) are totally destroyed or replaced.

2.10 Key criteria for identifying Arabic proverbs

Having considered proverbs from numerous perspectives in this chapter, I here present a list of key criteria for identifying Arabic proverbs, which I have used as a guide in my selection of proverbs from the two novels being considered in this thesis.

1. The Arabic form has to have either a *mubtada'-xabar* structure, or a *fi^{c}l (+faa^{c}il) structure*; i.e. it has to be a sentence/clause (*jumla*) in traditional Arabic terms.
2. The form has to consist of more than one word.

3. The form is likely to be metaphorical (e.g. 'Money talks') but it may be a metonymic, or a synecdoche (e.g.'The early bird catches the worm'), or literal (e.g. 'Honesty is the best policy'; i.e. this definition of 'proverb' includes maxims and aphorisms as possible proverbs).

4. The form has to be traditional and popular (regardless of whether it was originally uttered by an identified speaker or not). It must thus reflect something of the norms and conventions of the people who use it. There is a conformity between the proverb and the people's beliefs. In this case, the proverb may not be restricted to a people's culture, but as long as it is used by people, then it fits their surrounding and convictions. For instance, when we say, الزّوج آخر من يعلم, although, originally, this is of a French origin, its use by the characters in the novel, Anājīl al-Xarāb, means that it suits their conviction. Popularity means that a proverb must be in circulation among people, regardless of whether it really conveys wisdom or not. For example, the proverb نفسه خضراء is used in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar,* and is mentioned by Anīs Frayḥah as well, although it is a comment on somebody being fond of romantic affairs with women.

5. The form has to have (potential) wisdom, although in many cases popularity will strongly support the use of the proverb, even if the element of wisdom is rather weak.

Some forms will be clearly proverbs according to these criteria, and others more marginally proverbs. In doubtful cases, I have used common sense in determining whether a form is a proverb or not.

2.11 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have considered the following: different definitions of proverbs by different scholars (section 2.2); different views about the historical origins and aspects of proverbs (section 2.3); the formal features of proverbs - phonic features, alliteration and assonance, rhyme, and poeticity (sections (2.4-2.4.1.3), as well as archaicness (section 2.4.2.1) and figurativeness (cf. 2.4.2.2); the structural-semantic features of proverbs with its sub-categories – equational structure, antithesis, valuation. cause and effect, and repetition (sections 2.5-2.5.5); the semantics of proverbs with its two sub-

divisions - proverbs as multi-word units and figuration in proverbs, this latter having five further sub-sub-sections - definition of metaphor, definition of synecdoche, definition of metonymy, definition of hyperbole, definition of personification, and definition of irony (sections 2.6-2.6.2.6), as well as the differentiation of proverbs from other tropes (section 2.6.3); non-standard types of proverbs with their two sub-divisions – imported proverbs and modified/adapted proverbs and anti-proverbs (sections 2.7-2.7.2); cultural features of proverbs including bond with nature and domestic life, traditionality of content, features of proverbs in different cultures, and potentially localized nature of proverbs (sections 2.8-2.8.4); the social functions of proverbs, including the functions of proverbs in everyday life, education, political speeches and literature (sections 2.9-2.9.4). Finally, I have provided a list of key criteria for identifying Arabic proverbs (Section 2.10).

Chapter 3: Proverbs in *Muftaraq al- Maṭar* and *Anajīl al-Xarāb*

3.1 Introduction

In the following sections, I provide biographical information about Yūsuf al-Maḥmūd of relevance to this thesis, followed by a summary of his novel *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, and then biographical information about Naufal ⁱAlī Nayouf of relevance to this thesis, followed by a summary of his novel *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. I then present the biography of both writers, together with the summaries of the two novels into English.

3.2 *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*

3.2.1 Background to the author and the novel

Yūsuf Aḥmad al-Maḥmūd was born in Kfir Šāġer (Dreikeiš-Ṭarṭous), in Syria in 1932 and died on December 18ᵗʰ, 2013. He was educated in Lattakia and Ḥoms, and graduated from Damascus University, getting a BA in Arabic Language. He worked as a teacher and a journalist. He was a member of the Novel and Short Story Society. His literary works include:

المفسدون في الأرض، قصص، دمشق *al-Mufsidūm fī al-ʿĀrḍ* ('The Corrupters of the Earth') short stories, Damascus, 1958.

سلامات أيّها السّعداء، قصص، دمشق *Salāmāt ʿĀyyuhā al-Suʿadāʾ*('Greetings, oh Happy Ones') short stories, Damascus, 1978.

مفترق المطر *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* ('The Dividing Place of the Rain'), novel, Damascus, 1983, Arab Writers Union.

حارة النّسوان *Ḥārit al-Niswān* ('The Women's Quarter') short stories, Damascus, 1988, Arab Writers Union.

Literary critical assessments of Yūsuf Aḥmad al-Mahmūd and his novel *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* include the following:

يقول الشّاعرحيان حسن: «بالنسبة لي شخصياً أول ما شدني إليه عمله في الصحافة وزاويته الدورية التي كنا ننتظر صدورها يومياً في صحيفة "الثورة" بعنوان:"إلى من يهمّه الأمر" على مدار ثلاثة عقود دون توقّف، فقد كانت بحق زاوية تستحق المتابعة لأسلوبها السّاخر و المتميّز (علي، 2014).

The poet Ḥayyān Ḥasan says: For me personally, what initially attracted me to him was his work in journalism, including his regular column in al-Ṯawrah Newspaper

'To Whom It May Concern', which we used to await daily over three decades. This was a column worth following and reading for its distinctive, ironic style.

الناقدة السوريّة ماجدة حمّود تعبّر عن وجهة نظرها في رواية "مفترق المطر: " وترى د. حمود أن «مفترق المطر» تقدّم لنا عبق الريف الساحلي بكل غناه و معاناته و تتيح فرصة معايشة عوالم ريفية مدهشة في خصوصيتها، لذلك تبدو الرواية أشبه بتأريخ للريف السوري في بدايات القرن العشرين" (الحسن، 2013).

The Syrian critic Mājidah Ḥammūd expresses her view about the novel, *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*: Ḥammūd believes that *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* presents to us the fragrance of the rural coast with all its richness and suffering, and it gives the opportunity to experience rural worlds, which are wonderful in their specificity. Accordingly the novel is virtually a history of the Syrian countryside in the beginnings of the twentieth century.

رواية مفترق المطر التي قال عنها الروائي السوداني الكبير الطيب صالح انها رواية عالمية بكل المقاييس والتي وصفها الصحفي أحمد علي بأنها ملحمة شعرية من الطراز الأرفع (سانا، 2012).

The novel *Muftaraq al-Maṭar,* about which the great Sudanese novelist, Tayeb Salih, said that it is a world-class novel according to all measures, and which the journalist Aḥmad ᶜAlī described as an epic of the most sublime kind.

On a reflective note, the researcher seconds the views on *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* stated above. In writing the novel, al-Maḥmūd has managed to capture the essence of the life in a typical Syrian countryside. The novel has reminded me of my childhood in one of Syria's villages as I could easily resonate with what was being narrated in its storyline. For instance, the incident where Xaḍrā al-ᶜAlī was chatting to or cursing the cow, Ḥammūrah, revived my memory, through recalling the words that the milkwoman used to say while milking her cow. Similarly, the situation where the villagers supplicate to the Saint's shrine seeking physical and psychological healing revived many childhood memories in my head. More importantly, the prolific use of proverbs by the novel's characters echoes the pattern of speech of the Syrian people. Overall, I believe that *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* authentically reflects the traditions, habits and beliefs of the Syrian coast villages, in general, and *Kfir Šāġir,* in particular.

3.2.2 Summary of the novel

The Syrian novelist Yūsuf al-Maḥmūd deals with many aspects in his novel, shedding light on them through a fictional narrative which covers an important period of time: the first half of the twentieth century. This period was a crucial period in the rural life of the Syrian coast, which shares a border with, and has close links to, Lebanon. In its narration and plot dealing with the network of social relations, the novel adopts a classical manner with a suspensive literary style. The writer consciously moves away from the modern style of literary writing, i.e. stream of consciousness, intermingling time, subtle poetic style, flashback, etc. Despite that, or perhaps due to it, the writer

succeeds splendidly in creating a live fictional world, live in its people, its creatures, the natural elements it contains, its traditions, its tragedies, and its small joys – particularly, through the language of its characters, and its richness in proverbs which are derived from the surrounding environment, and specifically its dialect, which forms an essential element of its aesthetics and its highly artistic realism. The combination of the afore-mentioned style and language create a substantial complex, making *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* one of the most prominent Arabic novels that deal with Arab rural life. We can compare it with other works such as *al-Arḍ* (The Land) by the Egyptian writer, ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān al-Šarqāwī, *ᶜUsfūr min al-šarq* (A Bird from the East) by the Egyptian writer Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm, *al-Raġīf* (The Loaf) by the Lebanese writer,Tawfīq ᶜAwwād, and *Rīḥ al-Janūb* (South Wind) by the Algerian writerᶜAbd al-Ḥamīd Bin Haddoqah, and a considerable part of *Al-Wabā'* (The Plague) by the Syrian writer Hānī al-Raḥib.

The novel tells the story and history of the oppression and ignorance which the peasants endured under the feudal system and its violation of people's dignity and sometimes their honour too. It is striking that the writer presents to us the story and history of that period from the point of view of a narrator or narrators participating in the events, as simultaneously victims and makers of those events, not as witnesses or relayers of the news of the time, place and people of those events. That period, the first half of the twentieth century, with its sweetness and bitterness, tragedies and achievements, deserves to be regarded as a particularly rich, decisive, substantial and foundational period. In brief, it was after the long Ottoman occupation, which lasted for a full four hundred years, a mere window or a crossing period to the new world, a world resulting in many disasters produced by the repercussions of the two world wars. In this general atmosphere, which was complex both globally and regionally, the writer focuses his lens on a tiny geographical spot, a village, specifically *Kfir Šāġir* and the neighbouring villages situated on the mountains opposite the Mediterranean Sea and the Syrian-Lebanese *Sahil ᶜAkkār* (Akkār plain). Here the narrators draw a wide panorama of peasant characters whose level of education varies between ignorance and a healthy spontaneous intelligence, between illiteracy and basic or intermediate education. The novel explicitly and convincingly makes plain that behind its enticing narration, with its extensive though concise detail, lie a superb talent, as well as real-life experience. The writer describes the life that he lived and whose bitterness and ambitions he suffered, with every cell of his body, in his childhood, youth and as a young man. This life

experience uncovers a deep love and knowledge of life, nature and the people there. Abū Maḥmūd, for instance, embodies the image of the educated person to whom people come and with whom they spend every evening so that he can show them his knowledge, and can tell them what he has heard and learnt in his life. His son Musallim is his heir in embodying this type of knowledge and education. The prototype of patriarchy with its authority and contempt for woman and narrow-mindedness is dominant, despite the relative knowledge that characterizes both the father and his son in their confined surroundings. This inferior perception of women is expressed in numerous situations, and is frequently uncovered by proverbs and actions. Abū Maḥmūd, for instance, does not favour Nādirah as a future bride for his son Musallim, although she is educated. The reason for this is that she does not know how to cook well. From his point of view and that of his needs, as well as the perspective of the surrounding society, this is an eminently good reason, however ridiculous it seems to us. It is supported by the popular tradition, which functions as a pretext for him and as a point of reference summed up by the following proverb: شطارة المرأة في مطبخها *šaṭāratu al-mar'ati fī maṭbaxihā* (the skill of the woman is in her kitchen). And when Xaḍrā al-ᶜAlī asks her husband to get rid of the mortgage on her father's land and buy the sold part, instead of letting strangers buy it, he answers her with the following proverb: رزق المرأة لا بركة ولا هناءة *rizqu al-mar'ati lā barakatan wa lā hanā'atan* (the woman's livelihood is neither happy nor blessed).

Musallim's view of women is embodied in his objection to his mother's giving birth to another baby girl. He says to his mother - rather than his wife! – in disapproval: ألا يكفينا خاتون لتجلبي لنا مصيبة أخرى! *'alā yakfīnā Xātūn li-tajlibī lanā muṣībah 'uxrā* (is not Xātūn enough, without bringing us another disaster!) This view of women as inferior is presented explicitly in his beating his sister Xātūn and punishing her when she hesitates to obey his orders. However, despite her ignorance, Xātūn's aunt, Ḥmāmah, shows her awareness in trying to convince her brother-in-law [Abū Maḥmūd] to cancel Xātūn's wedding to Nibrās, because she sees in this marriage a form of oppression of the young girl. But it is only a form of oppression because he does not own any land. This is an old, traditional argument, virtually intuitive or sacred, and expressed through the proverb: لا عرض لمن ليس له أرض *lā ᶜirḍ liman laīsa lahu 'arḍ* (there is no honour for anyone who does not own land). The obvious explanation of this proverb is that he who does not

have land is lowly, hungry and needy, i.e. he is easily reviled by others, especially given that the powerful were in control, i.e. the feudal system.

The novel also tackles some bright sides of the peasant's life, shown in Abū Maḥmūd's love for the land, hospitality, sincerity to his neighbour, and his dedication and commitment to his country. This is obvious in the character of Abū Maḥmūd who preferred to return to a life of poverty in his own country rather than being rich and staying in Argentina. He tells his wife, who blames him for coming back from abroad, instead of bringing his family to him, the following proverb: رغيف و بصلة هنا، ولا رز باللحم هناك *ragīf wa baṣalah hunā, wa lā rizz bi-l-laḥim hunāk* (a loaf and an onion here rather than rice with meat there).

The novel is characterized by its comic sense mixed with pain, which is a result of both poverty and ignorance. All this is expressed in a lively manner, touching the depths of the soul through numerous techniques, of which proverbs are not the only ones, though they are one of the essential devices on which the novel relies. We see this clearly at various moments which are difficult to describe here. One of these, however, is when Xaḍra al-ᶜAlī curses her cow, describing it as stubborn, because it does not give milk like other people's cows. She says to it: لا رحم الله مغرز إبرة بذاك الّذي ورثنا هذه السّلالة (31) *lā raḥima aḷḷāh miġazzat 'ibrah bi-ḏāka al-laḏī warraṯanā hāḏihi al-sulālah* (may God not show the slightest mercy on him who bequeathed us this offspring). There is a strong presence in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* of humour which plays on the naivety of the other, as in the story narrated by Abū Maḥmūd, who when he was in Argentina, worked as a pimp. He wanted to advertise a woman to earn some money. He said that she was unique: إنّها بعكس النّساء مشقوقة بالعرض (121) *'innahā biᶜaksi al-nisā'i mašqūqah bi-l-ᶜirḍ* (unlike other women she was split horizontally!)

The novel also relies on its historical background, covering historical events such as the revolt of Qasim Mulḥim [who fought agaist the Ottoman occupation and the French mandate] in Baᶜalbak [in Lebanon], where thirty horsemen were executed by the Turks. The employment of the element of myth increases the attraction of the novel for the reader. For example, the narrator says that what he is relating is a myth of the village of *Kfîr Šāġir*, pretending that the village was the centre of a kingdom whose king was *Šāġir*, and that when he became extremely angry, he gave up his royal attributes and

cursed the gods. ((كفر شاغر))! :قالت الرّعيّة *qālat al-raᶜiyyah kfir Šāġir* (The subjects said: "Šāġir cursed!", and the village was named after him through this act. It is thought that this explanation, or mythologisation, is only a fabrication for the sake of arousing interest, and exploiting the naivety of the listeners at that time. It is a mythologisation because the word *Kfir* was typically used in ancient languages for inhabited places in *Bilād al-Šām* (Historical Syria); for instance, *Kfir Txārīm, Kfir Qāsim, Kfir Baṭnā*, etc. It means 'village'.

It is worth mentioning that in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, where disrespect for women is prevalent, there are characters, though they are illiterate or have an intermediate education, who show a mature understanding of women's respect. One example is Zāhir, who taught his sister how to write and read without his father's knowing. Another example is Abū ᶜAyyūd, who refused to marry in order that his wife would not be exposed to any embarrassing situation at the hands of the feudal lords. Similarly, the character of Nādira had a deep influence in moving Musallim away from shoemaking, and guiding him towards writing articles. It was also she who urged him to memorize new poems. By doing so, she helped him to develop his life as a poet and prose-writer. Abū Aᶜayūd's courage also had a great influence on Musallim concerning his perception of marriage.

There are a lot of episodes that present sympathy with nature, especially animals, and with human beings. This is obvious in the scene where "the whole house was filled with silence. The cow, Ḥammora, had changed its behaviour towards her calf that day. It was not as pleased as usual when the calf entered the house, but was content to lay its face on its back, without feeling it. The image is a foreshadowing of the death of Abū Mizyad [Musallim's brother]. When my mother [Musallim's mother] delayed in releasing and milking it: حتّى حمّورة الّتي كانت تعجّ لابنتها منذ أن تدخل الدّار، و تلجّ به إذا ما تأخّرت أمّي بإطلاقها إليها و حلبها، اكتفت ذلك المساء،أن أسندت صفحة وجهها على ظهر عجلتها، لا تلحسها، أو تنعّر لها (259) *ḥattā Ḥammūra al-llatī kānat taᶜiju libnatihā mundu 'an tadxula al-dār, wa talijju bihi 'idā mā ta'axxarat 'ummī bi-'iṭlāqihā 'ilayhā wa ḥalbihā, 'iktafat dalika al-masā'i, 'an 'asnadat ṣafḥata wajhihā ᶜalā ḍahri ᶜijlatihā, lā talḥasahā, aw tunaᶜᶜira lahā* (On that evening even Ḥammora which used to roar at its calf's late return home, only leaned its face on its back, neither licking it nor yelping in joy for it).

3.3 *Anājīl al-Xarāb*

3.3.1 Background to the author and the novel

Naufal ᶜAlī Nayūf is a Syrian writer, who was born on the 10ᵗʰ of April, 1948 in Barmaya, Banyas, Syria. He obtained his MA in Russian Language and Literature in 1974 from Leningrad University. In 1984, he obtained his PhD, in literary theory from Moscow Government University. This was entitled *The Function of the Character in Literary Work, Applied to Naguib Mahfouz's Novels: From* New Cairo*, to* Mīramār. He worked from 1974 to 1979 in the Syrian Ministry of Education. From 1985-1988, he worked in Oran University, Algeria, from1988 to 1995, in the Libyan University, Tripoli, and from 1998 to 2003 in the Russian Friendship University. From1996 to 2003, Naufal ᶜAlī Nayūf was a TV and radio correspondent from Moscow, and in 2007, he worked for one year in the Syrian Ministry of Education.

Naufal ᶜAlī Nayouf is editing consultant for two monthly series, published by *Children's Publications*, the General Syrian Book Corporation: the monthly *Usāma* magazine (26 issues till now), and *Famous Characters*, a monthly series for adolescents (first issue published in February 2011). He is a member of the Arab Writers Union (Translation Society), Damascus. He publishes articles, poems and stories in different Arabic periodicals, and on websites such as alawān.org (formerly *al-ᶜaqlāniyīn a-lᶜarab*). The following translations from Russian into Arabic have been produced by Nayouf:

> *Dirāsāt* دراسات أدبيّة في الّنظريّة و الّتطبيق. مجموعة من الكتّاب. دمشق، وزارة الثّقافة، 1978. *'adabiyyah fī al-Naḏaryyah wa al-Taṭbīq. Majmūᶜah min alkuttāb, Dimašq, Wizārat al-ṯaqāfah, 1978* ('Literary Studies in Theory and Practice') by a group of writers, Damascus, Ministry of Education, 1978.

> *al-Waᶜī wa al-Fann* الوعي والفن - غيورغي غاتشف- ترجمة نوفل نيوف، عالم المعرفة، الكويت، 1990. *Ġyūrġī Ġātšīf, tarjamat Naufal Nayūf, ᶜĀlam al-Maᶜrifa, al-Kuwait, 1990* (G. Gachef. Consciousness and Art, Kuwait, *ᶜĀlam al-Maᶜrifa* series, 1990).

Qalb Kalb قلب كلب، ميخائيل بولغاكف، رواية، ترجمة نوفل نيوف، دمشق، وزارة الثَّقافة، 1985.
lilkātib, Mikhail Bulgakov, riwāyah, Dimašq, Wizārat al-ṯaqāfah, 1985 (M. Bolgakef. A Dog's Heart (novel), Damascus, Ministry of Education, 1985).

Naḏaryyat al-Rūmānsiyyah fī al- نظريّة الرّومانسيّة في الغرب، دمشق، دار التَّكوين، 2007.
Ġarb, Dimašq, Dār al-Takwīn, 2007 (Romantic Theory in the West, Damascus. Dār Attakwīn, 2007).

al- الرّايات البيضاء، نوادر دومبازة، ترجمة نوفل نيّوف و عادل اسماعيل، دمشق، وزارة الثَّقافة، 2007.
Rāyāt al-Baīḍā', Nawāder Dūmbāzah. Tarjamat Naufal Nayouf wa ᶜādil, Ismāᶜīl. Dimašq, Wizārat al-ṯaqāfah, 2007 (Nawader Dombaza. White Flags (with Dr. ᶜādil Ismāᶜīl), Damascus, Education Ministry, 2007).

سوريّة في رحلات روسيّة خلال القرن التَّاسع عشر، ترجمة نوفل نيّوف و عادل اسماعيل، دمشق، وزارة الثَّقافة، 2009. *Sūriyyah fī Riḥlāt Rūsiyyah xilāl al-Qarn al-Tāsiᶜ ᶜašar. Tarjamat Naufal Nayouf wa ᶜādil, Ismāᶜīl. Dimašq, Wizārat al-ṯaqāfah, 2009* (Syria in Russian Journeys During the 19th Century, in collaboration with Dr. ᶜādil, Ismāᶜīl, Damascus, Ministry of Education, 2009).

لغز عمره ثلاثة آلاف عام من منظور روسيا المعاصرة، ترجمة نوفل نيّوف و عادل اسماعيل، دمشق، وزارة الثَّقافة، 2010. *Luġz ᶜUmruhu ṯalāṯat Ālāf ᶜām, Tārīx al-Yahūd min Manḏū Rūsyā al-Muᶜāṣirah. Tarjamat Naufal Nayouf wa ᶜādil Ismāᶜīl, Dimašq, Wizārat al-ṯaqāfah, 2010* (A. Shafaryevech. *A Three Thousand Years Old Puzzle*. The History of the Jews from the Perspective of Modern Russia. In collaboration with Dr. ādil Ismāᶜīl, Damascus, Ministry of Education. 2010).

His literary works include:

Musawwadāt al-Qalb (*šiᶜr*), Dimašq, مسوّدات القلب، شعر، دمشق، دار الكتاب العربي، 1991.
Dār al-Kitāb al-ᶜArabī, 1991 (Blackening of the Heart). Poetry, Damascus, Dār al-Kitāb al-ᶜArabī.

Anājīl al-Xarāb (*riwāyah*), Dimašq, Wizārit al-ṯaqāfah, 1995. أناجيل الخراب. ، دمشق: (The Gospels of Destruction). Nove, Damascus, Ministry of Education. 1995. وزارة الثَّقافة، 1995.

Taqṭīr al-Rūḥ (*qiṣaṣ qaṣīrah*), تقطير الرّوح، قصص قصيرة، دمشق اتحاد الكتّاب، العرب، 2000.
Dimašq, Ituiḥād al-Kuttāb al-ᶜArab, 2000 (Distilling the Soul). Short stories, Damascus, Arab Writers Union.

ر#سيا من الدّاخل: دراسات سياسيّة، دمشق، دار الحصاد، 2005. *Rūsyā min al-Dāxil, Dirāsāt Siyāsiyyah, Dimašq, Dar al-Ḥaṣād, 2005* (Russia from the Inside: PoliticalStudies), Damascus, al-Hasad Publishing House.

آفاق الرّواية، حدود القصّة: دراسات نقديّة تطبيقيّة ، دمشق، وزارة الثّقافة، 2007. *'Āfāq al-Riwāyah, Ḥudūd al-Qiṣṣah: Dirāsah Naqdiyyah Taṭbīqyyah*, Dimašq, Wizārat al-ṯaqāfah, 2007. (The Horizons of the novel and the limits of the story: Practical Critical Studies), Damascus, Ministry of Education, 2007.

3.3.2 Summary of the novel

The novel deals with the destinies of a group of Syrian university students on the eve of the June 1967 war and after the defeat. The writer achieves his aim by weaving a network of intellectual and romantic relationships, through which the personalities of these young people are elucidated, representing the generation of that time in its social, ideological and psychological varieties. The narrative starts at the time of Xalīl al-Dūri's stay in hospital having suffered a stroke shortly after the defeat. There he recalls his childhood in the village and remembers his friend, Zakī Mannān, who continued to write poetry, while Xalīl, the narrator, had left this pursuit a long time ago. He says: "It is good that I broke the tambourine and got divorced from singing". The features of Xalīl's character start to develop from that moment. They seem contradictory, deep, torn and fragile all at once. He mocks his counterpart, Zakī Mannān, because neither a party nor a comrade accepted him as a companion. This makes Xalīl astonished at Fātina's admiration for Zakī. Xalīl, who is married to Fātina, remembers Rābiha whom he loves and continues to have an affair with despite her marriage to Rādī al-Akḥal. Xalīl is physically attracted to her: جهل الكبر قتّال *jahl al-kabar qattāl* (the vanity of old age is deadly).

These are only a few characters in the novel and they are skilfully handled. Ilyās, for instance, is the treasurer of the group and the funder of their party, while Marwān is responsible for membership nomination and deciding penalties. In this distribution of roles, there is a degree of humour and indication of the frivolousness and playfulness of the young that foreshadows the defeat. Subsequently, reality uncovers the bitterness of life, which in turn, unfolds its most cruel side.

Rābiha curses the bourgeois women with whom she suspects her husband has love affairs. Xalīl is convinced that there are crises of sex, belief and freedom. The sexual crisis is obvious through the interlocking emotional relationships between the majority of the novel's characters, as if the writer makes of love a real test for his heroes, through which he shows their solidity or fragility in real life. The crisis of belief is related, for Xalīl, to lack of will, which embodies in his opinion the source of the world's calamities. Xalīl pursues his apocalyptic vision which is fulfilled through the failure to liberate Palestine. The relationship of love between Xalīl and Fātina falls apart, as does that between Rāḍi and Rābiha. For Xalīl, Rābiha is the first and most delicious forbidden thing. She criticizes Rāḍi who justifies his opportunistic philosophy, especially when he says: هه. اللّسان قطعة لحم، كما تديرينه يندار *hah. al-lisān qitʿit laḥim, kamā tudīrīnahu yandār* (This tongue is a piece of flesh, as you turn it, it will be turned). Rādī also gives reason to his self-serving logic, saying: الدّيك يبحث في المزبلة، على الأرض، لينتفع، ليعيش أيضاً *addīk yabḫt fi al-mizbalat, ʿalā al-arḍ li-yantafiʿ li- yaʿīš a'yḍn* (the cock searches on the garbage heap, in order to get benefit, and to live as well).

Fawzī al-Sardād, the combatant, speaks with Zakī about the present generation which bears the stamp of carelessness, ingratitude and selfishness. It is in this way that the artificial colours, which used to cover and ornament women's faces, disappear. The comrades used to lift Rāḍī on ʿAbd al-Karīm's shoulders cheering: و ضدّ الرّجعيّه الإقليميّه *ḍidda al-rajʿīyyah wa- al-iqlīmyyahwa- al- ṭā'ifyyah* الطّائفيّه (against reactionism, regionalism and sectarianism). Then the make-up melted and the masks fell away, which even their wearers had not fully realized were only make-up and mask. Rādī begins saying to Xalīl that the defeats resulting from the dreams and imaginings of revolutionaries are the most dangerous ones, while genuine pride for Rādī is embodied in money and power. The shock shows the essence of the novel's characters. We could even say that these characters represent a generation that would inevitably be defeated: the generation of destruction. The story of all these characters seems like a potent and embodiment of destruction (defeat). Perhaps the twin possibilities of reading the title of this novel come precisely from here. Do we read the title *Anā Jīl al-Xarāb* (I am the generation of destruction), where *anā* is a subject pronoun? Or do we read it as *Anajīl al-Xarāb* (The gospels of destruction)?

Zakī feels the pain and bitterness of defeat and says to his friends who are with him: repeated defeats in the face of a small country, and we are more than 100 million […].

Rāḍī mocks Zakī's idealism and his contempt for money. But the idealistic political advocate, Fātina, defends him saying: كثيرون لا يصلحون خدماً لزكي منّان! لا تقارن أموالك بفقره .(170) *kaṯīrūn lā yaṣliḥūn xadaman li-Zakī Mannān! Lā tuqārin 'amouālaka bi-faqrihi* (a lot of people are not good enough to be the servants of Zakī Mannān! Do not compare your money to his poverty).

These fissures within the characters themselves, and between them, create a world that cannot easily be summarized in partial sayings and actions. This is because the context of the narrative and the moments at which things are said or done appear most clearly through the environment of the novel and the intermingling time structure, as well as through the monologues which carry a strong poetic charge that embodies highly important features of the world created by the novel, and the reactive world that creates the novel at the same time.

The world which is reshaped by reality and by its characters is the outcome of the trauma of defeat. It is not surprising that the novel ends, with Fātina, in a monologue, talking to herself - she calls out to her fragile self, hating her husband's weakness, but at the same time preserves the moments of her love for Zakī Mannān, who shares with her the joy of attachment to hope. But even that bright beam in her life has receded with the disappearance of Zakī.

The novel is fraught with despair, loss and defeat. But, at the end of the novel Fātina pictures a horizon which is open to diverse possibilities, of which the hope of consciousness and advance is but one.

3.4 Proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*

Out of 693 phraseological units, there are 521 proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, in addition to 36 curses, 132 other non-proverbial phrases, and 4 invocations. Curses are discussed in Chapter 5. In this chapter, I will consider proverbs only.

Muftaraq al-Maṭar	No. out of 693	Percentage
proverb	521	75.04%
curse	36	5.19%
other	132	19.05%
invocation	4	0.58%

3.5 Proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*

There are 127 proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, in addition to 4 curses, and 38 other phraseological units. Curses are discussed in Chapter 5. In this chapter, I will consider proverbs only.

Anājīl al-Xarāb	No. out of 169	Percentage
Proverb	127	75.15%
Curse	4	2.37%
Other	38	22.49%
Invocation	0	0%

3.6 Formal features of the proverbs

In Chapter 2, I considered various formal features of proverbs, including alliteration (Section 2.4.1.1), rhyme (Section 2.4.1.2) and archaicness (Section 2.4.2.1). In the following sections (3.6.1-3.6.3), I will consider these features as they are found in proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb*.

3.6.1 Alliteration and assonance

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, 364 proverbs (70% of the total number of proverbs in the novel) display a significant degree of alliteration and/or assonance. Examples of proverbs which display significant alliteration and/or assonance in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* are:

Example 1:

ملزّق بالبيت مثل القرادة! (المحمود، 1983، ص16).

TT

He sticks to the house like the tick!

Here there is alliteration as the sound "m" is repeated at the beginning of the two words ملزّق *mlazzaq* and مثل *miṯl*. There is also assonance in in the two words ملزّق *mlazzaq* and القرادة *alqirrādah* as the sound "q" is repeated in both words.

Example 2:

الجدي لا يظلّ جدياً، يصير له قرون و يناطح (المحمود، 1983، ص64).

TT

The goat does not remain a goat; it grows horns and fights.

Here there is alliteration in both words يظل *yaḏallu* and يصير *yaṣīru* because the sound "ya" is repeated at the beginning of these two words يظل *yaḏallu*, يصير *yaṣīru*. Another alliteration occurs in the two words لا *lā* and له *lahu*, where the sound "l" is repeated at the beginning of both words. The repetition of identical or similar consonants in the neighbouring words: الجدي *aljadī* and جدياً *jadyan* means that there is assonance.

Example 3:

الفراخ لا تدير أعشاشاً (المحمود، 1983، ص234).

TT

The chicks cannot manage nests.

Here there is assonance as the sound "ā" is repeated in the three words الفراخ *alfirāx*, لا *lā* and أعشاشا *aᶜšāšan*.

Example 4:

كانون، كن في بيتك، يا مجنون (المحمود، 1983، ص285).

TT

January, stay at home, you madman.

Here there is assonance as the syllable "nūn" is repeated in the two words كانون *kānūn* and *majnūn* مجنون. There is also alliteration in the two words كانون *kānūn* and كن *kin* since the sound "n" is repeated at the beginning of both words.

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, 92 proverbs (72.44% of the total number of proverbs in the novel) display a significant degree of alliteration and/or assonance. Examples of proverbs which display significant alliteration and/or assonance in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* are:

Example 1:

ST

قطع الأعناق و لا قطع الأرزاق (نيوف،1995، ص152).

TT

Cutting off someone's neck is better than preventing him earning his livelihood.

There is assonance as the sound "ā" is repeated in the three words الأعناق *alánāq,* لا *lā* and الأرزاق *alarzāq,* and the sequence 'āq' is repeated in the two words الأعناق *ala^cnāq* and الأرزاق *alarzāq*. There is repetition of a whole word twice قطع *qaṭ^c*. This is alliteration and assonance.

Example 2:

ST

لا حكاية بلا أساس، و لا إنسان بلا راس (نيوف،1995، ص159).

TT

There is no story without an origin, and no human being without a head.

There is assonance as the "ā" sound is repeated in لا *lā*, حكاية *ḥikāyah*, بلا *bilā*, أساس *asās*, لا *lā*, إنسان *'insān,* بلا *bilā*, راس *rās*, and as "ās" is repeated in the two words أساس *asās* and راس *rās*. There is another repetition of the syllable 'lā' in the words لا *lā*, بلا *bilā,* لا *lā* and *bilā* بلا. This is also assonance.

Example 3:

ST

الدّجاجة، اقطع منقارها-لا تغيّر كارها (نيوف،1995، ص181).

TT

Even if you cut off the hen's beak, it will never change its trade.

There is assonance as the sound "ā" is repeated in الدّجاجه *addajājah*, منقارها *minqārhā,* لا *lā* and كارها *kārhā*, and "ārhā" is repeated in both words: منقارها *minqārhā* and كارها *kārhā*.

Example 4:

ST

نقدّم لك العلّيق و تقدّم لنا اللّبطة (نيوف،1995، ص187).

TT

We offer you blackberry (fodder); you offer us a kick.

Here there is assonance as the sequence *qaddim* is repeated in both words نقدّم *nuqaddim* and تقدّم *tuqqadim*. There is alliteration in the words لك *laka* and لنا *lanā* with the repetition of the sound "l". There is alliteration in the two words: العلّيق *al^calīq* and اللّبطة *allabṭah* as both words begin with the sound "al". The repetition of "*qaddim*" in the two neighbouring words نقدّم *nuqaddim* and تقدّم *tuqqadim* is also an example of assonance.

3.6.2 Rhyme

Of the 521 proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, 70 (13.46% of the total number of proverbs in the novel) have rhyme. Examples are:

Example 1:
                                                                                                  ST
صبرة تشرين الّتي تعلّم بالمصارين (المحمود، 1983، ص57).
TT
October/November's frosty air which affects the guts.

Here there is correspondence of vowel and consonantal sounds in the two words تشرين *tišrīn* (October/November) and مصارين *maṣārīn* 'guts'.

Example 2:
                                                                                                  ST

الّذي لا يهوش أصله من الوحوش (المحمود، 1983، ص71).
TT
He who does not feel enthusiastic is a beast by origin.

Here there is rhyme between يهوش *yahūš* 'feel enthusiastic' and وحوش *wuḥūš* 'wild beasts' because there is correspondence of vowel and consonantal sounds in both words. This is represented in the repetition of the sequence "*ḥūš*" at the end of each of both words.

Example 3:
                                                                                                  ST
هنا حفرنا وهنا طمرنا (المحمود، 1983، ص364).
TT
Here we dug and covered over.

Here there is rhyme between حفرنا *ḥafarna* 'we dug' and طمرنا *ṭamarna* 'we covered over'. The two words rhyme, ending with the same sounds "*arna*".

Example 4:

ST

اذكري الدّيب و هيّري القضيب (المحمود، 1983، ص490).

TT

Mention the wolf and prepare the stick .

Here there in this proverbs as the two words الدّيب *addīb* and القضيب *alqaḍīb* end with the same consequence " īb".

Of the 127 proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, 5 (3.94% of the total number of proverbs in the novel) have rhyme. These are the following proverbs:

Example 1:

ST

الدّنيا بلا شراب خراب (نيوف، 1995، ص176).

TT

Life without drink is a wreck.

Here there is rhyme between شراب *šarāb* 'drink' and خراب *xarāb* 'wreck'as both words end with the same sequence "*rāb*".

Example 2:

ST

أنت تعمل من الحبّة قبّة (نيوف، 1995، ص85).

TT

But you make a dome-tomb out of a seed.

Here there is rhyme between حبّة *ḥabbah* 'seed' and قبّة *qubbah* 'dome-tomb'as there is a correspondence between the vowel and consonantal sounds *"bbah"* at the end of both words.

Example 3:

ST

لا نعرف أصله ولا فصله، يا ابنتي، ولا من أين رأس أبيه (نيوف، 1995، ص106).

TT

We do not know his root or origin, my daughter, or even from where is his father's head.

Here there is rhyme between أصله *aṣlu* (his root) and فصله *faṣlu* (his origin).

Example 4:

<div align="right">**ST**</div>

<div align="right">النسيان من النسوان (نيوف، 1995، ص31).</div>

TT

Forgetfulness is due to women.

Here there is rhyme between النسيان *al-nisyān* and النسوان *al-niswān.* This is because both words end with the same vowel and consonant sequence *"ān"*.

3.6.3 Archaicness

A number of proverbs go back to old origins, even though the proverbs themselves are still current. So, by archaichness I do not mean that the proverbs are obsolete. Rather, I mean that the proverb itself has ancient origins. To illustrate archaicness, I have chosen the following examples.

Muftaraq al-Maṭar

Example 1:

<div align="right">**ST**</div>

<div align="right">الأولاد أمانات عند الآباء، و صاحب الأمانة يستردها متى شاء (المحمود، 1983، ص11).</div>

TT

Children are kept in trust with their parents, and the Owner of that trust can take it back whenever He wants.

Although this proverb is used on the Syrian coast, it ultimately derives from a Pre-Islamic poem by Labīd Bin Rabīᶜa, written in the seventh century A.D.

<div align="right">و ما المال و الأهلون إلّا ودائع\ و لا بدّ يوماً ان تردّ الودائع (لبيد بن ربيعة) (البعلبكي، 2001، ص227).</div>

Money and family members are no more than stored treasures/ One day those treasures will necessarily be claimed back

Example 2:

<div align="right">**ST**</div>

<div align="right">مراقبتي لخاتون ذات شجون وشؤون (المحمود، 1983، ص164).</div>

TT

My watching of Xātūn is full of sorrows and concerns.

This proverb is derived from a proverb (٤٧ ص ،الضبي) إنّ الحديث لذو شجون *ʾinna al-ḥadīṯa la-ḏū šujūn* which was mentioned by al-Ḍubbī in the eighth century A.D.

Example 3:

ST

و لا تلقوا بأيديكم إلى التَّهلكة (المحمود، 1983، ص301).

TT

Do not throw yourselves down to death.

This proverb is derived from the Quran:

وَأَنفِقُواْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ وَلاَ تُلْقُواْ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ (البقرة، ص195).

Example 4:

ST

قال جحا و ما قصّر (المحمود، 1983، ص365).

TT

What Juḥā said is quite enough.

This proverb mentions a famous character from Arabic folklore, Juḥā, whose real name was Dujain ᵓbn Tābit al-Fizārī. He is said to have lived in the eighth century A.D. and was documented by Ibn an-Nadīm in the first millennium AD in his book *Nawādir Juḥa* (النجّار، 1978، ص16).

Example 5:

ST

من عهد الطّم و الرّم، إلى عهدنا (المحمود، 1983، ص499).

TT

Since the era of *aṭṭum wa rrumm* up till our time.

This proverb is derived from a proverb بالطّم والرم *bi-ṭṭummi wa-r-rumm*, which was mentioned by al-Zamaxšarī circa 1100 A.D. in his book *al-Mustaqṣā fī Amṯāl al-ᶜarab* (الزمخشري، 1962، ص 39).

Example 6:

ST

إيّاك أعني، و اسمعي يا جارة (المحمود، 1983، ص515).

TT

You are the one I mean, listen neighbour.

This proverb is a hemistich, from a poem by the pre-Islamic poet Mālik Bin Sahil al-Fezāry (شامي، 1995، ص11).

Example 7:

ST

المرأة شرّ كلّها وشرّ منها أنّه لا بدّ منها (المحمود، 1983، ص465).

TT

A woman as a whole is evil, but what is more evil is that one is in need of her.

This proverb is attributed to Imām ᶜAlī Bin Abī Ṭālib, the fourth Caliph, in the seventh century A.D.

Anājīl al-Xarāb

Example 1:

ST

المال و البنون زينة الحياة الدّنيا (نيوف، 1995، ص172).

TT

Money and sons are the beauty of life.

This proverb is a verse from Quran   (46 :الكهف), (208 ،2001،البعلبكي).

Example 2:

ST

ما نفع أن تربح العالم و تخسر نفسك (نيوف، 1995، ص125).

TT

What is the use of gaining the world and losing yourself!

This is taken from the Bible (Matthew 16: 26).

Example 3:

ST

الإناء ينضح بما فيه (نيوف، 1995، ص208).

TT

The pot overflows with what it contains.

This is derived from a famous old hemistich by the poet Ibn al-Ṣaifī

in the 12th century.   (العرب، 2015) كل إناء بما فيه ينضح (مثل عربي)

Example 4:

ST

أدعو عليك الله في غسق الدّجى يبليك ربّي مثلما أبلاني (نيوف، 1995، ص232).

TT

I beseech God to curse you in the twilight darkness asking my Lord to afflict you
as He has afflicted me .

This is derived from a famous Arabic poem written by al-Imam Saᶜīd Bin Aḥmad Bin
Saᶜīd at the end of the 18th century. "و لأدعين عليك في جنح الدّجى   فعساك تبلى مثلّما ابليتني" *Wa*
li'āḍᶜīanna ᶜalaīka fī junḥi al-Dujjā faᶜasāka tublā miṯlamā ablaītiny (جريدة يافع، 2000).

Example 5:

ST

عادت حليمة لعادتها القديمة (نيوف، 1995، ص224).

TT

Ḥalīmah returned to her old habit.

This proverb emerged in the seventh century AD. It is attributed to the wife of a
prominent Arabic figure who was known for his generosity and hospitality (سليمان,
2012).

Example 6:

ST

تعدّدت الأسباب و الموت واحد (نيوف، 1995، ص79).

TT

Causes are multiple but death is one.

This is a hemistich by the poet Ibn Nubātah from an old poem from the first millennium
AD (البعلبكي، ط3، 2001، ص227).

Example 7:

ST

أم هو حصرم رأيته في حلب؟(نيوف، 1995، ص172).

TT

Or is it sour grapes that you saw in Aleppo?

This is derived from a proverb mentioned by al-Zamaxšarī in the twelfth century AD:

"أعجز عن الشّيء من الثّعلب عن العنقود". يزعمون أنّ الثّعلب رأى العنقود فرامه فلم ينله فقال:
هذا حامض. قصة المثل مذكورة في كتاب المستقصى في أمثال العرب (الزّمخشري، ص 235،
1962).

'ā^cjaz ^can aššay'I mina atta^clabi ^can al[ْ]unqūd". Yaz^cumūn 'ānna atta^calba
ra'ā al^cunqūd fa-rāmhu fa-lam yanalahu, f-aqāla:h[ُ]ā ḥāmiḍ.

People claim that a fox saw some grapes on a bush. He tried to reach them
but could not. So he said: This is sour. "More helpless at getting something
than a fox getting grapes." The story behind this proverb is written in *al-*
Mustaqsā fi Amṯāl al-ᵋArab.

Example 8:

ST
أطلق لنفسي حبل الجرأة على غاربه (نيوف، 1995، ص247).

TT
I myself set free the rope of courage.

This proverb is derived from the proverb حبلك على غاربك *ḥabluji ᶜalā ġāribiki*, which was
mentioned by al-Zamaxšarī in the twelfth century A D. (الزّمخشري، 1962، ج2، ص56).

3.7 Structural-semantic features of the proverbs

In Chapter 2, I considered various structural-semantic features which are claimed in the
literature to be typical of proverbs: equational structure (Section 2.5.1), antithesis
(Section 2.5.2), valuation (Section 2.5.3), cause and effect (Section 2.5.4), and
repetition (Section 2.5.5). In the following sections (3.7.1-3.7.5), I will consider these
features as they are found in proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb*.

3.7.1 Equational structure

Equational structures in Arabic can be defined as structures involving a predicand
(*mubtada'*) and a predicate (*xabar*) in which the predicate/*xabar* is not a verb or a verb
phrase (i.e. in which the predicate/*xabar* is a noun/noun-phrase, adjective/adjectival
phrase, or an adverb/adverbial phrase).

Muftaraq al-Maṭar

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar,* out of 521 proverbs only 47 (9.02%) proverbs have an equational structure.

Example 1:

ST

البنت بليّة (المحمود، 1983، ص15).

TT
The girl is a disaster.

Discussion:

Umm Maḥmūd gave birth to a baby girl, so Musallim complained about her having another daughter, and told him not to be sad because the girl was a present, but he considerd her a misfortune. In this proverb, a definite *mubtada'* noun البنت *al-bint* (the girl) is followed by an indefinite *xabar* noun *balyyah* بليّة (a disaster). In terms of Abrahams' classification (cf. section 2.5.1), the structure of this proverb is positive equivalence.

Example 2:

ST

النّوم سلطان (المحمود، 1983، ص21)

TT
Sleep is a sultan.

Discussion:

In this proverb, a definite *mubtada'* النّوم *al-nawm* (sleep) is followed by an indefinite *xabar* adjective سلطان *sulṭān* (sultan). The structure of the proverb is equational. In terms of Abrahams' classification (cf. section 2.5.1), this proverb's structure is positive equivalence .

Example 3:

ST

النصيب عجيب (المحمود، 1983، ص452).

TT
Marriage is strange.

Discussion:

In this proverb, a definite *mubtada'* noun النصيب *al-naṣīb* (marriage) is followed by an indefinite *xabar* adjective عجيب *ᶜajīb* (strange). The structure of this proverb is equational. In terms of Abrahams' classification (cf. section 2.5.1) this proverb is of the positive equivalence type.

Example 4:

ST

الكلام مع الغشيم ضائع! (المحمود، 1983، ص176)

TT

Conversing with the foolish is a waste of time.

Discussion:

In this proverb, a definite *mubtada'* noun phrase الكلام مع الغشيم *al-kalā maᶜ al-ġašīm* (conversing with the foolish) is followed by an indefinite *xabar* adjective ضائع *ḍā'iᶜ* (waste of time). However, we notice that there is a waste of time when talking to a foolish. In terms of Abrahams' classification (cf. section 2.5.1), this proverb is of the positive causational type.

Example 5:

ST

هي مثل صحو الشّتاء (المحمود، 1983، ص140).

TT

She is like the clear weather of winter.

Discussion:

Musallim says this proverb about his mother. It means that the person cannot completely rely on her admiration. "Like the weather of winter" means that she has a volatile temper. She cannot stay in one state. Winter's clear weather is deceptive. It disappears soon to be replaced by wind and rain. One should always be cautious of it and not rely on it. In this proverb, a definite *mubtada'* noun (pronoun) هي *hīa* (it) is followed by a definite *xabar* noun phrase مثل صحو الشّتاء *miṯlu ṣaḥwi al-šitā'i* (like the clear weather of winter). In terms of Abrahams' classification (cf. section 2.5.1), this proverb is of the positive causational type.

Example 6:

ST

الشّغل جوهرة ابن آدم (المحمود، 1983، ص22).

TT

Work is the diamond of the human being.

Discussion:

In this proverb, a definite *mubtada'* noun الشّغل *al-šuġl* (work) is followed by a *xabar* جوهرة *jawharatu* (diamond). In terms of Abrahams' classification (cf. section 2.5.1), this proverb is of the positive equational type.

Anājīl al-Xarāb

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* there are 14 (11.02%) proverbs whose structures are equational out of the total number of proverbs in the novel.

Example 1:

ST

الزّوج آخر من يعلم (نيوف، 1995، ص76).

TT

The husband is the last to know.

Discussion:

Xalīl said to Fātina: There is *arak* (is an alcoholic drink, known in many Arab countries, especially Lebanon and Syria). Rābiḥa replied: Leave it to your respectful wife. Then he said to her: Swallow your tongue, you daughter of Eve! Fātina does not know about this house. Then Rābiḥa replied: Who? Lady Fātina! Is she a saint, like the males! Then she said this proverb to Xalīl. This is originally a French proverb. It means that the woman may betray her husband and do all kinds of ignominious things ... and she still remains considerate of her husband, saying sweet words to him. So, he continues to believe that she is a saint. Neighbours, relatives, strangers and even enemies all know that she is betraying her husband. But he does not discover that till the end. This is the direct meaning. But this proverb may be said with variants on different occasions – to someone who betrays his friend, to a ruler who is betrayed by his inner circle, to a father who is betrayed by his children, etc. In this proverb, a definite *mubtada'* noun *al-zouju* الزّوج (the husband) is followed by a *xabar* adjectival phrase آخر من يعلم *'āxir man yaᶜlam* (the last to know). In terms of Abrahams' classification (cf. section 2.5.1), the structure of this proverb is positive equivalence.

Example 2:

الصّابون كلّه عند البدو صابون (نيوف، 1995، ص75).

TT

To the bedouins, all soap is soap.

Discussion:

Xalīl says to Rābiḥa: We have two hours. Should we drink wine? She answers him: As if there was anything else than wine! Xalīl replies to her: Italian martini! And it is afternoon! She briefly and absent-mindedly replied: Everything is wine. So Xalīl says this proverb to her. The meaning of this conversation is: Xalīl offers Rābiḥa a drink: should we drink wine? She replies with contempt: Do you mean that you have something else to drink? Why do you want me to choose? He says: I have martini which is suitable for this time of the day. She replies: No, wine. So he returns the blow with a stronger one, criticizing her contemptuously: You are an uncivilized Bedouin and do not know about drink. You are similar to the Bedouins who do not know anything about taste and civilization – they do not distinguish between the most expensive kind of soap and gipsy soap, for instance! All kinds of drink and all kinds of soap are the same! In this proverb, a definite *mubtada'* noun phrase *al-ṣābūn kulluh* الصّابون كلّه (the soap, all of it) is followed by a *xabar* prepositional phrase عند البدو صابون *ᶜind al-badū ṣābūn* (soap among the Bedouin). In terms of Abrahams' classification (cf. section 2.5.1), the structure of this proverb is positive equivalence.

3.7.2 Antithesis

In this section, I will adopt Westermarck's view of antithetical structure in proverbs, i.e. that antithetical proverbs are those proverbs whose structures have a sense of comparison. This is clearly illustrated by proverbs which have a *better than / worse than* structure. However, antithesis is also present in proverbs which have a *rather than* element as well. Westermarck's definition does not cover proverbs whose antithetical structure is fairly implicit - for instance, when there are two things –one good and one fairly harsh, and there are two people involved in choosing one or the other. Both choices may be made by these individuals, but, the comparison can be understood implicitly by assuming the word "while" is lurking there. So the formula becomes "I

choose this while you choose that" or "what is this if you will lose that". In this thesis, I will include proverbs of this type under the category of antithesis.

Muftaraq al-Maṭar

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, out of 521 proverbs, only 64 (12.28%) proverbs make use of antithesis.

Example 1:

ST

الحي أبقى من الميت (المحمود، 1983، ص9).

TT

The living man is better than the dead one.

Discussion:

Umm-Maḥmūd is angry because they did not bury the dress with her daughter Ḥabbūb. She threw it on the fire because she did not want to see anybody wearing it after her death. Abū Maḥmūd and the others say this proverb. It means that it would have been better to give it to anybody who is in need rather than burying it with her daughter or throwing it on the fire. Westermarck notes, "A typical form of valuation is to say that one thing is better than another" (Westermarck, 1931, p. 3).

Example 2:

ST

صيت الغنى ولا صيت الفقر (المحمود، 1983، ص82).

TT

The reputation of being rich rather than the reputation of being poor.

Discussion:

Ḥabīb says to Musallim and Abū Mizyad that their father brought with him three hundred English pounds when he came back from Argentina. They replied to him that this does not bother them. It means that it is better for a person to be known as a rich one than knowing him as a poor person. In this example, we notice that there is a comparison between being rich and being poor. The proverb has the structure of preferring one thing, which is having the reputation of having money and possessions richness rather the other, which is being known for others as poor and destitute.

Example 3:

ST

الجاه السّا لك ولا المال المخزون (المحمود، 1983، ص566).

TT

Ongoing dignity rather than money put aside.

Discussion:

The structure of this proverb is built on preferrance. Since this proverb has the comparison structure of having two things and the preference of choosing one rather than the other. This proverb has the antithetical structure.

Example 4:

ST

القريب أولى من الغريب (المحمود، 1983، ص458).

TT
The relative is better than the stranger.

Discussion:

Ḥamama wants to tell her brother-in-law that Xātūn should marry in her own village.

The structure of this proverb is built on preferrance.There is a comparison between marrying a relative or marrying a stranger. However, there is an explicit preference to marrying the relative. In Westermarck's terms about antithesis in proverbs, this is a typical example of the antithetical structure.

Anājīl al-Xarāb

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, out of 127 proverbs, only 14 (11.02%) proverbs make use of antithesis.

Example 1:

ST

قطع الأعناق و لا قطع الأرزاق (نيوف، 1995، ص152).

TT

Cutting off someone's neck is better than preventing him earning his livelihood.

Discussion:

Rabeha accuses Radi of being selfish, but he asks her to understand his personality and philosophy of life, and to be careful not to prevent him from taking advantage of opportunities.

Here,there is a comparison between preventing someonefrom earning his livelihood and between killing him. Both options are severe, but one is preferable

to the other. Adopting Westermarck's perception about antithesis in proverbs, this example falls under the antithetical structure category. This is obvious for having better than in this proverb structure.

Example 2:

ST

نقدّم لك العلّيق و تقدّم لنا اللّبطة (نيوف، 1995، ص187).

TT

We offer you blackberry (fodder); you offer us a kick.

Discussion:

ᶜAbd al-Karīm says this proverb to Rāḍī who is swaying in front of him, reminding him that he is indebted to him for teaching him dancing. It is like saying: *dallalnāh bilʿasal faḍḍalʿalayh albayḍ*, the translation of this being "We spoilt him with honey; he preferred eggs". But here the words 'blackberry' and 'kick' make the proverb rough and humiliating. It is because blackberries are given only to mules and horses, and only donkeys and similar animals – mules and camels – kick. It means that we advise you and want the best for you and you kick everything and reward us with evil. It is as if we are dealing with a stupid, troublesome mule. We offer it fodder in the nosebag then it kicks us! Is this the reward for doing good? Here, Rāḍī mocks ᶜAbd al-Karīm. This proverb has an implicit sense of antithesis. We can read the proverb this way: we offer you blackberry (while) you offer us a kick.

Example 3:

ST

ما نفع أن تربح العالم و تخسر نفسك (نيوف، 1995، ص125).

TT

What is the use of gaining the world and losing yourself .

Discussion:

Zakī says this proverb to Xalīl. It means that he questions what the wisdom is of living a life that has no connection with principles and morals. A similar saying was used by Jesus Christ: "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?" (Mark: 8:36). It is said to someone who strives to win money, power and wealth at the expense of everything. He achieves what he wants of the pleasures of life but at the expense of good reputation, wisdom and principles.

3.7.3 Valuation

Muftaraq al-Maṭar

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, out of 521 proverbs, 136 (26.10%) proverbs involve valuation.

Example 1:

ST

كثرة الضّرب تعمي القلب (المحمود، 1983، ص173).

TT

Frequent beating makes the heart blind.

Discussion:

In this proverb, there is a deed كثرة الضّرب *kaṯritu al-ḍarbi* and its consequence تعمي القلب *tuᶜmī al-qalbi*. If you frequently beat somebody, he or she will not be able to have the ability to think properly. In terms of Westermarck's views, the structural form of this proverb is valuation. For more discussion see section 2.5.3**.**

Example 2:

ST

تقاتلت الخيل و البغال، فراحت الحمير بالدّرب. تخاصم البك والمشايخ، رحنا نحن فرق عملة (المحمود، 1983، ص214).

TT

When the horses and the mules fought, the donkeys were trodden underfoot
on the road. When the sheikhs and the beg fought, we a were small change.

Discussion:

Simple people are always small change. They die for nothing exactly as donkeys die in a battle between mules and horses. In this proverb there is an event تقاتلت الخيل و البغال *taqātalat al-xayl wa al-biġāl* and its consequence فراحت الحمير بالدّرب *farāḥat al-ḥamī bi-l-darb*. In the same proverb, there is another event تخاصم البك والمشايخ *taxāṣama al-bak wa al-mašāyix* and its consequence رحنا نحن فرق عملة *riḥnā naḥnu farq ᶜimlah.* In terms of Westermarck's views, the structural form of this proverb is valuation. For more discussion see section 2.5.3**.**

Example 3:

ST

الخائن يخونه الله (المحمود، 1983، ص215).

TT

The one who betrays (us), God will betray him.

Discussion:

Maḥmūd al-Muḥammad asks the peasants to unite around one opinion and be either with the Beg or with the sheikhs, and he asks them to swear by the Quran that God may abandon the traitor. In this proverb there is an event (entity) الخائن *al-xā'in* and its consequence يخونه الله *yaxūnuhu Allah*. In terms of Westermarck's views, the structural form of this proverb is valuation. For more discussion see section 2.5.3

Example 4:

ST

العروس الغريبة تفتح عين الصّغير والكبير (المحمود، 1983، ص565).

TT

The strange bride draws the attention of young and old.

Discussion:

This proverb means when a woman marries a man from another village, she will be spotted all the time. This proverb is a warning that the stranger's deficiencies are more obvious than the deficiencies of the original residents of the village. In relation to this structure of this proverb, there is an event (entity) العروس الغريبة *al-ᶜarūs al-ġarībah* and its consequence تفتح عين الصّغير والكبير *taftaḥ ᶜēn al-kabīr wa al-ṣaġīr.*In other words, if you (a woman) marry to a stranger, you will be criticised all the time. In terms of Westermarck's views, the structural form of this proverb is valuation. For more discussion see section 2.5.3**.**

Example 5:

ST

اطراء الولد يفسده (المحمود، 1983، ص63).

TT

Complementing the son may spoil him.
Discussion:

In relation to this structure of this proverb, there is an event (entity) اطراء الولد *'iṭrā' al-walad* and its consequence يفسده *yufsiduhu*. In terms of Westermarck's views, the structural form of this proverb is valuation. For more discussion see section 2.5.3**.**

Example 6:

ST

ما تركضه الأرنبة يذهب من طريقها (المحمود، 1983، ص106).

TT

The distance which the rabbit has already run, no longer remains in its way.
(More literally: *What the rabbit runs, goes out of its way.*)

Discussion:

Saᶜd says to Ḥabīb that he should only sow the field in which he is working: "The shadows began to fall upon ᶜaīn al-Ḥajal". Ḥabīb answers saying this proverb. *mā tarkuḍuhu al-arnabah yaḏhab min ṭarīqihā!* means that whatever he does today he

will be free from tomorrow. Using of Westermarck's views, the structure of this proverb falls under the valuation type. There is an event, ما تركضه الأرنبة *mā tarkuḍuhu al-'arnabah* which is running part of the distance that you are supposed to. The result of this act is يذهب من طريقها *yaḏhab min ṭarīqihā*. For more discussion see section 2.5.3**.**

Anājīl al-Xarāb

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb***,** out of 127 proverbs, only 14 (11.02%) proverbs involve valuation.

Example 1:

ST

إنّما بالكلام وحده لا يحيا الإنسان (نيوف، 1995، ص14).

TT

Man shall not live by words only.

Discussion:

Xalīl says this proverb because he stopped writing poetry, while others continued this activity adding what the result is. The proverb means others continued the job of writing poetry and some people consider them poets, but they are not talented. So, what is the advantage of being well-known while this fame is without any basis. This reminds us of Christ's saying: 'Man shall not live by bread alone.' (Luke:2001: 4:4-4). Xalīl here modifies this Biblical verse. But its origin is known. According to Westermarck's conception of valuation, the structure of this proverb can be categorized as having a valuation structure (cf. 2.5.3). The proverb has an event إنّما بالكلام وحده *'innamā bi-al-kalāmi waḥdihi* and its consequence لا يحيا الإنسان *lā yaḥyā al-'insān.*

Example 2:

ST

المرأة كظلّك، إن هربت منها تبعتك، وإن تبعتها هربت منك (نيوف، 1995، ص187).

TT

A woman is like your shadow: if you run away from her she follows you, and if you follow her she runs away from you.

Discussion:

Radi says this proverb, ignoring those present, and raising his voice trying to impugn the relationship between Faatina and Zaki. It means: do not make effort to chase a woman because she is like your shadow – if you chase it, it will escape from you; while

if you run away from it, it will follow you. In using this proverb, Rāḍī wants to attract people to the love which he has noticed between Fātinah and Zakī in order to cause them disgrace and its consequences. According to Westermarck's conception of valuation, the structure of this proverb can be categorized as having a valuation structure (cf. 2.5.3). The proverb has an event إن هربت منها *'in harabta minhā* and its consequence تبعتك *tabiᶜatak*. The same proverb includes another event وإن تبعتها *wa'in tabiᶜtahā* and its consequence هربت منك *harabat mink.*

Example 3:

ST

كثرة الضحك تميت القلب (نيوف، 1995، ص23).

TT

Laughing too much kills the heart.

Discussion:

The nurse was astonished at Xalil's sense of humour at such an age. He answered her that his happiness was the cause of his stroke saying this proverb. It is a Hadith of the Prophet who warned against excessive laughter: "Excessive laughter kills the heart". In Umberto Eco's great novel *The Name of the Rose,*we read that what distinguishes the human being from the animal is laughter rather than speech. According to Westermarck's conception of valuation, the structure of this proverb can be categorized as having a valuation structure (cf. 2.5.3). The proverb has an event كثرة الضحك *kaṯratu al-ḍaḥiki* and its consequence تميت القلب *tumītu al-qalbi.*

Example 4:

ST

جهل الكبر قتّال (نيوف، 1995، ص 92).

TT

The vanity of the elderly kills.

According to Westermarck's conception of valuation, the structure of this proverb can be categorized as having a valuation structure (cf. 2.5.3). The proverb has an event جهل الكبر *jahlu al-kabari.* The consequence of this act is قتّال *qattāl.*

Example 5:

<div dir="rtl" align="center">

ST

لا تنم بين القبور ولا تشف منامات (نيوف، 1995، ص27).

</div>

TT

Do not sleep between tombs and have nightmares.

Discussion:

According to Westermarck's conception of valuation, the structure of this proverb can be categorized as having a valuation structure (cf. 2.5.3). The proverb has an event which is sleeping in the graveyard, among the tombs. The consequence of this act will be having nightmares.

Example 6:

<div dir="rtl" align="center">

ST

الصّداقة تحجب العيوب (نيوف، 1995، ص90).

</div>

TT

Friendship hides deficiencies.

Discussion:

Fāṭina says of Rāḍī that he is really a coward, but he tries to hide this through his generosity with his friends. She says this proverb about Rāḍī. It means that people are considerate towards their friends – they hide their friends' deficiencies or even try not to see them. So, they only see their good characteristics and deeds.

Example 7*:*

<div dir="rtl" align="center">

ST

البكاء يخفّف الهمّ (نيوف، 1995، ص158).

</div>

TT

Crying (weeping) eases grief .

Discussion:

After Rābiḥah's grandmother finishes telling a story, Rābiḥah starts to cry saying that perhaps her grandmother also cries inside, adding this proverb. When a person cries, he feels relief and eases his loss and sorrow. Releasing inner grief is considered a good form of treatment which may protect from heart attack, stroke, etc. It is known in psychology as "catharsis".The woman is said to be wiser and live longer than the man because she finds somebody to talk to about herself. In this sense tears are nothing but

treatment. Everywhere in the world and especially in the East, it is no shame for a woman to cry while it is shameful for a man to do so. This is why people say: "He cries like a woman". They want him to be a stone; he would explode with grief like a dog.

Example 8*:*

<div dir="rtl" align="center">
ST

و من يعمل المعروف مع غير أهله كواقد الشّمع في قاعة العميان (نيوف، 1995، ص156).
</div>

TT

He who does a good deed to someone who does not deserves is like a man who lights a candle in the hall of the blind

Discussion:

According to Westermarck's conception of valuation, the structure of this proverb can be categorized as having a valuation structure (cf. 2.5.3). The proverb has an event أهله غير مع المعروف يعمل من و *wa man* yaᶜ*malu al-maᶜrūfa maᶜa ġaīri 'ahlihi.* The consequence of this act is العميان قاعة في الشّمع كواقد *kawāqidi al-šamᶜi fī qāᶜati al-ᶜimyāni.*

3.7.4 Cause and effect

Muftaraq al-Maṭar

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, out of 521 proverbs, only 53 (10.17%) proverbs involve cause and effect.

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl" align="center">
ST

من ضرب أخواته يصر جحش امرأته (المحمود، 1983، ص173).
</div>

TT

He who beats his sisters will become his woman's ass.

Discussion:

This is said by Ḥulwa to Musallim who used to beat his sister, Xātūn. The proverb means that the brother who mistreats his sisters becomes very obedient to his wife in the future. This proverb is commonly used. It seems that people came to this proverb and its lesson from their own everyday observations.

Example 2:

من يطعم التّسعة يأكل العشرة (المحمود، 1983، ص214).

TT
He who feeds nine times, eats the tenth.

Discussion:

The peasants say that in other villages, the peasant has a boss who defends them, and accordingly, he takes most of their money. So, they allow him to benefit a lot, while they themselves benefit very little. This proverb humiliates, but it is wise and real in an unwise world. It is the outcome of the bitter life which the people live. It means that you should give up a lot of what you own whether money or right in order to get a part of your money or right. A time which is not controlled by law but by power does not leave the weak in general with any option except to give up their values and principles and agree to bribe. This is in order to get a part of their right (to give nine percent in order to get one percent). This is better than losing everything. There is no law to protect them and they have no power to get back their rights by themselves.

Example 3:

ST
ديِّنْه اليوم، يردّ لك غداً (المحمود، 1983، ص232).

TT
If you lend to him today, he will return to you tomorrow.

Discussion:

Sulaiman says this to Musallim about his brother Abu Mizyad. The proverb means that if the teenager lives his teenage years with a reasonable degree of freedom, neither totally uncontrolled nor deprived of liberty, he will be the winner, because he will not grow up suffering from psychological complexes, and an uncontrolled desire to mix with the other sex. This open-minded, realistic and civilized view is rejected and condemned by over-zealous Muslims, and the result is catastrophic both individually and socially.

Example 4:

ST
تأليف القط لا يخلّصه من مخالبه (المحمود، 1983، ص326).

TT
Taming the cat does not save you from his claws/ scratches.

Discussion:

Musallim is angry at the sheikh who has criticised his way of reciting poetry. But the sheikh realizes that his criticism was said to a child and to criticise a child is not an easy matter. So, Musallim says this proverb about himself. Usually it is said about a bird or a wild animal that it is tamed, i.e. it has become familiar with a person – it does not either fear or bite him, nor does it flee from him. Perhaps it means here that taming the cat does not protect you from its claws, i.e. it does not mean that you are safe from its claws. This proverb is said to someone who does not submit to you and cannot be trusted whatever you do for him. There is a belief that the cat cannot be tamed, and however much love it has for you, it will scratch you with its claws. It is said with very much the same meaning: "He who plays with the cat should bear its scratches". It means: "Be always careful! Be cautious about so and so!"

Example 5:

ST

من كبّر الحجر ما ضرب (المحمود، 1983، ص374).

TT
The one who has enlarged the stone will not be able to hit with it.

Discussion:

Abū Maḥmūd says to Musallim that he wants to be a master-shoemaker, asking his father to buy him the necessary tools to fulfil his wish. This proverb is used when a person threatens a lot, or promises to bring a mountain of gold, but his words are unreliable. A corresponding English proverb is: "Barking dogs seldom bite". Another corresponding English proverb is: "Far shooting never killed bird" (Honeck, 1997 p.23).

Example 6:

ST

الزّواج بالبنات الأبكار يطيل الأعمار (المحمود، 1983، ص481).

TT
Marrying a virgin girl prolongs one's life.

Discussion:

The sheikh says to Abū Maḥmūd that the value of the dowry has risen in the regions around the village, so the girls' acceptance of marriage has increased, and even the old sheikh was able to marry a young, virgin girl. This is one of the habits of the Bedouin

and Muslims who legitimize old men marrying young girls who never married before, claiming that Islam allows this.

Anājīl al-Xarāb

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, out of 127 proverbs, there are only 8 (6.29%) proverbs which involve cause and effect.

Example 1:

ST

لا يجنّ من الحبّ إلّا العازب (نيوف، 1995، ص232).

TT

No one goes mad with love except the bachelor.

Discussion:

In this proverb, there is a certain extreme behaviour linked to the man who is not yet married. In other words, there is a deed and a consequence. If you fall in love, you may go mad if you have not ever married before. The structure of this proverb is classified as cause and effect. For further explanation see 2.5.4.

Example 2:

ST

إذا كانت الزّوجة مذياعاً توجّب على الزّوج أن يصمت (نيوف، 1995، ص242).

TT

If the wife is a radio, the husband should keep silent.

Discussion:

Xalīl says this proverb to Fātinah who asks him to speak. He accuses her of chattering and talking constantly like a radio. So he gets no turn to speak and keeps silent. It is obvious that their relationship has broken down. It has reached breaking point. There is no space for understanding and enduring the other or even listening to him.

Example 3:

ST

كن جميلاً ترى الوجود جميلاً (نيوف، 1995، ص209).

TT

Be beautiful, you will see the world as beautiful.

Discussion:

Fātina feels herself suffocating in Šukrī's office. She is astonished because she can only feel this awful feeling. She exclaims this proverb, which is a famous line by the poet Ilyā Abū Māḍī: "You are complaining and you do not have a disease/Be beautiful, you will see the universe as beautiful". This is true through experience, tradition and according to modern psychology: when you are always bored and pessimistic, you see everything around as black. Similarly, when your temper is bad. By contrast, when you are optimistic, cheerful and confident of yourself and of those who are around you, you will see all the universe as cheerful.

Example 4:

ST

انسم حاصوداً و نم بعين الشّمس (نيوف، 1995، ص11).

TT
Be called a reaper and sleep in the sun.

Discussion:

Xalīl says this proverb about Zakī who has not published a word for years. It means what is important is to become famous and for people to say about you that you are skilful in reaping, even if you have not harvested even an ear of corn, but you sleep in the day time. It is enough that you are known now: propaganda is everything. For instance, it is enough to be said that this is an unrivalled surgeon, and you will find that all people say the same thing about him and visit him to be treated.

In the "other" category, we mean that the structure of the proverb does not clearly belong to any of the following categories: equational, antithesis, valuation and cause and effect. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, of the 521 proverbs, there are 220 (42.22%) proverbs are classified as "other". 77 (60.62%) proverbs of the 127 proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* are classified as "other".

3.7.5 Repetition

Proverbs may display (i) root repetition, (ii) pattern repetition, and (iii) lexical repetition – or combinations of these with involving different words. Here I will provide

definitions of all these three morphological features. Root repetition, as defined by Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002, p. 103) "involves repetition of the same morphological root in close proximity within a text (thus درسنا هذا الدّرس 'we studied this lesson' involves repetition of the root درس).

Pattern repetition "involves repetition of the same pattern (فعل, فاعل, مفعول,مفعلة , فعل, etc.) in two or more words in close proximity (Dickins, Hervey and Higgins 2002, p. 103). They give the example البيت القديم الكبير where the repetition of فعيل pattern in قديم and كبير is clear.

According to Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002, p. 108-111), lexical repetition can be displayed in two forms – the repetition of a single word, termed lexical-item repetition (or word repetition), or repetition of an entire phrase, termed phrase repetition. An example of word repetition is the repetition of the word حوار, picked out by curly brackets, in the following extract (taken from Dickins, Hervey and Higgins 2002, p. 112):

> {حوار} الثقافات ، أو {حوار} الحضارات ، أو {حوار} الأديان ، أو {الحوار} الإسلامي المسيحي ، أو {حوار} الشمال والجنوب ، أو {حوار} الإسلام والغرب ، أو {الحوار} العربي الأوربي ، كلها عناوين لموضوع واحد [...]

An example of phrase repetition is وبعد أيّام, picked out in curly brackets, in the following extract, taken from Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002, p. 11):

> .. في مالطا قُتل فتحي الشقاقي قائد ثاني اكبر حركة اصولية، فلسطينية، معارضة، بعد «حماس» برصاص الموساد .. {وبعد أيام} قتل إسحق رابين رئيس وزراء إسرائيل بثلاث رصاصات اطلقها متطرف يهودي في عمر احفاده هو إيجال عامير .. {وبعد أيام} انفجرت شحنة ناسفة لا تقل عن ١٠٠ كيلوجرام في مقر الحرس السعودي في الرياض، وكان الضحايا امريكيين وهنودا .. {وبعد أيام} اغتيل في جنيف الملحق التجاري المصري في سويسرا .. {وبعد ايام} فجرت منظمة الجهاد مبنى السفارة المصرية في إسلام أباد عاصمة باكستان في عملية انتحارية.

Of the 127 proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*:

(i)   10 (7.874%) display root repetition only.
(ii)   6 (4.724%) display pattern repetition only.
(iii)   17 (13.385%) display lexical repetition only.
(iv)   2 (1.5746%) display both root and lexical repetition.

Of the 521 proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*:

(i)   47 (9.03 %) display root repetition only.

(ii)   65 (12.5 %) display pattern repetition only.

(iii) 48 (9.23%) display lexical repetition only.

(iv)   8 (1.53 %) display both root and lexical repetition.

Regarding the use of repetition in the twp novels, it is worth mentioning that both writers show the potential to use poetic language in different forms of repetition. This proves that both writers "possess morphological competence" (Russell, 2004, p. 293). However, *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* contains fewer proverbswhich involve lexical repetition than *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. This may be explained through the different nature of the characters in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. In the latter, the politically-oriented characters, with their verbal attachment to different ideologies, are suited to their prolific use of this stylistic trope. Similarly, the higher use of root repetition in proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* is explicable in terms of the writer's intention to highlight certain effects in his literary work such as emphasis on the political and social frustration experienced by the characters. This point is discussed by Ibrahim, Kassabji and Aydelott (2000, p.101):

> the agglutinative property of Arabic, on the other hand, allows for polypoton, or the repetition of words derived from the same root (such as repetition in Arabic occurring often within one clause) for certain special effects, like emphasis or humor.

3.8 Figuration in the proverbs

In Chapter 2, I considered figuration in proverbs as discussed in the general literature (Section 2.4.2.2). In this section, I consider figuration as it is found in proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb*.

Of the 127 proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, 102 (80.31%) are figurative – with metaphor, metonymy, simile, and hyperbole sub-types, as follows.

Anājīl al-Xarāb	No.	Percentage of all proverbs (127 proverbs)	Percentage of proverbs involving figuration (102 proverbs)

Figuration	102	80.31%	100%
Metaphor	86	67.72%	84.31%
Metonymy	0	0	0%
Simile	14	11.02%	13.72%
Hyperbole	2	1.57%	1.96%
Literalness	25	19.69%	0%

Of the 521 proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, 390 (75%) are figurative – with metaphor, metonymy, simile, hyperbole, irony and euphemism sub-types, as follows. (Note that in the following list, one proverb is listed as metaphor/hyperbole, as this proverb can be legitimately analysed as belonging to either of these two categories.While there are there are no examples of irony and euphemism in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, there are proverbs belonging to both these categories in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*).

Muftaraq al-Maṭar	No.	Percentage out of 521	Percentage out of 390
Figuration	390	75%	100%
Literalness	7	1.34%	0%
Metaphor	271	52.12%	69.48%
Metonymy	26	5%	6.66%
Simile	61	11.73%	15.64%
Hyperbole	23	4.42%	5.89
Metaphor/hyperbole	1	0.19%	0.25%
Irony	2	0.38%	0.51%
Euphemism	1	0.19%	0.25%

In the following sections I consider the following types of figuration in proverbs in the two novels: metaphor (Section 3.8.1), synecdoche (Section 3.8.2), metonymy (Section 3.8.3), simile (Section 3.8.4), hyperbole (Section 3.8.5), metaphor/hyperbole (Section 3.8.6), personification (Section 3.8.7), irony (Section 3.8.8) and personification (Section 3.8.9). This list largely corresponds to the list of figures of speech identified in the general literature on proverbs in Chapter 2: metaphor (Section 2.6.2.1), synecdoche (2.6.2.2), metonymy (Section 2.6.2.3), hyperbole (Section 2.6.2.4) and personification (Section 2.6.2.5). However, the proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb* also include examples involving types of figuration which are not typically identified in the proverb literature – simile (Section 3.8.8), irony (Section 3.8.8) and euphemism (Section 3.8.9).

3.8.1 Metaphor

Muftaraq al-Maṭar

Example 1:

ST

الجمل لا يرى حردبته (المحمود، 1983، ص40).

TT

The camel does not see his hunched back.

Here there is metaphor because it means that just as the camel cannot see his hunched back, so Abū Maḥmūd cannot see the deficiency in his daughter's appearance (the ugliness of his daughter's hair).

Example 2:

ST

عديم و وقع بسلّة تين (المحمود، 1983، ص514).

TT

He was destitute and has newly got a basket of figs.

Here there is a metaphor based on the destitute person who has become full after hunger. This 'person' refers to France, which seemed to be destitute before occupying Syria (under the League of Nations Mandate), but could not resist the abundance found in the occupied territory. This proverb is usually used as a comment on the behaviour of somebody who has been deprived of something such as money or possessions. When he suddenly obtains the thing he has been missing, it is still clear from his behaviour that he was previously a poor or destitute person.

Example 3:

ST

بولة المعلّم تشلفط (المحمود، 1983، ص567).

TT

The landlord's urine hurts.

Here there is a metaphor because the proverb is not taken literally. It is a metaphor for the ruthlessness and mercilessness of the landlords towards the serfs and the peasants.

Anājīl al-Xarāb

Example 1:

ST

الصّابون كلّه عند البدو صابون (نيوف، 1995، ص75).

TT

To the bedouins, all soap is soap.

Here, there is a comparison with the Bedouins who do not know anything about taste and civilization - they do not distinguish between the most expensive kind of soap and gipsy soap, for instance! All kinds of drink and all kinds of soap are the same!

Example 2:

ST

تصبّ الزّيت على النّار (نيوف، 1995، ص146).

TT

Rābiḥa was most of the time pouring oil on the fire.

When we pour oil on a fire, it does not go out, but flares up. Rābiḥa was described by her friends as Raḍī's first half, because she is the one who planned his day-to-day life for him, while Rāḍī was called Rābiḥa's second half. When they wanted to annoy Rābiḥa, they would refer to her literally as the second half, which means the sexual part of her body. She would encourage them to think of her this way instead of rebuking them and stopping them from doing so. Xalīl comments on her provocative reply by saying this proverb. The proverb means that Rābiḥa is making things more complicated.

Example 3:

ST

الدّجاجه، اقطع منقارها-لا تغيّر كارها (نيوف، 1995، ص181).

TT

Even if you cut off the hen's beak, it will never change its trade.

Here there is a comparison between the behaviour of a hen and that of Marwān who has eaten almost all the tangerines in the dish. When his friend Ilias tried to stop him eating, Marwān went on eating the tangerines even including the peel. Then Xalīl commented on Marwan saying this proverb which means that Marwān has had this habit of eating greedily since he was a student at the university and has not changed his habits despite the passage of many years. This proverb involves criticism and mockery.

3.8.2 Synecdoche

Muftaraq al-Maṭar

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* only 1 proverb out of 521 proverbs (0.19%) clearly involves synecdoche.

Example 1:

ST

ما تركضه الأرنبة يذهب من طريقها (المحمود، 1983، ص106).

TT

What the rabbit runs, it loses its way.

Anājīl al-Xarāb

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, only one proverb out of 127 proverbs (0.78%) involves synecdoche.

Example 1:

ST

إذا وقعت النّعجة كثرت سكاكينها (نيوف، 1995، ص197).

TT

When the ewe falls, many knives appear.

3.8.3 Metonymy

Muftaraq al-Maṭar

Example 1:

ST

لم يطقطق المزراب ومنه قشّة واحدة (المحمود، 1983، ص29).

TT

The gutter did not click and there was not even one single straw.

Here the clicking of the gutter is a metonymy for rain or the coming of winter and the "one single straw" is a metonymy for the cow's fodder or sustenance. Umm-Maḥmūd angrily talks to her cow which finishes all the hay stored for it for the whole winter even before the winter comes. This proverb is a metonymy for poverty and the scarcity of the produce which is not sufficient for them until next year, but only to the beginning of the winter.

Example2:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

الشّاب بمداسو و لباس راسو (المحمود، 1983، ص433).

</div>

TT

The young man is known by his shoes and his head cover.

Here مداسو *madāsū* and لباس راسو *lbās rāsū* are a metonymy for appearance. The proverb means that a young man is judged by his appearance.

Example 3:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

لم يرسل أسود على أبيض (المحمود، 1983، ص378).

</div>

TT

He did not send black on white.

What is meant here is that he did not even write a single letter on paper. He totally forgot them, i.e. he left them behind his back. So أسود *aswad* is metonymic for ink/writing and أبيض *abyaḍ* is metonymic for paper.

Anājīl al-Xarāb

There are no metonymic proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*.

3.8.4 Simile

Muftaraq al-Maṭar

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

نبقى متفرّقين مثل بعر الجمال (المحمود، 1983، ص215).

</div>

TT

We stay dispersed like camel dung.

The peasant Abū ʿAlī said this proverb to his fellow villagers who never were never able to agree on anything. The peasants accused each other of snitching on each other to the landlord, instead of collaborating against him. So, the proverb is used with a global connotation to refer to the disunity of the peasants in this village. They are as scattered as camel dung. In this proverb, there is a simile because it uses the word مثل *miṯl* (like).

Example 2:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

المرأة مثل المفكرة. كل يوم تقلب ورقة جديدة (المحمود، 1983، ص87).

</div>

TT

A woman is like a diary. Every day you turn a new page.

Ḥabīb said this proverb about women to Saʿd. The comparison is between a woman and a diary. Just as a person turns over a page of the diary everyday, so women change their minds everyday as well. In this proverb, there is a simile because it uses the word مثل *miṯl* (like).

Example 3:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

ملزّق بالبيت مثل القرادة!(المحمود، 1983، ص16).

</div>

TT

He sticks to the house like the tick!

When al-Stāsyūn asked Musallim about his mood, Umm-Maḥmūd answered her by likening her son's stay at home to the tick which clings on to the animal. In this proverb, there is a simile because it uses the word مثل *miṯl* (like).

Anājīl al-Xarāb

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

كأنّك دلقت عليها سطل ماء ساخن (نيوف، 1995، ص34-35).

</div>

TT

It was as if you had poured a bucket of hot water on her.

This means that you made her shut up, i.e. she was talking about a certain subject (lying, threatening, being pompous, etc.) then somebody said a single word that indicates that the speaker was discovered (showing explicitly his lying, pretence, etc.). Then he kept silent as if he has swallowed his tongue. The proverb is taken from the direct meaning of saying "If we pour cold water on fire, it will go out immediately. Otherwise, it will continue burning for a long time". In this version, "as if you had poured a bucket of hot water on her" is a modification of the original proverb (hot water instead of cold water). It is an indication that you not only made him keep silent, feel shy and be silent. But, it is also as if you have boiled him with hot water and caused him much pain. You obliged him to shut up and bear this pain. This little modification adds a great power to the first

proverb. If cold water would keep somebody silent and makes him feel shy, hot water would make him shut up with pain and force him to bear that pain. In this proverb, there is a simile because it has ك in the beginning of the word كأنَّك. This ك has the same function as مثل *miṯl* (like).

Example 2:

ST

كأنَّني أغنّي في طاحون! (نيوف، 1995، ص50).

TT

As if I was singing in a windmill.

When a person talks and nobody cares about what he says or even listens to him, he becomes angry and says this proverb. It is because the sound of the windmill is so loud that if anyone speaks or sings very loudly inside it, even those who are near him cannot hear him. This proverb is a simile for the uselessness of talking. However much you raise your voice, nobody listens to you or your orders. Here Xalīl Addūrrī says this proverb to Xālid who disagrees with Xalīl's views and principles. In this proverb, there is a simile because it has ك in the beginning of the word كأنَّني. This ك has the same function as مثل *miṯl* (like).

Example 3:

ST

و من يعمل المعروف مع غير أهله كواقد الشّمع في قاعة العميان (نيوف، 1995، ص156).

TT

He who does a good deed to someone who does not deserve is like a man who
lights a candle in the hall of the blind.

What is the use of lighting candles or electricity in the hall of blind people? Thus there is no benefit in doing good deeds for those who do not deserve them. Here Rābiḥah says this proverb to Fātinah because, while Rābiḥah sympathised and empathised with Fātinah when she was upset, Fātinah hurt Rābiḥah in return. So, Rābiḥah's good feelings towards Fātinah were likened to kindling a candle in a hall full of blind people. In this proverb, there is a simile because it has ك in the beginning of the word كواقد. This ك has the same function as مثل *miṯl* (like).

3.8.5 Hyperbole

Muftaraq al-Maṭar

Example 1:

ST

صياحك يسمع إلى الأرجنتين (المحمود، 1983، ص34).

TT

Your screaming is heard in Argentina!

Abū Maḥmūd blames his wife because she shouts day and night. She answers him that her shouting will not displace the Angels of the house because he has never stopped praising and honouring God. He answers her that there is no value in sanctifying God as long as she persists in her habit of screaming. He says this proverb about her shouting. It is a hyperbole to describe the perpetual loud voice and screaming of his wife.

Example 2:

ST

هل تمشين على بيض! (المحمود، 1983، ص43).

TT

Do you walk on eggs!

Xaḍrā al-ᶜAlī says to her daughter Xātūn that she is late in bringing the water from the water source despite having gone there a long time before. The mother exaggerates by likening Xātūn's slow return to walking on eggs. It means that eggs are easily spoiled. This is a hyperbole expressing caution, slowness and procrastination.

Example 3:

ST

صبرة تشرين الّتي تعلّم بالمصارين (المحمود، 1983، ص57).

TT

October/November's frosty air which affects the guts.

Musallim and his brother were going to work one the land in the early morning. Musallim said that it was very cold in October/November as usual. He exaggerates by saying that this frosty air leaves its deep traces on the guts.

Anājīl al-Xarāb

Example 1:

ST

أي و الله لا أصدّقك و لو مرقت من خرم الإبرة (نيوف، 1995، ص73).

TT

I will not believe you even if you passed through the eye of a needle.

When Rābiḥa talks to Xalīl about Rāḍī and tells him that she is no longer interested in him or any other man, Xalīl says this proverb to her. The proverb means that I would not believe you even if you performed a miracle in front of my eyes and I saw you passing through the eye of a needle as if you were a saint! It means no matter how skilful you are in hiding your cunning nature, I will never believe you. Do not bother yourself. You may try to change my mind and prove that you are honest, but I will not believe you because I have known what you are like for a long time. Xalīl confirms to her that it is impossible for Rābiḥa to be not interested in men as he knows her well.

Example 2:

ST

نقطة منّك تعكّر البحر (نيوف، 1995، ص229).

TT

By God! A drop from you makes the sea turbid.

Ilyās and Rāḍī are playing backgammon. Ilyās says this proverb to Rāḍī. It means how mean, evil and harmful you are! The poison drops from every word, act and movement. Each drop makes the whole sea turbid. This is a very hyperbolic way to express hatred.

3.8.6 Metaphor/hyperbole

The proverbs in this section can be analysed as involving both metaphor and hyperbole.

Muftaraq al-Maṭar

Example 1:

ST

صوت ريّا إذا ما غنّت، يهزّ الحجر (المحمود، 1983، ص169).

TT

If Rayyā sang, her voice would move a stone.

This means that Rayyā's voice is quite sonorous and beautiful, it would make a stone move. Here Ḥulwah exaggerates in telling Musallim about the physical power of the resonance of Rayyā, Musallim's sister's voice in moving even stones. This is a metaphor for a sonorous voice.

Anājīl al-Xarāb

There are no examples of proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* which involve both metaphor and hyperbole.

3.8.7 Personification

Muftaraq al-Maṭar

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* only one proverb out of 521 proverbs (0.19%) involves personification.

Example 1:

ST

الأيّام متربّصة بهم. هي تشغّلهم (المحمود، 1983، ص23).

TT

The Days are lying in wait for them. They will let them work.

Anājīl al-Xarāb

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, only one example out of 127 proverbs (0.78%) involves personification.

Example 1:

ST

جهل الكبر قتّال (نيوف، 1995، ص92)

TT

The vanity of the elderly kills.

3.8.8 Irony

Muftaraq al-Maṭar

Example 1:

ST

المسيح لنا، وعيد الميلاد لكفر شاغر! (المحمود، 1983، ص254).

TT

We have Christ, while Kfīršaġir has Christmas Day.

Ibrāhīm Taqlā is from the village of *Bīt Šbāṭ* whose people are Christians. He says this proverb to mock himself and his people from the same village because their celebration of Christmas does not last three days as it does in the Alawite village of *Kfīršaġir*. It means that we believe in Jesus Christ and worship Him as God, but our festival for His Birthday does not last as long as it does for the Muslims (specifically the Alawites) who believe in him as a Prophet only.

Example 2:

ST

لا أحد يبقى على يمينه إلّا كلّ كافر (المحمود، 1983، ص530).

TT

Only the unbeliever sticks to his oath.

This proverb is ironic because unbelievers cannot keep their pledge. Here Umm-Maḥmūd tells her son who swore not to work again in ploughing this proverb to urge him to break his oath. But she uses it in an ironic way. Instead of saying: "Only the believer sticks to his oath", she says: "Only the unbeliever sticks to his oath".

Example 3:

ST

ضاعت و التقت! (المحمود، 198، ص86).

TT

She was lost and became found again!

Musallim and his brother, Abū Mezīad, are as weak and unskilful in digging the land as women. Så̊dā offers to dig the land instead of them. Her work will not be better than theirs and nothing will change for the better. So this proverb is to mock her.

Anājīl al-Xarāb

There are no examples of proverbs involving irony in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*.

3.8.9 Euphemism

Muftaraq al-Maṭar

    Example 1:

                                                ST

تغيّرت البنديرة (المحمود، 1983، ص514).

TT
The Bindīra [authority/power] changed.

It means that there has been a change in power, but this seems to be just words without actions. Everything is as it was before. The term 'bindīra', literally meaning 'flag,' is used to allude euphemistically to the actual referent, which is the change of the power in charge– from the Ottomans to the French. The proverb means that the occupying power changed.

Anājīl al-Xarāb

There are no proverbs involving euphemism in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*.

3.9 Standardness of the proverbs

In Chapter 2, I considered in addition to proverbs in their standard forms, imported proverbs (Section 2.6.1) and modified/adapted proverbs and anti-proverbs (Section 2.6.2). In this section, I consider these features as they are found in proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, as well as the geographical scope of use of these proverbs.

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, 13 (2.5%) are standard proverbs taken from written sources (poems, the Quran, etc.), 79 (15.19%) are modified proverbs (adaptations of existing, established proverbs), 32 (6.15%) are general Syrian/Shami proverbs (i.e. found in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan), 18 (3.46%) are local only (found only in the village which is the focus of the novel), 9 (1.73%) are found in the wider Arab World, 72

(13.85%) are local with non-local variants, 7 (1.35%) are unidentified and 290 (55.77%) are found in the Syrian coast only.

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, 13 (10.25%) are standard proverbs, 40 (31.50%) are modified proverbs, 10 (7.87%) are local with non-local variants, 11(8.66%) are General Syrian/Shami proverbs, 0 (0%) local only, 3 (2.36%) are wider Arab World, 49 (38.58%) are Syrian coast only and 1 (0.79%) is unidentified.

3.9.1 Language of the proverb: Standard and colloquial Arabic

The language of the proverbs employed in both novels varies. A few of them are written in Standard Arabic and originated from Standard Arabic as well. Others appear in the novels in Standard Arabic, though their origin is Colloquial Arabic. This variety in the usage of Standard Arabic and Colloquial Arabic applies also to the modified proverbs which appear in both novels. The issue of Standard vs. colloquial is specific to Arabic proverbs, and was not therefore discussed in Chapter 2.

3.9.1.1 Standard Arabic from Standard Arabic original

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* there are 97 proverbs (18.65%) used in Standard Arabic which also originate in Standard Arabic. Some of these are given in their original Standard Arabic form, while others are modified.

Example 1:

ST

الحي أبقى من الميت (المحمود، 1983، ص 9).

TT

The living man is better than the dead one.

Example 2:

ST

النّوم سلطان (المحمود، 1983، ص21)

TT

Sleep is a sultan.

Example 3:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

انحرفنا لتشميع الخيط (المحمود، 1983، ص114)

</div>

TT

We slipped away to wax the string.

Example 4:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

دوام الحال من المحال (المحمود، 1983، ص489)

</div>

TT

The continuation of the present is impossible.

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* there are 61 proverbs (48.03%) used in Standard Arabic which also originate in Standard Arabic. Some of these are given in their original Standard Arabic form, while others are modified.

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

تعدّدت الأسباب و الموت واحد (نيوف، 1995، ص79).

</div>

TT

Causes are multiple but death is one.

Example 2:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

كل ذي عاهة جبّار (نيوف، 1995، ص 85)

</div>

TT

Every one with a disability is powerful.

Example 3:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

قطع الأعناق و لا قطع الأرزاق (نيوف، 1995، ص 152).

</div>

 TT

Cutting off someone's neck is better than preventing him earning his livelihood.

Example 4:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

المال و البنون زينة الحياة الدّنيا (نيوف، 1995، ص 172).

</div>

TT

Money and boys are the beauty of the life.

3.9.1.2 Standard Arabic from unidentified original

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* there are 14 proverbs (2.96%) used in Standard Arabic which cannot be traced back to any written reference, but which sound like proverbs.

Example 1:

ST

الفراخ لا تدير أعشاشاً (المحمود، 1983، ص 234).

TT

The chicks cannot manage nests.

Example 2:

ST

إبرته صارت مسلّة (المحمود، 1983، ص 216)

TT

His pin became a pack needle.

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* there are no standard proverbs of unidentified origin.

3.9.1.3 Colloquial (from colloquial)

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* there are 15 proverbs (2.88%) used in colloquial Arabic which also originate in colloquial Arabic. Some of these are given in their original colloquial Arabic form, while others are modified.

Example 1:

ST

الشّاب بمداسو و لباس راسو (المحمود، 1983، ص 433).

TT

The young man is known by his shoes and his head cover.

Example 2:

ST

الصّهر مسند الضّهر (المحمود، 1983، ص 498).

TT

The son-in-law is the support of the back.

Example 3:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

استدّ من زبون النّحس و لو قصرينة (المحمود، 1983، ص 285).

</div>

TT

Get back even the worst kind of straw from a bad customer.

Example 4:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

كانون، كن في بيتك، يا مجنون (المحمود، 1983، ص 250).

</div>

TT

January, stay at home, you madman.

Example 5:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

الحصاد هو شغلة الغشيم (المحمود، 1983، ص 141).

</div>

TT

Harvesting is the work of the fool.

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* there are 4 proverbs (3.15%) used in colloquial Arabic which also originate in colloquial Arabic. Some of these are given in their original colloquial Arabic form, while others are modified.

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

الدّهر خاين (نيوف، 1995، ص107).

</div>

TT

Life is treacherous.

Example 2:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

انسم حاصوداً و نم بعين الشّمس (نيوف، 1995، ص11).

</div>

TT

Be called a reaper and sleep in the sun.

Example 3:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

لا حكاية بلا أساس، و لا إنسان بلا راس (نيوف، 1995، ص 159).

</div>

TT

There is no story without an origin, and no human being without a head.

Example 4:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

لا تنم بين القبور ولا تشف منامات (نيوف، 1995، ص27)

</div>

TT

Do not sleep between tombs and have dreams.

3.9.1.4 Mixed – Standard Arabic and colloquial

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* there are 44 proverbs (8.46%) either used in mixed Standard and colloquial Arabic, or which have the same form in both Standard and colloquial Arabic.

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

الحصاد هو شغلة الغشيم (المحمود، 1983، ص 141).

</div>

TT

Harvesting is the work of the fool.

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* there are 5 proverbs (3.94%) either used in mixed Standard and colloquial Arabic, or which have the same form in both Standard and colloquial Arabic.

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

يد من ورا و يد من قدّام (نيوف، 1995، ص152).

</div>

TT

A hand from behind and a hand at the front.

Example 2:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

النسيان من النسوان (نيوف، 1995، ص31).

</div>

TT

Forgetfulness is due to women.

This proverb has the same form in both Standard and colloquial Arabic.

Example 3:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

من دق دق حتّى السّلام عليكم (نيوف، 1995، ص86).

</div>

TT

From knock knock to good-bye.

Example 4:

ST

الشّام شامة الدّنيا (نيوف، 1995، ص130).

TT

Damascus is the beauty spot of the world.

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* there are 389 proverbs (74.81%) used in Standard Arabic which derive from proverbs in colloquial Arabic.

Example 1:

ST

أين ذبت مثل الملح (المحمود، 1983، ص 42).

TT

Where did you melt away like salt?

Example 2:

ST

هل تمشين على بيض! (المحمود، 1983، ص 43).

TT

Do you walk on eggs!

Example 3:

ST

الفرس من خيّالها و المرأة من رجّالها (المحمود، 1983، ص 77).

TT

The horse is known by its rider and the woman by her man.

Example 4:

ST

التّحصيل من النّاس صار أصعب من قلع الأضراس (المحمود، 1983، ص 83)

TT

Getting money back from people is harder than pulling teeth.

Example 5:

ST

لم يفقس من البيضة بعد (المحمود، 1983، ص 110).

TT

He did not yet hatch from the egg.

Example 6:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

الدّنيا قامت ولا من يقعدها (المحمود، 1983، ص 111).

</div>

TT

the world has risen up and nobody there can settle it down again.

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* there are 57 proverbs (44.88%) used in Standard Arabic which derive from proverbs in colloquial Arabic.

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

أعوج و لو ظلّ في القالب أربعين سنة (نيوف، 1995، ص187).

</div>

TT

It is bent even if it remained forty years in the mould.

Example 2:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

إذا وقعت النّعجة كثرت سكاكينها! (نيوف، 1995، ص197).

</div>

TT

When the ewe falls, many knives appear.

Example 3:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

من يأكل العصي ليس كمن يعدّها (نيوف، 1995، ص85).

</div>

TT

He who is beaten by a stick is not like the one who counts the blows.

Example 4:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

تزوّج بامرأة (كسّر القن ريشها) (نيوف، 1995، ص151).

</div>

TT

He married a woman; the coop broke her feathers**.**

3.10 Religious orientation of the proverbs

Many proverbs in Arabic have a clear religious element. This is not a feature which has been the focus of attention of the general literature on proverbs, and was not therefore dealt with in detail in Chapter 2.

The following charts show that 41 proverbs (13, i.e. 10.24% of the total number of proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, and 28, i.e. 5.38% of the total number of proverbs, in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*) relate to various religious sources and orientations:

Muftaraq al-Maṭar	No.	Percentage
Quran	4	0.77%
Originally religious	9	1.73%
Biblical	0	0%
Hadith	1	0.19%
Imam ᶜalī	2	0.38%
Semi-religious	4	0.77%
Anti-religious	3	0.58%

Anājīl al-Xarāb	No.	Percentage
Quran	4	2.35%
Originally religious	5	2.94%
Biblical	1	0.59%
Hadith	1	0.59%
Imam ᶜalī	1	0.59%
Semi-religious	1	0.59%

As the above charts show, only a few proverbs have a specifically religious origin or orientation – although many more proverbs have a more general religious association.

3.11 Cultural features of the proverbs

In Chapter 2, I considered some cultural features of proverbs which are prominently discussed in the literature, particularly bond with nature and domestic life (Section 2.8.1), and traditionality of content (Section 2.8.2). These rather basic categories do not do justice to the range of cultural features found in the proverbs in the two novels, and I have accordingly developed a much more detailed taxonomy of cultural features to analyse the cultural features of these proverbs (section 3.11-3.12.15).

In the following sections, I will consider cultural features of the proverbs, as follows: agriculture (Section 3.11.1), agriculture and traditionality of content (Section 3.11.2), animals (Section 3.11.3), animals and nature (Section 3.11.4), domestic life (Section 3.11.5), domestic life and household (Section 3.11.6), domestic life and the human body (Section 3.11.7), domestic life and nature (Section 3.11.8), domestic life and traditionality of content (Section 3.11.9), the household (Section 3.11.10), the household and animals (Section 3.11.11), the household and traditionalityof content (Section 3.11.12), the human body (Section 30.11.13), the human body and nature (Section 3.11.14), the human body and traditionality of content (Section 3.11.14), nature (Section 3.11.16), nature and the household (Section 3.11.17), nature and traditionality of conent (Section 3.11.18), traditionality of content (Section 3.11.19), and the weather and nature (Section 3.11.20).

3.11.1 Agriculture

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 34 proverbs (6.93%) have as their dominant element agriculture:

Example 1:

ST

استدّ من زبون النّحس و لو قصرينة (المحمود، 1983، ص250).

TT

Get back even the worst kind of straw from a bad customer.

You consider that every penny you get back from customer is a gain to you because your money is lost with him.

Example 2:

ST

إلّا هذه الضّيعة المغضوبة، مأكولة مذمومة، مثل خبز الشّعير (المحمود، 1983، ص214).

TT

Except this benighted, eaten up and blameworthy village, which is like barley bread.

This proverb is said to someone who does good things to others, but is rewarded with contempt and condemnation.

Example 3:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

رغيف و بصلة هنا، ولا رز باللحم هناك (المحمود، 1983، ص50).

</div>

TT

A loaf and an onion here is better than rice with meat there.

This proverb means to be poor in your own country is better than being rich in a foreign country.

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 6 proverbs (4.72%) have as their dominant element agriculture:

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

انسم حاصوداً و نم بعين الشّمس (نيوف، 1995، ص11).

</div>

TT

Be called a reaper and sleep in the sun.

Example 2:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

صحيح أنّ الفلّاح فلّاح أينما جاء و أينما راح (نيوف، 1995، ص185).

</div>

TT

It is true that the peasant is a peasant wherever he comes or goes.

3.11.2 Agriculture and traditionality of content

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 1 proverb (0.79%) has as its dominant element, both agriculture and traditionality of content:

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

أم هو حصرم رأيته في حلب؟ (نيوف، 1995، ص172).

</div>

TT

Or is it sour grapes that you saw in Aleppo?

This is derived from a proverb mentioned by al-Zamaxšarī in the twelfth century AD:

<div dir="rtl">

''أعجز عن الشّيء من الثّعلب عن العنقود'' يزعمون أنّ الثّعلب رأى العنقود فرامه فلم ينله فقال: هذا حامض ِقصة المثل مذكورة في كتاب المستقصى في أمثال العرب (الزّمخشري، ص 235، 1962).

</div>

TT

Even less able to get something than a fox is able to get the bunch of grapes. They say that a fox saw a bunch of grapes and tried get it, but could not. So, he said about it, "It's sour".

3.11.3 Animals

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 79 proverbs (15.19%) have as their dominant element animals:

Example 1:

ST

فلان لولا زوجته ما كان ليساوي بعرة عنزة (المحمود، 1983، ص396).

TT

A man without a wife is not worth a goat's dropping.

This proverb is an admission of a wife's virtue, that she is the one to be appreciated, because without her the house will be ruined, because her husband will be despised and frivolous and will not be worth even a goat's dropping.

Example 2:

ST

اليوم بدجاجة حربا، غداً بدجاجتنا (المحمود، 1983، ص514).

TT

Today is for Ḥarba's hen, tomorrow is for ours.

This means that the neighbours are in trouble today, but tomorrow we will be like them.

Example 3:

ST

إنّ امرأة ربّت ثوراً فلم يحرث (المحمود، 1983، ص507).

TT

A woman raised an ox, it would not plough.

This proverb means that a woman and,especially a widow is unable to rear her children.

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 11proverbs (8.66%) have as their dominant element animals:

Example 1:

ST

قرّرت أن أضرب العصافير جميعاً بحجر واحد (نيوف، 1995، ص154).

TT

 I have decided to kill all the birds with one single stone.

Example 2:

ST

الدّجاجه، اقطع منقارها-لا تغيّر كارها (نيوف، 1995، ص181).

TT

 Even if you cut off the hen's beak, it will never change its trade.

3.11.4 Animals and nature

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 2 proverbs (1.58%) have as their dominant element both animals and nature:

Example 1:

ST

تزوّج بامرأة (كسّر القن ريشها) (نيوف، 1995، ص151).

TT

He married a woman; the coop broke her feathers.

Example2:

ST

نقدّم لك العلّيق و تقدّم لنا اللّبطة (نيوف، 1995، ص187).

TT

We offer you fodder; you offer us a kick.

3.11.5 Domestic life

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 252 proverbs (48.46%) have as their dominant element domestic life:

Example 1:

ST

الأكل على قدر المحبة (المحمود، 1983، ص500).

TT

Eating is measured by love.

This proverb is used to encourage the guest to have more food and not to feel shy about doing so.

Example 2:

ST

كل كرهاً، و اشرب كرهاً، ولا تعش كرهاً (المحمود، 1983، ص474).

TT

Eat under duress, drink under duress, but do not live under duress.

The proverb means one could bear (forcing himself to eat) eating something which he dislikes. But to bear living with whom he does not love is something impossible or more difficult than anything else.

Example 3:

ST

بال الرّجال في ثيابهم (المحمود، 1983، ص489).

TT

Men pissed in their pants.

The men were very frightened.

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 49 proverbs (38.58%) have as their dominant element domestic life:

Example 1:

ST

لا تنم بين القبور ولا تشف منامات (نيوف، 1995، ص27).

TT

Do not sleep between tombs and have dreams.

Example 2:

ST

من يأكل العصي ليس كمن يعدّها (نيوف، 1995، ص85).

TT

He who is beaten by a stick is not like the one who counts the blows.

3.11.6 Domestic life and household

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) has as its dominant element domestic life and the household:

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

هل تمشين على بيض! (المحمود، 1983، ص43)

</div>

TT

Do you walk on eggs!

This proverb contains the word بيض *baīḍ* (eggs). This is a kind of food that is normally seen in every villager's house.

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 1 proverb (0.79%) has as its dominant element domestic life and the household:

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

إنّما بالكلام وحده لا يحيا الإنسان (نيوف، 1995، ص14).

</div>

TT

Man shall not live by words only.

3.11.7 Domestic life and the human body

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) has as its dominant elements domestic life and the human body:

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

الحياء في النّظر (المحمود، 1983، ص43).

</div>

TT

Modesty is in the way one looks.

This is something Musallim says about himself. The person who has the sense of politeness and good up-bringing shows this through his look, and not through pretending to be shy and polite.

3.11.8 Domestic life and nature

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 2 proverbs (0.38%) have as their dominant elements domestic life and nature:

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

كنت أقرّطك الحصا؟ (المحمود، 1983، ص118).

</div>

TT

I was letting you grind the pebbles**.**

The proverb involves a threat: I will treat you in a bad way, letting you grind the pebbles with your molars, either from hunger, when it means a threat of making you starve, or from humiliation.

Example 2:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

رأيناك في الشّمس، ورأيناك في الفيء. هنا تقولين يا ليته يتزوّج. و عندما يقرصك الحبل ترشقين بالنبل (المحمود، 1983، ص96).

</div>

TT

We saw you in sun, and saw you in shadow. Here you say I wish he would marry.
But when you are pinched by the rope, you will fight shooting arrows.

I know you. You cannot cheat me. "The rope pinched you" and "pinched by the rope" mean that if you had not been involved you would never been affected.

3.11.9 Domestic life and traditionality of content

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* no proverbs have as their dominant elements domestic life and traditionality of content. In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 1 proverb 0.79%) has as its dominant elements domestic life and traditionality of content:

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

يضحك من يضحك أخيراً (نيوف، 1995، ص72).

</div>

TT
He laughs who laughs last.

3.11.10 Household

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 42 proverbs (8.08%) have as their dominant element the household:

Example 1:

ST

جعلوا الدّنيا دبساً و طحينة (المحمود، 1983، ص209).

TT

They made the world treacle and *ṭaḥīna*.

Example 2:

ST

العين لا تقابل المخرز (المحمود، 1983، ص216).

TT

The eye cannot resist the awl.

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 12 proverbs (9.45%) have as their dominant element the household:

Example 1:

ST

تصبّ الزّيت على النّار (نيوف، 1995، ص146).

TT

Rābiḥa was most of the time pouring oil on the fire.

3.11.11 Household and animals

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) has as its dominant elements the household and animals:

Example 1:

ST

طقّ مثل البيضة (المحمود، 1983، ص524).

TT

(He) burst like an egg!

He exploded like an egg!

3.11.12 Household and traditionality of content

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) has its dominant elements the household and traditionality of content:

Example 1:

ST

انحرفنا لتشميع الخيط (المحمود، 1983، ص114).

TT
We slipped away to wax the string.

Discussion

For an account of the story behind this proverb, see section 3.11.19 *Traditionality of content*.

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 2 proverbs (1.58%) have as their dominant elements the household and traditionality of content:

Example 1:

ST

عادت حليمة لعادتها القديمة (نيوف، 1995، ص224).

TT
Ḥalīma returned to her old habit.

Discussion

For an account of the story behind this proverb, see section 3.11.19 about traditionality of content.

Example 2:

ST

أطلق لنفسي حبل الجرأة على غاربه (نيوف، 1995، ص247).

TT
I myself set free the rope of courage.

Discussion

For an account of the origin of this proverb, see section 3.6.

3.11.13 Human body

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 64 proverbs (12.31%) have as their dominant element the human body:

Example 1:

ST

التّحصيل من النّاس صار أصعب من قلع الأضراس (المحمود، 1983، ص83).

TT

Getting money back from people is harder than pulling teeth.

Example 2:

ST

لا يستطيع أن يحك فيها وراء أذنيه (المحمود، 1983، ص463)

TT

(In Al-Ḥūrah village) he (the Aghā) even cannot scrub behind his own ear!

In *Anājīl al-Xrāb* 15 proverbs (11.81%) have as their dominant element the human body:

Example 1:

ST

يد من ورا و يد من قدّام (نيوف، 1995، ص152).

TT

A hand from behind and a hand at the front.

Example 2:

ST

قطع الأعناق و لا قطع الأرزاق (نيوف، 1995، ص152).

TT

Cutting off someone's neck is better than preventing him earning his livelihood.

Example 3:

ST

هه، اللّسان قطعة لحم، كما تديرينه يندار (نيوف، 1995، ص88).

TT

This tongue is a piece of flesh, as you turn it it will turn.

3.11.14 Human body and nature

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 3 proverbs (0.58%) have as their dominant elements the human body and nature:

Example 1:

ST

عظام جنودها في وادي جهنّم ما تخّت بعد (المحمود، 1983، ص514).

TT

The bones of its soldiers in *Jahannam* valley have not yet decayed.

France should still remember that event, because not a long time has passed since then, its dead soldiers' bones being proof of that. France should take care in order not to witness another similar massacre.

Example 2:

ST

غبرة الموت على وجهه! (المحمود، 1983، ص319).

TT

Death's dust is on his face!

This proverb means death's features are apparent on his face, as if he was nearly dead. He might die between overnight.

Example 3:

ST

أرجلهم في الطّين وعيونهم على الكمين (المحمود، 1983، ص237).

TT

Their feet are in the clay while their eyes are on the ambush.

The proverb means that the emigrants are drowning in dirt and fatigue (clay is mud, torture and dirt) while their hopes are on unattainable money and riches. Their home country stays in their mind and they are unable to return to it due to their hope for wealth.

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 1 proverb (0.79%) has as its dominant element the human body and agriculture:

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

كانت شوكة أبي الهدى الصّيادي مغروسة تحت إبطي و أنا أضغط عليها لئلّا تبين (نيوف، 1995، ص55).
</div>

TT

Abū al-Hudā al-Ṣayyādī's thorn was embedded under my armpit and I was pressing on it so it would not show.

3.11.15 Human body and traditionality of content

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) has as its dominant elements the human body and traditionality of content:

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

أنت تشير على جحي لحي (المحمود، 1983، ص237).
</div>

TT

You are even able to consult the bearded Juḥā.

It is said you are fully qualified to do this. You advise and consult even Juḥā and his father's father! You are more intelligent, more skilful and more cunning; what can he do compared to you!

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 1 proverb has as its dominant elements the human body and traditionality of content:

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

كل ذي عاهة جبّار (نيوف، 1995، ص85)
</div>

TT

Everyone with a disability is powerful.

3.11.16 Nature

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 28 proverbs (5.38%) have as their dominant element nature:

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

الماء سرح تحتك (المحمود، 1983، ص96).

</div>

TT

Water ran through beneath you.

Example 2:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

هم يأكلون الأخضر واليابس (المحمود، 1983، ص214)

</div>

TT

They eat what is green and what is dry**.**

Example 3:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

الصبرة تقص المسمار (المحمود، 1983، ص401).

</div>

TT

The harsh frost cuts the nail.

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 9 proverbs (7.09%) have as their dominant element nature:

Example 1:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

من كبّر ما ضرب (نيوف، 1995، ص173).

</div>

TT

He who threw [with a large stone] did not hit .

Example 2:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

تمنيت أن تبتلعني الأرض و تطبق إلى الأبد (نيوف، 1995، ص243).

</div>

TT

I wished the earth would swallow me and close up forever.

3.11.17 Nature and the household

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) has as its dominant elements nature and the household:

Example 1:

<div align="right">**ST**</div>

<div align="right">إذا نزلت الشّمس في الزّحلوطة، لم تعد تستوي المخلوطة (المحمود، 1983، ص93).</div>

TT

If the sun sank down the slope, the *Maxlūṭah* would no longer be cooked.

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 1 proverb (0.79%) has as its dominant elements nature and the household:

Example 1:

<div align="right">**ST**</div>

<div align="right">تصبّ الزّيت على النّار (نيوف، 1995، ص146).</div>

TT

Rābiḥa was most of the time pouring oil on the fire**.**

3.11.18 Nature and traditionality of content

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 1 proverb (0.79%) has as its dominant elements nature and traditionality of content:

Example 1:

<div align="right">**ST**</div>

<div align="right">هل وراء الأكمة ما وراءك (نيوف، 1995، ص83).</div>

TT

Is what is behind the heap behind you, Fātinah.

3.11.19 Traditionality of content

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 12 proverbs (2.31%) have as their dominant element traditionality of content (cf. Section 2.8.2 for a definition of *traditionality of content*). The most interesting of these are 8 proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (1.54%) which can be related back to specific stories, as in the following examples:

Example 1:

ST

شمّع الخيط وهرب.

TT

He waxed the string and escaped.

The story behind this proverb is as follows:

حاول مسلّم و أخيه الانسحاب من بيت خالتهما من دون رجعة ، قائلين: انحرفنا لتشميع الخيط (المحمود 1983 ص 114). أي هربنا. و المثل يمكن أن يقال بطريقة أخرى:" شمّع الخيط وهرب". قصّته كما يرويها سلام الرّاسي أنّ أحد ملوك الزّمان حكم على أحد مساكين الرّجال بالإعدام، فطلب هذا كبكوبة خيطان و قطعة شمع، و إعطاءه وقتا" لتشميع الخيط. و بما أنّ التّقاليد تقضي أن يستجاب طلب المحكوم بالإعدام، قبل إعدامه، مهما كان الطّلب، جيء إليه بكبكوبة و قطعة شمع، فطلب الرّجل من حارسه أن يمسك أوّل الخيط و يبتعد عنه تدريجيا" ليستطيع تشميع الخيط تباعا". و عندما ابتعد الحارس عن الرّجل و هو ممسك بأوّل الخيط، ترك الرّجل الخيط و هرب. و عندئذٍ صار تشميع الخيط مقدّمة للهرب" (يعقوب، ص35-36).

> The story, as Salām Arrāsī narrated it, is that one of the ancient kings had ordered the execution of a poor man. This man asked for a piece of wax and a reel of thread. He also asked to be given time to wax the thread. And since tradition demands the wish of the condemned man be granted before his execution, regardless of what he asks for, a reel of thread and a piece of wax were brought to him. The man asked his prison guard to hold the beginning of the thread and to walk back slowly "in order to be able to wax the string effectively". However, when the prison guard got far away from the man as he was holding the beginning of the string, the condemned man let go of the string and escaped. So, waxing the string became the beginning of escape.

Example 2:

ST

قال جحا و ما قصّر (المحمود، 1983، ص365).

TT

Juḥā so spoke, and did not hold back / What Juḥā said is quite enough.

Abū Maḥmūd says that he did not say anything bad about Nādirah. Then Umm Maḥmūd says this to her husband, accusing him of wanting to trivialize thinking about Nādira, when he speaks about her not being a good cook.

The story behind this proverb is as follows:

أراد جحا أن يرافق جماعة راحوا لخطبة فتاة، و قال لهم بأنّه لن يضرّهم بشيئ، بل على العكس، إذا قلتم كلمة، فسأقول أنا اثنتين. سأل أهل العروس: هل لدى العريس دابّة؟ فأجاب الأهل بأنّ لديه بقرة و معزاة، ولكنّ جحا قال: لا بل عنده بقرتين و معزتين. و سألوه إن كان عنده حاكورة. فقالوا بأنّ لديه حاكورة. لكنّ جحا ضاعف العدد. ثمّ سألوا إن كان العريس عنده عاهة فقالوا أنّ عنده مشكلة في إحدى عينيه. لكنّ جحا قال لهم: لا بل عنده مشكلة في كلتا العينين (المحمود، 1983، ص365).

Joha wanted to accompany a group of people who were going to propose to a young girl. He said to them that there would be no harm in them aking him with them. He said, on the contrary, if you say a word, I will say two instead. The bride's family asked the young man if he had an animal to benefit him. They answered that he had a cow and a goat. But Joha said that he had two cows and two goats. Then they asked him if he had a small farm. Then they answered that he had one. But Joha doubled the number. Then, they asked if the bridegroom had any physical defects; and they answered that he had a small defect in one of his eyes. But Joha, as usual, doubled things, and said that he had a defect in both eyes.

Example 3:

ST

إيّاك أعني، و اسمعي يا جارةالمحمود (المحمود، 1983، ص515).

TT

You are the one I mean, listen you neighbour.

This proverb is said to he who says something while means/intends something else. The story behind the proverb is as follows:

و أوّل من قال هذا المثل سهل بن مالك، من فزارة، لما قصد النّعمان بن المنذر فمرّ بديار طيْ، فسأل عن سيّدهم حارثة بن لأم، فرحّبت به أخته، و لم يكن حارثه موجودا"، فوقع في نفسه شيء من تعلّق قلبه بها، فأقام بفناء البيت، و راح ينشد بحيث تسمعه، و ممّا أنشده قوله:

كيف ترين في فتى فزارة	يا أخت خير البدو و الحضارة
إيّاك أعني فاسمعي يا جارة (شامي، 1995، ص11).	أصبح يهوى حرّة معطارة

The first person to say this proverb was Sahel Bin Malik, from Fazarah. On his way to visit Annu'man Ibn Almunther, he stopped at the houses of the Tayyi', asking about their master Harithah Bin La'em whose sister welcomed him, for Harith was not there. Then he fell in love with her and stayed in the courtyard of the houses and started to sing in an audible voice. This is part of what he sang:

You, the sister of the best both bedouins and civilized Arabs
How do you see the man of Fizarah
He fell in love with a noble and beautiful woman
You, I mean and listen, you, neighbour.

Example 4:

ST

مراقبتي لخاتون ذات شجون وشؤون (المحمود، 1983، ص515).

TT

My watching of Xātūn is full of sorrows and concerns.

The origin of this proverb is as follows:

زعموا أنّ ضَبَّةُ بْنُ أُدِّ بن الياس بن مضر بن معد وَكَانَ لَهُ ابْنَان يقال لأحدهما سَعْدٌ و الآخر سُعَيْدٌ ،و أنّ إبل ضَبّة نفرت تحت اللّيل وهما معها ، فَخَرَجَا يطلبانها ، فتفرّقا في طلبها، فوجدها سَعْدٌ فعاد بها ، و أمّا سُعَيْدٌ فذهب و لم يرجعن فجعل ضَبَّةُ يقول بعد ذلك إذا رأى تحت اللّيل سواداً مقبلاً أَسَعْدٌ أَمْ سُعَيْدٌ ،فذهب قوله مثلاً.

ثمَّ اتى على ذلك ما شاء اللّه ان يأتي لا يجيْ سعيد و لا يعلم له خبر ، ثُمَّ إنَّ ضَبَّةَ بعد ذلك بَيْنَمَا هُوَ يَسِيرُ و الْحَارِثِ بْنِ كَعْبٍ فِي ا لأَشْهُرِ الْحَرَمِ وهما يتحدّثان إذ مرّا على سرحة بمكان فقال له الحارث: فَقَالَ الْحَارِث : أَتَرَى هَذَا الْمكان؟ فَإنِّي لَقِيتُ فيه شاباً مِنْ هَيْئة كَذَا وَكَذَا ــ فوصف صفة سعيد، فَقَتَلْتُهُ وَأَخَذْتُ برداً كان عليهن و مِنْ صفة البرد كذا و كذا ــ فوصف صفة البرد ــ و سيفاً كان عليه ، فَقَالَ ضبّة: ما صفة السّيف؟ قال: ها هو ذا علَيّن قال فأرينهن فأراه إيّاهن فعرفه ضبّة ثمَّ قال: إنَّ الْحَدِيثَ لَهُ شُجُونٌ . ثُمَّ ضَرَبَه حَتَّى قَتَلَهُ ، فذهب قوله هذا أيضاً مثلاً. فَلَامَهُ النَّاسُ و قالوا قتلت رجلاً في الأشهر الحرم فقال ضبّة: "سَبَقَ السَّيْفُ الْعَذَلَ" (الضّبي، 1983، ط2 ، ص47).

They said that Ḍibbah Ibn Ilias Ibn Mudar Ibn Ma'ad had two sons. One was called Saʿd and the other Saʿīd and they separated when they went in search of the stray camels. When Saʿd found the camels, he brought them back home, whereas Sid did not come back. This made Ḍibbah say "Is it Saʿd or Saʿīd?", whenever he saw a shadow in the night. This saying became a proverb. Then God wanted Saʿd to come back but not Saʿīd. While he was walking and talking to Al-Ḥārith in the sacred months, they passed by a place, and Al-Ḥārith said to him: "Do you see this place? I met a young man there whose features were so and so", describing Saʿīd, "and I killed him and took his garment which looked like such and such", and he described the gown/garment, with the sword laid on it. Then Ḍibbah asked, "What did the sword look like?". Then Ḥārith answered "It is here", wearing it. Then Ḍibbah asked him to show it to him, and he did. Ḍibbah recognised it and said, "It is true, the conversation has sorrows". Then he killed Ḥārith. His second saying became a proverb as well. But people blamed him for killing a man in the sacred months. Then Ḍibbah said: "*Sabaqa al-sayfu al-ʿaḏal*" (The sword overran the excuse).

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 12 proverbs (9.45%) have as their dominant element traditionality of content. The most interesting of these are 5 proverbs (3.94%), which can be related back to specific stories, as in the following examples:

Example 1:

ST

الإناء ينضح بما فيه (نيوف، 1995، ص208).

TT
The pot overflows with what it contains.

There are two indications that this proverb has been used in the early days of the Arabs. The first is:

قالت العرب قديماً، كل إناء بما فيه ينضح، وهي عبارة صحيحة وعميقة المعنى، فالإناء الذي امتلأ حتى آخره، لابد أن ينضح بما فيه، فإن كان خيراً، فنعم بما نضح، وإن كان سوءاً، فكفانا الله شره (العرب، 2014).

In the old days, the Arabs said, each pot overflows with what it contains. This is a correct and meaningful phrase. For the brim-full pot will definitely overflow with what it contains. So if it is filled with goodness, blessings are what it will overflow with; while if it is filled with evil, may God prevent its evil.

As for the second, it can be found in a story related to Imam ʿAlī:

قال ابن أبي الحديد: (و لمّا ملك عسكرِ معاوية عليه الماء وأحاطوا بشريعة الفرات وقالت رؤساء الشّام له: اقتلهم بالعطش كما قتلوا عثمان عطشاً، سألهم عليُّ(ع) وأصحابه أن يسوِّغوا لهم شرب الماء فقالوا: لا والله، ولا قطرة حتّى تموت ظمأ كما مات ابن عفّان، فلمّا رأى(ع) أنّه الموت لا محالة تقدَّم بأصحابه وحمل على عساكر معاوية حملات كثيفة حتّى أزالهم عن مراكزهم بعد قتل ذريع سقطت منه الرُّؤوس والأيدي، وملكوا عليهم الماء، وصار أصحاب معاوية في الفلاة لا ماء لهم، فقال له أصحابه وشيعته: امنعهم الماء يا أمير المؤمنين، كما منعوك، ولا تسقهم منه قطرة، واقتلهم بسيوف العطش، وخذهم قبضاً بالأيدي فلا حاجة لك إلى الحرب، فقال: لا والله، لا أكافئهم بمثل فعلهم، افسحوا لهم عن بعض الشَّريعة، ففي حدِّ السَّيف ما يغني عن ذلك).

ملكنا فكان العفو منّا سجيَّة   فلمّا ملكتم سال بالدَّم أبطح
فحسبكم هذا التَّـــفاوت بيننا   فكلُّ إناء بالّذي فيه ينضح (النّبأ، 2009).

Ibn Abī Al-Ḥudayd said, "When Muꜥāwiya's soldiers gained control of the water and the water-holes of the Euphrates, the leaders of Greater Syria said, 'Kill them by denying them water, just as they killed Uthman'. ꜥAlī (peace be upon him) asked them to make water accessible to them, but they replied, 'No, by God, not even a drop until you die of thirst, just as Ibn ꜥaffān died. When alī (peace be upon him) found that death was inescapable, he proceeded with his followers/comrades and launched repeated attacks on Muꜥāwiyah's soldiers, displacing them from their positions. After much killing, during which heads and hands fell, they regained control of the water while Muꜥāwiya's soldiers were pushed into the wilderness without water. Then ꜥalī's partisans and comrades said to him, 'Preventing them from having water, Commander of the Faithful, just as they prevented you, and do not give them a drop to drink, but kill them with the swords of thirst, and take them captives by hand as you will not even need to launch an attack'. ꜥalī replied, 'No, by God. I will not treat them as they treated me. Let some water be made available to them. This sword blade will substitute for lack of water'."

> When were in control, forgiveness was our natural disposition.
> While when you were in control, blood trickled from the bodies lying face-down on the ground.
> You permitted the killing of captives while we forgave our captives.
> This difference between us suffices. And each pot overflows with what it contains.

Example 2:

ST

عادت حليمة لعادتها القديمة (نيوف، 1995، ص224).

TT

Ḥalīma returned to her old habit.

This proverb is said to someone who has decided to give up a bad habit and then returns to it. It emerged in the seventh century AD. The story behind the proverb is as follows:

حليمة هي زوجة حاتم الطائي الذي اشتهر بالكرم، كما اشتهرت هي بالبخل، فكانت إذا أرادت أن تضع سمناً في الطبخ واخذت الملعقة ترتجف يدها، فأراد حاتم أن يعلمها الكرم فقال لها: إن الأقدمين كانوا يقولون أن المرأة كلما وضعت ملعقة من السمن في طنجرة الطبخ زاد الله بعمرها يوماً، فأخذت حليمة تزيد ملاعق السمن في الطبخ، حتى صار طعامها طيباً وتعودت يدها على السخاء ! وشاء الله ان يفجعها بابنها الوحيد الذي كانت تحبه أكثر من نفسها فجزعت حتى تمنت الموت وأخذت لذلك تقلل من وضع السمن في الطبخ حتى ينقص عمرها وتموت فقال الناس: عادت حليمة إلى عادتها القديمة (سليمان ، 2012).

Ḥalimah was the wife of Ḥātim Aṭṭā'ī who was known for his generosity while she was known for her meanness. Whenever she wanted to add ghee to the cooking her hand would start to tremble. Ḥātim wanted to teach her a lesson in generosity and said to her: The old people used to say that every time a woman added a full spoon of ghee to the cooking, God will add one day to her life. So Ḥalimah became generous! Starting to add spoons of ghee to her cooking, it made it tasty. But God wanted to deprive her of her only son whom she loved even more than herself. She was so filled with dread that she wished for death and started to reduce the ghee in the cooking in order to reduced her life and die. So people said: "Ḥalimah returned to her old habit".

Example 3:

ST

هل وراء الأكمة ما وراءك (نيوف، 1995، ص83).

TT

Is what is behind the heap behind you, Fātinah?

This proverb is said when oneself mocks himself and reveals something about himself which he normally does not want to show.

The story behind this proverb is as follows:

قالَتْها امرأة كانت واعَدَتْ تَبَعاً لها أن تأْتِيَهُ وراء الأَكَمة إذا جَنَّ رُؤْيٌ رُؤْياً، فَبَيْنا هي مُعِيرةٌ في مَهْنَة أَهْلِها إذ نَسَّها شَوْقٌ إلى مَوْعِدها وطال عليها المُكْث وضَجِرت (* قوله «وضجرت» في التهذيب: وصخبت).، فخرج منها الذي كانت لا تريد إظْهارَه وقالت: حَبَسْتُموني ووَراء الأَكَمة ما وَراءها يقال ذلك عند الهُزْء بكل مَنْ أَخبر عن نفسه ساقِطاً مَا لا يريد إظْهارَه (قاموس الباحث العربي).

This proverb was said by a woman who promised to meet her lover behind the rubble-hill if she was mad to meet him. But while she was busy helping her family, she felt a great desire to meet her lover. But she stayed for a long time and got bored. So, she said what she did not intend to say. She said: "You imprisoned me while there is somebody waiting for me behind the heap".

Example 4:

ST

إن الله لا يغير ما بقوم حتى يغيروا ما بأنفسهم (نيوف، 1995، ص170).

TT

God does not change a community (people) until it (they) change what is inside them.

This is taken from the Quran, the Surah of Thunder (الرعد), Verse 11.

3.11.20 Weather and nature

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 14 proverbs (2.69%) have as their dominant elements weather and nature:

Example 1:

ST

الهواء الغربي فرفح قلبي (المحمود، 1983، ص402).

TT

The west wind has made my heart delighted.

Example 2:

ST

الهواء القبلي رمى الحبلى (المحمود، 1983، ص402).

TT

The Qiblī wind blew the pregnant woman over.

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 1proverb (0.79%) has as its dominant elements weather and nature:

Example 1:

ST

فاتنا الموسم (الآن) (نيوف، 1995، ص177).

TT

The season has gone now (We have missed the season now).

3.12 Relationship to traditional activities and crafts

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 20 proverbs (3.85%) involve traditional crafts. In *Anājīl al-Xarāb*7 proverbs involve (5.51%) traditional crafts. These are further discussed in relation to specific traditional crafts below.

3.12.1 Animal rider

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) involves an animal rider:

Example 1:

ST

هي ليلة يا مكاري (المحمود، 1983، ص145).

TT

It is just one single night, you animal rider**.**

3.12.2 Blacksmith

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 2 proverbs (0.38%) involve blacksmithng.

Example 1:

ST

سكيننا الحدّاديّة الّتي تلقط البرغشة برهافة حدّها (المحمود، 1983، ص292).

TT

Our blacksmithing knife which cuts the fly with its sharpness.

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 1proverb (0.79%) involves blacksmithing

Example 1:

ST

كان راضي السندان و هي المطرقة، فوقعت أنا و فاتنه بينهما (نيوف، 1995، ص74).

TT

Rāḍī was the anvil and she was the hammer, so I and Fatina fell between them**.**

3.12.3 Blacksmith and shoemaker

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) involves the blacksmith and shoemaker.

Example 1:

ST

كنا بالسّكافة صرنا بالحدادة (المحمود، 1983، ص114).

TT

We used to be shoemakers but now we are blacksmiths.

3.12.4 Knight

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) involves a knight.

Example 1:

ST

الفرس من خيّالها و المرأة من رجّالها (المحمود، 1983، ص77).

TT

The horse is known by its rider and the woman by her man.

3.12.5 Musician

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 1 proverb (0.79%) involves a musician:

Example 1:

ST

لا تقل للزّمَار زمّر، و لا للطّبّال طبّل (نيوف، 1995، ص187).

TT

Do not say to the piper pipe or to the drummer drum.

3.12.6 Reapers

In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 1 proverb (0.79%) involves reapers.

Example 1:

ST

انسم حاصوداً و نم بعين الشّمس (نيوف، 1995، ص11).

TT

Be called a reaper and sleep in the sun.

3.12.7 Peasants

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 2 proverbs (0.38%) involve peasants.

Example 1:

ST

سنة الملّاح هي سنة الفلّاح (المحمود، 1983، ص126).

TT

The year of the snow [i.e. where snow is like salt: *milḥ*] is the year of the peasant.

Example 2:

ST

صرتم حواصيد و شقفة (المحمود، 1983، ص150).

TT

You became less than harvesters.

3.12.8 Ploughing

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 2 proverbs (0.38%) involve ploughing.

Example 1:

ST

الفلاحة مثل الزّنى، مرة واحدة وألف مرة مثل بعضها بعض، صيت يلزم صاحبه إلى الأبد (المحمود، 1983، ص82)

TT

Ploughing is like adultery. Once and a thousand times are like each other. A reputation accompanies its owner forever**.**

Example2:

ST

علف العنزة لا يربي بقرة، و البقرة الفلّاحة غير البقرة المرتاحة! (المحمود، 1983، ص97)

TT

The fodder for a goat does not feed a cow, and the ploughing cow is different from the relaxed cow!

3.12.9 Knights, fighters and peasants

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) involves knights, fighters and peasants.

Example 1:

ST

القاؤك لفأسك مثل أن لو كان دياب بن غانم ألقى بسلاحه في الميدان!(المحمود، 1983، ص106)

TT

Throwing your axe is like Dīāb Bin Ġānim throwing his weapon on the battlefield!

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) involves both peasants and tradesmen.

Example 1:

ST

صاحب الصّنعة بالقلعة، والفلّاح بالتّعاسة و الأتراح (المحمود، 1983، ص227).

TT

He who has a trade lives in a castle, but the peasant leads a life of misery and grief.

3.12.10 Merchants

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) involves merchants:

Example 1:

ST

لو سكت الخاسر، ولم يفلس التّاجر، ولم يبك القابر، ما كان بقي للحاضر شيء من الغابر (المحمود، 1983، ص98).

TT

If the loser kept silent and the merchant did not bankrupt, and the burier did not cry, there would remain nothing for the present out of the past.

3.12.11 Hunters

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) involves hunters.

Example 1:

ST

الصّيّاد و طالب الزّواج، لا يستطيعان أن يشترطا على الظّروف (المحمود، 1983، ص68).

TT

The hunter and he who proposes marriage cannot stipulate the circumstances.

3.12.12 Begs and sheikhs

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) involves the Beg and sheikhs.

Example 1:

ST

تقاتلت الخيل و البغال، فراحت الحمير بالدّرب. تخاصم البك والمشايخ، رحنا نحن فرق عملة (المحمود، 1983، ص214)

TT

When the horses and the mules fought, the donkeys were trodden underfoot on the road. When the sheikhs and the Beg fought, we were small change.

3.12.13 Sheikh

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) involves a sheikh.

Example 1:

ST

فكنتم تحملونها باردة ساخنة، وتطقّونها بأذن المشايخ، ونبوء نحن بسواد الوجه؟(المحمود، 1983، ص214).

TT

You used to carry it cold- hot, putting it into the sheikhs ears, and we appear black faced?

3.12.14 Fortune-telling

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) involves fortune-telling.

Example 1:

ST

أنا لا أضرب بالرّمل (المحمود، 1983، ص364).

TT

I am not a fortune teller.

3.12.15 Mayor and policeman

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) involves a mayor and policeman.

Example 1:

ST

كانت يد المختار في حلق الجندرمة إلى الكوع (المحمود، 1983، ص512).

TT

The mayor's hand was on the policeman's throat up to the elbow.

3.13 Conclusion

Looking at the formal features of the proverbs in both novels, we notice that alliteration and assonance are significant in both novels, occurring in 70% of the total number of proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and a slightly higher percentage, 72.44%, of the total number of proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. This is a tangible confirmation that both novels are fraught with emotions. By contrast, rhyme occurs in only 3.94% of the proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, with only a third of the percentage of the proverbs using rhyme in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, at 13.46%. With regard to repetition, *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* shows a higher percentage of repetition in general – 240 (46.15%) of the 521proverbs exhibit all types of repetition in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, while 47 (9.03%) proverbs display root repetition only, 65 (12.5%) pattern repetition only. In comparison 35 (27.56%) of proverbs display all types of repetition in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, while 10 (7.87%) display root repetition only, 6 (4.72%) pattern repetition only. Nevertheless, in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar,* lexical repetition is less displayed, with 48 (9.23%) than in proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 17 (13.39%) lexical repetition. Similarly, the representation of both root and lexical repetition , is slightly higher in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, with 2 (1.57%) in comparison to 8 (1.53%) in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*.

Looking at figurative usages in proverbs, *Anājīl al-Xarāb* has a slightly higher rate, 80.31%, compared to 75% in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*. Simile is more common in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* occurring in 15.64% of figurative proverbs, compared to 13.72% in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. *Anājīl al-Xarāb* has a higher percentage of metaphors – 84.31% of all figurative proverbs, compared to 69.48% for *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*. *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* displays much more metonymy than *Anājīl al-Xarāb* – 6.66% compared to 0% respectively. The proportion of figurative proverbs displaying hyperbole in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* is 5.89 – the percentage of hyperbole in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, at1.96%. While a small proportion of figurative proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* displays both metaphor and hyperbole (0.25%), euphemism (0.25%), and irony (0.51%)*,* there is no use at all of these three figures of speech in the figurative proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*.

Although religion is an important factor in the Arab World, there are a few proverbs, which have religious features. The findings show that 10.24% of proverbs have religious orientations in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, while only around half this percentage do so in

Muftaraq al-Maṭar (5.38%). This low percentage in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* may be explained in two ways: first, through the many occasions where characters suplicate to *walīs* or *maqāmāt,* instead of God; and second, through the existence of these holy places in the villages, where the events take place. This prompts the character to visit and pay tribute to the holy shrine, rather than merely uttering a proverb talking about God. In general, both novels are poor in proverbs with religious orientations. This may be attributed to the secular and communist orientation of both writers.

Cultural features of the proverbs belong to the following categories and subcategories: agriculture, human body and agriculture, animals and nature, domestic life, animals, domestic life and the household, domestic life and the human body, domestic life and nature, domestic life and traditionality of content, household and animals, household, human body, human body and nature, human body and traditionality of content, nature. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 34 proverbs (6.93%) have as their dominant element agriculture, while only 6 proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (4.72%) do so. Domestic life is less strongly represented in proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* with 49 proverbs (38.58%) while in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* it is found in 252 proverbs (48.46%). This is not surprising since the environment in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* is rural, with peasants, animals and a focus on farming and farms.

Animals are found in 79 of the proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (15.19%), but in only 11 proverbs (8.66%) in *Anājīl al-Xarāb,* i.e. the percentage of animal proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* is nearly double that in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. This is again a plausible outcome because of the type of characters and surroundings in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*. In *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, the characters are more educated, while in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar,* the characters are peasants who live in small villages, and animals are fundamental in their lives.

Archaicness is another point discussed in this chapter. A number of proverbs go back to archaic origins, even though the proverbs themselves are still current, I gave seven examples in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar,* and eight examples *in Anājīl al-Xarāb.*

In relation to literary provenance, proverbs taken from written sources (poems, the Quran, etc.) in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* occur in only 2.5% of cases, compared to a higher percentage 10.25% of such proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. The percentage of proverbs

from written sources in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* is thus nearly five times higher than the percentage of such proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*. Again we notice that the percentage of modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* at 31.50% is considerably higher than the percentage of modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* at 15.19%. The percentage of general Syrian/Shami proverbs is 6.15% in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* compared to 8.66% in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. The percentage of proverbs which are local only is 3.46% in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* as compared to nill in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, 1.73% of proverbs are used in the wider Arab World, compared to 2.36% in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. The percentage of the unidentified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* at 1.35% is nearly double the percentage of the unidentified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* at 0.79%. The percentage of local proverbs with non-local variants in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* at 13.85% is almost double the percentage of local proverbs with non-local variants in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, at 7.87%.The percentage of proverbs used on the Syrian coast only in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (38.58%) is smaller than the percentage of the proverbs used on the Syrian coast only in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (55.77%).

The percentage of proverbs involving traditional crafts is a little bit smaller in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* at 3.85%, as compared to 5.51% in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. Concerning the language of the proverbs as they are employed in both novels (colloquial, standard, mixed) and their origin (standard, colloquial), we notice in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* the percentage of Standard Arabic proverbs which also originate in Standard Arabic (48.03%) is higher than the percentage of the Standard Arabic proverbs of Standard Arabic origin in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (18.65%).

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* there are 14 proverbs (2.96%) used in Standard Arabic of unidentified origin, while in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* there are 0 Standard Arabic proverbs of unidentified origin. The percentage of proverbs used in Standard Arabic which derive from proverbs in colloquial Arabic in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (74.81%) is higher than the percentage of proverbs used in Standard Arabic which derive from proverbs in colloquial Arabic in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (44.88%). There is a slight difference between the percentage of colloquial Arabic proverbs which also originate in colloquial Arabic in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (2.88%) and the percentage of the proverbs whose language falls in the same sub-category in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (3.15%).

While there are only 5 proverbs (3.94%) either used in mixed Standard and colloquial Arabic, or which have the same form in both Standard and colloquial Arabic in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, there are a higher number in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* – 44 proverbs (8.46%).

Chapter 4: Modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb*

4.1 Introduction

This chapter considers modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. It defines modified proverbs as 'deformed' novel versions of existing proverbs (Section 4.2), considering the place of these modified proverbs in literature (Section 4.3). It presents the modified proverbs which are used in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb,* showing how these fit into various different patterns (Section 4.5), in relation to their origins (Section 4.5.1), cultural features (Section 4.5.2), social functions (Section 4.5.3), and formation (Section 4.5.4). Section 6 provides a conclusion.

4.2 Modified proverbs

According to Mieder (p.28, 2004), modified proverbs – also known as anti-proverbs – can be defined as "parodied, twisted, or fractured proverbs that reveal humorous or satirical speech play with traditional proverbial wisdom" (see Mieder and Litovkina 1999; Mieder 2003). According to Litovkina (2011, p.192), when the change in the form or the structure of proverbs arouse laughter, they can be considered as "intertextual jokes". It means that given that the proverb is a text, the humour that is provoked by playing with this traditional proverb can be looked at as a joke in relation to this proverb (text). Litovkina (2011, p.192), uses Norrick's term, modified proverbs, to refer to proverbs which are adapted from their original form. However, Mieder (2004, p.28) uses the term, anti-proverbs, to refer to modified or transformed proverbs.

Mieder explains the ways in which proverbs can be changed. One possibility is the slight difference in form between the original proverb and the modified one as in the example provided by Mieder and Mieder (2004, p.314), "Do unto mothers" instead of "Do unto others". Here, the modified proverb has cbeen hanged by adding only one letter "m" to the word "others". On the other hand, the new proverb may deviate drastically from the form of the traditional proverb. However, according to Litovkina and Mieder (2006, p. 7), to get the humour that is aroused by the new modified proverb,

it is a vital condition for the listener/reader of the anti-proverb to be aware of the original proverb: "Typically an anti-proverb will elicit humor only if the traditional proverb upon which it is based is also known, thus allowing the reader or the listener to perceive the incongruity between the two expressions".

Szpila (2009b), introduces the term, paremic locus, defining this as a narrative space in which either an original proverb or its paraphrase is located. Szpila (2009b) says: "A paremic locus is where we see a signal, either semantic or formal or both, of a proverb, which is then analysed as applying to various elements of the text, so it is a question of the proverbs' function with reference to a novel's plot and its interpretable semantics.

Mieder notes that with the existence of many transformations of the original proverbs, it is difficult to maintain the idea of the sacredness of the proverbs' frames, forms or stable appearance. As Mieder (2004, p.28) puts it:

> The fixity of proverbs is not as rigid as it once was believed to be. Unintentional variants have also been part of the use and function of proverbs, both oral and written. And yet, more often than not proverbs are cited in their standard traditional form to add some common sense to human communication.

Mieder (2004, p.28) supports his view about the various proverbs that can be created from one single original proverb. He says:

> for example, the proverb "A fool and his money are soon parted" has resulted in such modified proverbs as such "A fool and his father's money are soon parted", "A fool and his money are soon popular," "A fool and his money stabilize the economy," "A fool and his wife are soon parted," "A married man and his money are soon parted," "A widow and her money are soon courted," "If a fool and his money are soon parted, why are there so many rich fools?," and "There was a time when a fool and his money were soon parted, but now it happens to everybody".

In the aforementioned new or modified proverbs, it is still possible to track the present authority of the original proverb. One of these modified proverbs gives the sense of an opposite meaning to that of the original proverb, through questioning it and as Mieder (2004, p.28) suggests, through "adding a contradictory phrase beginning with the conjunction "but". However, this modification or addition does not undermine the importance of the adapted proverb because this changed form is still able to serve a certain function.

When there is a replacement of one word or more in a proverb, but without changing the meaning of the proverb, the new form is called "an occasional synonymous unit" by Martinez (2006, p.133-34). According to Martinez (2006, p.133-34): "This type of occasional productivity is not directly related with the lexemes that take part in the process of substitution".

Changing the lexemes is not the sole reason for the prevalence of the "new synonymous creation" (Martinez, 2006, p.134), but the "contextualization of the original unit" (Martinez, 2006, p.134). Martinez (2006, p.134) explains the vitality of the context: "The contextual information is so important that sometimes the interchange of synonymous lexemes in a specific context yields an utterance which is semantically very distant from the original form in a specific context".

Proverbs can be reduced to general forms to facilitate their adaptation. Mieder and Mieder (2004, p. 313) provide numerous examples of playing on the wording of the proverb to become a slogan advertising for a certain company. For instance, "the proverb "Where there's smoke there's fire," which can quickly become the proverbial formula "Where there's X, there's Y" or "Where there's smoke, there's X' as a lesser varied form. The Grumman Corporation employed the headline "Where there's smoke there's money" to explain its discovery of recovering wasted gases for reuse. And an advertisement for Vantage cigarettes uses the provocative headline "Where there's smoke there's controversy" - an excellent modern adaptation of the old saying.

It is possible to play with the way proverbs are uttered or written. This act of modification is not exclusive to one specific person but it is available to anyone who deals with daily language. This manifestation is referred to by Naciscione (p.55, 2001) as "instantial use". Martin (2011, p.185) illustrates this by giving an example: "one may speak of "the clean sweep of the proverbial new broom". In this case, although the structure of the original proverb "a new broom sweeps clean" has been modified, its meaning does not change". Martin (2011, p. 185) also points out, however, that modification may bring about a change in meaning that only to a certain extent overlaps with the canonical meaning of the original proverb.

The workings of proverb modification can be summarized as follows: the speaker/writer chooses a canonical proverb with a suitable meaning. Then, she alters one or more of its constituents in a way that changes its interpretation in view of its new wording. Yet, the original proverb can still be recognized by hearers/readers, thus making both versions of the proverb overlap –at least mentally (Martin, 2011, p.185).

The processes by which a proverb can be modified are numerous. Most scholars, however, group them into a few categories. According to Baran (2012), Zaikauskienė's (2012) analysis of the classical repertoire of Lithuanian paremias highlights the following tendencies in their development: 1) narrowing or widening of the semantic field; 2) demetaphorisation of the artistic image; 3) appearance of antithetic versions; 4) increase of comic effect; 5) appearance of the extended versions or shortening of the paremias; 6) appearance of contaminations; 7) enhancement of the artistic effect of poetic images by means of phonic organisation of phrases. Zaikauskienė also presents an overview of the functions of Lithuanian traditional paremiological units, claiming that proverbs preserve their typical 'inner' functions (pedagogical, didactic, psychotherapeutic) also while performing in individual situations (Baran, 2012, p.135).

Fernando (1996, 33-4) mentions four mechanisms for modification: replacement or substitution, addition, permutation and deletion. Partington's (1998, 126-8) taxonomy is equally divided into four categories which, for the most part, overlap with the previous (substitution, insertion, abbreviation and rephrasing). In this paper, I will make use of Partington's taxonomy, because it provides a clearer analysis than Baran's and is also newer and clearer than Fernando's, partially revising Fernando's categories.

Substitution is defined by Partington as "homophone-to-heterograph or single phoneme alteration[s] […]. One of the items of the original collocation is replaced by another, but the replacement must not change the phrase so drastically as to make the original unrecognisable to the text receiver" (Partington 1998, 126). Examples given by Partington include 'Prints Charming' for 'Prince Charming', and 'A fridge too far' for 'A Bridge too Far'. Partington goes on to add in addition 'whole-word substitution' and 'grammatical substitution': "An example of whole word substitution has already been discussed ['Murder of the cathedral' for 'Murder in the Cathedral'], in which a grammatical word 'of' replaced another grammatical word 'in'" (Partington 1998, 126).

In the view of Zaikauskienė (2012), modified proverbs (paremias) preserving the most general meaning of the basic proverb, with only a few shifts in form, are regarded as variants of the basic proverb.

Insertion is defined by Partington as "where an element has been added to the original" (Partington 1998, 127). Partington gives the examples 'Play up and play the word game' for the original 'Play up and play the game', and '[Ian Gale gave three artists the chance to] put the palate knife in' for the original 'put the knife in' (Partington 1998, 127). According to Zaikauskienė (2012), the most popular way of creating Lithuanian modified proverbs (anti-paremias) is a combination of equal lexical substitution (in the case of two-part proverbs) plus extension of the traditional paremia by a comment or reference – i.e. insertion in Partington's terms.

Abbreviation is where only part of an original form is reproduced. Partington gives the example, 'Lessons of another lost Arc for Britain' recalling the film title 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' (and referring to the French horse race 'Le Prix de L'Arc de Triomphe' (Partington 1998, 127).

Rephrasing is defined by Partington as a drastic change to the original form, such that the reader no longer recognises the phraseology of the original (as they do in the case of substitution), but has to rely on the collocation of a few items in the new version to recognise its relationship to the original (Partington 1998, 127-128). An example given by Partington (1998: 123) is "England's biggest rugby union club are prepared to *conquer at the Stoop* in Saturday's semi-final […]". Here, the phrase 'conquer at the Stoop' recalls the original phrase "She stoops to conquer", the title of a famous play by John Galsworthy.

Novelty in creating new proverbs seems to exist in every culture. According to Babič (2011, p.516):

> Small folklore forms are stored in memory as a unit with figurative meaning, their own rhythm and rhyme. That is why they are appropriate for different modifications. Modifications of proverbs and sayings are as common as proverbs and sayings themselves. On the one hand we can follow the creating of the "new proverbs", where the wit and the language capacity of the creator (though he/she is not known) is seen; but on the other, funny modifications of traditional proverbs

maybe almost more common than these proverbs themselves as seems to be in everyday Slovene. Some of the youngest modifications are made for commercial purposes. Copy-writers use small folklore forms to create more memorable commercial, specifically rhythm, rhyme, melody, partly words, form etc. of the proverb/saying/ riddle.

One would agree with Babic that people have their own mental reservoire of proverbs. However, the researcher disagrees with him that all memorised proverbs are figurative. It is true that when a proverb has rhyme or rhythm, it looks more appealing to remember and use it. Nevertheless, there are proverbs which are literal but have rhyme and rhytm, and are widely stored in people's minds as well. For instance, the Syrian proverb *tġaddā w-tmaddā* 'eat and lie down' is not figurative. It is, however, still appealing to the memory as it is short, and has the formal feature of rhyme. Babic's view that some modified proverbs become more popular than the original proverbs themselves may be true to a certain extent and in a certain environment. By way of illustration, the proverb "an apple a day keeps the doctor away" might become less popular than its modified form "a condom a day keeps the doctor away" if the speaker is in a community where HIV is killing most of its people. In this situation, the speaker who uses this modified proverb is fulfilling multiple tasks at the same time. First, he is giving crucial medical advice. Second, he is adding spice to his preaching through the humorous shade embedded in the new proverb. Third, he is indirectly making people trust what he says, as the modified proverb follows the structure of a well-known proverb.

According to (Jamal, p.4)

> In recent times the traditional patterns of usage and wording are increasingly disappearing in favour of playful and innovative forms (cf. Burger 2003, p.118f. and Mieder 1993, p.90). In other words, well-known proverbs are often only partially cited, modified or simply implied rather than stated explicitly. They may, moreover, be parodied and combined with different phraseological elements. It seems worth mentioning that such modifications, playing and punning with proverbs are mainly possible, because of the underlying assumption that native speakers of a given language are not only intrinsically familiar with the original proverb, but are also well aware of the hidden associations and allusions.

Advertising agencies take for granted the reader's knowledge or familiarity of the original form of the proverb used in the promotion or the advertisement: "Naturally the advertisers presume that the reader makes a positive identification with the proverbial headline, nodding his or her head in agreement" (Mieder and Mieder, 2004, p.314).

Mieder and Mieder (2004, p.314) go on to explain how far advertising agencies benefit from the popularity of the proverb: "Certain advertisements even use only one half of the original proverb, assuming from the beginning the general currency of the proverb among the readers". Mieder and Mieder (2004, p.314) support this claim by giving examples of abbreviated forms of Biblical proverbs:

> Close to Christmas time Harveys Bristol Cream Sherry was advertised with the headline "Do unto others", accompanied by a picture of a man wrapping sherry bottles for Christmas gifts. And close to Mother's Day the Faberge Fragrance Company added one letter to the above proverb remnant and made it "Do unto mothers". Both headlines are shortened forms of the biblical proverb "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Luke VI, 31), which almost adds a prophetic value to the advertisement. The implication is clear: "who wouldn't like a bottle of Harveys sherry or a bottle of Faberge cologne for himself, and since that is true, why not give these products as a gift as the proverb and bible recommend.

Mieder and Mieder (2004, p.313) argue that Biblical proverbs recur in advertisements more than any other proverbs, e.g. "Man does not live by bread alone" (Matthew IV, 4). Mieder and Mieder (2004, p.313) give another example of the possibility of reshaping Biblical proverb into a universal structure: "Man does not live by bread alone" (Matthew IV, 4). When used to promote a product for a company or a brand, the proverb's mightiness is taken into consideration:

> Other copy writers recognized that the proverb can also be generalized into the formula "Man does not (cannot) live by X alone" without losing its effectiveness. For instance, Pierre Cardin formulated "Man cannot live by clothes alone" to advertise men's cologne. Very successful is also "Man cannot live by blue jeans alone," a headline used by Wrangler, which makes jeans in colors, fabrics, and styles. Naturally a picture with people wearing a variety of jeans illustrates the claim of the headline." (Mieder and Mieder, 2004, p.313).

Mieder (2004, p.244) clarifies how using Biblical proverbs in advertisements gives the promoted produce a shade of sacredness and authenticity:

> Proverbs have been an intricate part of the persuasive if not manipulative tactics of advertisements for a long time. Copywriters noted decades ago that the authority and truth inherent in proverbs could easily be exploited as advertising headlines. In order to add even more convincing power to such proverbial slogans, they often use biblical proverbs, thus putting an almost sacrosanct claim of high value on the advertised product.

Modified proverbs are also found in informal popular culture, including graffiti, SMSes, and internet websites (Baran, 2012, p.135). Szpila (2012) argues that in Poland proverbs

serve as a set of useful linguistic signs for graffiti users in both graffiti and SMSes. All of the mural inscriptions examined by Szipla involve modified proverbs, confirming Wolfgang Mieder's (1993: 58) view that in contemporary communication proverbs are used predominantly in twisted forms. Szipla's study of proverbs in mural inscriptions and SMSes confirms Marek Skierkowski's observation (2002: 7) that the two modes interact closely: short text messages may be considered the graffiti of our times. Szpila (2007) on the humour in proverbial mural inscriptions refers in a more focused way to how graffiti writers modify proverbs in graffiti to achieve humorous ends. This study confirms the assertion of paremiologists (for example, Mieder & Tóthné Litovkina 1999) that the contemporary reaction to proverbial wisdom is typically humorous in nature. Szpila (2011) offers an extensive examination of Polish graffiti and the proverbial elements therein (Szpila, 2012, p.270).

Mieder and Mieder (2004, p.316) argue that the new form of proverb does not sabotage the original one, "The original wording of the proverbs is manipulated without destroying the familiar ring of the sayings". Mieder and Mieder (2004, p.316) go on to stress the fact that "of all the folk narrative genres [the proverb] has coped best with the problem of overcoming the dichotomy of tradition and innovation".

According to Mieder (2004, p.9), "Today, with the incredible power of the mass media, a newly formulated proverb-like statement might become a bona fide proverb relatively quickly by way of the radio, television, and print media".

It is probably impossible to give a precise definition of how similar or how different a modified proverb can be from the corresponding original proverb. As Szpila (2011, p.175) points out, it is impossible to say with certainty whether "the cover is not the best guide to the book" (Rushdie [Satanic Verses], 1998, p.257) is a paraphrase of *You can't tell a book by its cover* or not. Sometimes, even a large stretch of narrative may feel like an extended version of a particular proverb. Szpila (2011, p. 175.) [puts into question whether the coming paragraph from *The satanic verses* (Rushdie, 1998,134), could be regarded as an equivalent of *An Englishman's home is his castle*:

> Usually she was implacable in defence of her beloved fragment of the coast, and when summer weekenders strayed above the high tide line she descended upon them *like a wolf on the fold*, her phrase for it, to explain and to demand: – This is

my garden, do you see. – And if they grew brazen, – get out of it silly old moo, it's the sodding beach, – she would return home to bring out a long green garden hose and turn it remorselessly upon their tartan blankets and plastic cricket bats and bottles of sun-tan lotion, she would smash their children's sandcastles and soak their liver-sausages, smiling sweetly all the while: *You won't mind if I just water my lawn?*

Szpila (2011, p.175) argues that it seems implausible to consider this a 'paremic locus' (i.e. the place in a text where a proverb occurs or is relevant), as the relevant proverb with its terse words stays unexpressed despite the fact that "the narrative" (Szpila, 2011, p.175) might provoke the reader to deduce the appropriate proverb. However, this form of "semantic presence of a proverb is arguably the most elusive to prove, as the matching is a subjective operation on the part of the reader" (Szpila, 2011, p.175).

Another class of doubtful paremic loci identified by Szpila (2011, p.175) is illustrated by proverbs that correspond to idioms which are treated as their allusions (cf. Moon 1998: 29, 113) such as *The rotten apple injures its neighbours*. They are systemic allusions unlike novel textual ones and they could be omitted from the class of proverbs if they are treated as idioms only. Szpila, in fact, treats such fixed expressions as proverbial, but due to their questionable relationship to idioms considers them as peripheral, as they are also infrequent (Rushdie, 2005 [Shalimar the Clown], p.373).

Szpila (2011, p.176) also treats as peripheral "new proverbs" or "pseudo-proverbs". He goes on to explain more about this view: "original formulations of a principle, or truth aspiring to the status of paremia as being universally applicable" (2011, p.176). Szpila gives examples from Salman Rushdie's novels, arguing that although such forms "cannot be matched with any existing proverbs, we can say that they are proverbial in nature, viz. they are categorically matched with proverbs as a category of signs" (2011, p.176). Szpila explicates this idea about what looks like proverbs and can also be treated as proverbs by giving these two examples: "Proper sowing ensures a good harvest" (Rushdie [*Shame*], 1995, p.153) and "A compulsory ocean sounds worse than a forbidden well" (Rushdie [*Satanic Verses*], 1998, p.240). These two examples also share grammatical features of types of existing proverbs.

4.3 Modified proverbs in literature

Szpila argues that when proverbs are placed in a literary context, it is easier to play with their structure and meaning. Szpila (2011, p.173) says: "Obviously, literary language permits greater freedom in the creative manipulation of both the form and semantics of proverbs, but the differences are perhaps only in the quantity, not the quality of deployment."

According to Martin (2011, p.182) "One of the most powerful social institutions that can be creatively modified in dystopian fiction is language and within the vast linguistic realm, proverbs are particularly suitable for stylistic modification". Martin (2011, p.185) goes on to argue that inventing new societies demands finding suitable new proverbs: "Proverbs, for the most part, reveal themselves as optimal tools for dystopian writers, since they are ubiquitous elements in folklore and most other cultural phenomena worldwide. Their canonical form, however, belongs to a particular society with a particular culture in a specific period of history. If authors are to create a fictional society in the near future, they need new proverbs of their own".

Aldous Huxley's dystopian novel *Brave New World* provides some very good examples of modified proverbs. Here proverb modification is one of the ways in which the real-world society is linked to the work of fiction in *Brave New World*. According to Martin, (2011, p.182) in *Brave New World*, Huxley has recourse to play with language to present a lively dystopian community. Martin (2011, p.184) goes on to say: "Proverbs possess a series of characteristics that make them an optimal resource for the type of linguistic manipulation that dystopian literature makes use of".

In *Brave New World*, chapter six, for example, we find "*A gramme in time saves nine*", said Lenina, producing a bright treasure of sleep-taught wisdom" (Martin, 2011, p.186). This proverb is derived from the original proverb "a stitch in time saves nine". Lenina replaces the lexeme "stitch" with the lexeme "gramme", referring to a dose of a drug taken for sleep problems. This substitution adds stylistic beauty to the proverb and helps in making it more memorable, while "the rhyme and rhythmic pattern of the proverb is not altered substantially" (Martin, 2011, p.186). It is obvious that the canonical meaning of the proverb does not change, but overlaps with that of the created one. Martin (2011,

p.186) states that the modified proverb serves to fulfil a specific intention on the part of the author: "Of course, *a stitch in time saves nine* potentially applies to a wider range of situations than Huxley's creative exploitation of it. The fact that it is the canonical proverb which carries the most comprehensive meaning supports the argument that *ad hoc* modification usually performs a likewise *ad hoc* function such as supporting background information in the plot, as is the case here".

Martin (2011, p.186) presents other examples of modified proverbs used by Aldous Huxley. "A gramme is better than a damn" recurs in chapter three in *Brave New World*. It is reiterated with a slight difference in two other chapters, six and seven. This modified proverb has two proverbial origins: "an ounce of discretion is worth a pound of learning", and "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush". Both proverbs suggest that to guarantee a small amount of something you prefer is better than getting a bigger amount of something not easy to reach or getting it at an unsuitable time.

According to Martin (2011, p.187), drugs are used in Huxley's fictional world as a good device to inhibit the characters from doing wicked things. This explains the uniformity between Huxley's aim and the meaning of the proverb: "Better safe than sorry or better late than never". This caution is triggered by the characters when they refer to the advantages of taking a dose of "soma" the narcotic drug on time, as it will curb them from acting viciously.

Martin (2011, p.187) mentions that Huxley uses another type of modified proverb – those derived from productive proverbial structures such as: "Ending is better than mending" and "The more stitches, the less riches". Martin (2011, p.187) notes that "Ending is better than mending" is transformed from proverbs such as "half a loaf is better than no bread", "a good name is better than a golden girdle" or "brain is better than brawn", whereas "the more stitches, the less riches" can be tracked down to such prevalent forms as "the more you heap, the worse you cheap", "the more hurry, the less speed" or "the nearer the church, the farther from God". Huxley employs these modified proverbs to serve the task of showing the mundane world represented in consumption (Martin, 2011, p.187).

In chapter thirteen of *Brave New World*, Huxley uses another modified proverb (Martin, 2011, p.187), "A doctor a day keeps the jim-jams away", which is adjusted from the common proverb: "One apple a day keeps the doctor away". The anomalous characteristic of this new proverb is presented in the play with the lexemes: "doctor" and "apple" – "doctor" has replaced "apple". In doing this, Huxley has totally changed the implication of this proverb, i.e. a healthy diet is now achieved not by having an apple every day but by having a prescription and visiting the doctor instead. This change in wording and deletion of the word "apple" help to shift the centripetal force of the dystopian proverb to the novel's milieu – both social and psychological. This aesthetic diversion in the shape of the proverb fulfils the writer's intention. Martin (2011, p.188) argues that in *Brave New World*, "the therapeutic effort of "doctors" serves the purpose of preventing the sheer consequences of human nature, that is, trivial peculiarities and recurring states of depression-euphoria1".

According to Martin (2011, 186), proverbs are handled differently by different people who perceive them as credential units of their society: "we are subtly conditioned to believe the truth contained in proverbs, in a process that somewhat parallels what Huxley portrays in *Brave New World*".

4.4 Modified proverbs in two Syrian novels

In this section I will analyse modified proverbs in two novels from the Syrian coast: *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* ('The parting-place of the rain') by Yūsuf al-Maḥmūd and *Anajīl al-Xarāb* ('The Gospels of Destruction') by Naufal Nayouf. Like many Arabic novels (though unlike most English-language novels), both of these novels contain numerous proverbs. Unlike most Arabic novels, however, they both also contain a significant number of modified proverbs.

Both *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anajīl al-Xarāb* are full of proverbs and modified proverbs. The flux of proverbs and modified proverbs employed by the two writers indicates their unique style of writing. Sometimes the same proverb is used by both writers in different contexts. The prolific use of proverbs shows the writer's proverbial repertoire, especially when using them not only to ornament their literary work but as a thematic device to stress certain social or colonial problems, or even to portray certain characters

or events. More interesting is employing proverb-like expressions whose use is a necessity to express fully certain situations.

In this section, I will make use of Kuusi's (1966) notion of 'synonymous proverbs'. "Kuusi (1966) calls two proverbs synonymous if they express the same idea. By idea Kuusi means the abstract logical content of a proverb. The idea for the proverb "Make hay while the sun shines" would be "act while propitious conditions obtain". Since "Strike while the iron is hot" has the same idea, the two proverbs count as synonymous on Kuusi's definition". Norrick (1985, p.156) goes on and explain more about Kuusi's perception of the synonymous proverbs: "So operationally, synonymous proverbs must be able to occur in the same text with the same ideational semantic effect". According to Kuusi, "Proverbs are synonymous but not variants because they lack similarity of surface form" (Norrick, 1985, p.158). Kuusi (1966) explains when proverbs could be considered variants of a certain proverb: "The notion of variants could be further extended to structures differing by more than a lexical item, say if the difference were limited to a single syntactic unit. The proverbs *Who in fault suspects everybody* and *Who is guilty suspects everybody* differ by more than a single lexical item but "in fault" and "guilty" both function syntactically as predicate adjectival, in addition to their semantic equivalence in the structure at issue. So it seems reasonable to classify these structures as variants of a single proverb" (Norrick, 1985, p.158).

Modified Proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*

Example 1

Modified proverb:

ليس بالشّعر وحده ينمو التّفّاح! (المحمود، 1983، ص541).

Apple trees cannot grow by poetry alone!

Original proverb:

ليس بالخبز وحده يحيا الإنسان (متى:4:4).

Man shall not live on bread alone (Mathew 4:4).

The context of the original proverb is that when Jesus was in the wilderness, Satan tried to tempt Him when mocking Him by telling Him that if He really was the Son of God, He should turn stones into bread. But Jesus' sustenance was God's words.

The context of the modified proverb is that Musallim wonders whether his teacher's apple trees grow better that other neighbouring apple trees because their owner is a poet and he may be reciting poems for them to encourage them to grow. The poet says this proverb in answer to Musallim's question. Although the words *bi-š-ši˓ri*, *yanmū* and *at-tuffāḥ* in the modified proverb replace the words of the original proverb: *bi-l-xubz*, *yaḥyā* and *al-insān*, the reader can tell the original form of the modified proverb. Here the modification motivates the reader to think more about the sentence and ponder the original form. It catches the reader's attention and makes the modified proverb more effective in the narrative context because it highlights the sense of humour. The technique used is Partington's substitution.

There is a function in using the modified form of the proverb instead of employing the original one. Locating the canonical proverb in the place of the modified one would mean losing not only the humorous effect, but also the contextualization and particularization of the utterance. The context gives the proverb specific referents, illustrating it with one specific situation in which the proverb applies, and achieves an occasional synonymous proverb (Martinez, 2006, p.138). According to Partington, the technique used in forming this modified proverb is substitution.

Example 2:

Modified proverb:

لا يعرف الكلب باب دارهم (المحمود، 1983، ص487).

The dog does not know the door of their house.

Original proverb:

أحرص من كلب على جيفة (قوشاقجي، ج1، 1977، ص163).

Beware of a dog with carrion.
Variant:

أبخل من كلب (فريحة، 1953، ج1،ص4).

Meaner than a dog.

The two proverbs are synonymous because they express the same meaning – meanness. The dog is known for being careful, when having its meal, not to let other animals share it or feed from it. Similarly, the family of Xātūn's bridegroom does not even leave leftovers for a passing dog. Um Maḥmūd tells her husband that people in the village say

that the family of Xātūn's bridegroom is known for its meanness. Even the dogs which normally find remnants of food when hanging around houses will never find any leftovers around their house. Since Frayha's example is the one I usually hear in the Syrian coast, I will consider it the original proverb: أبخل من كلب (فريحة1953، ج1،ص4)

So, al-Maḥmūd used a modified version of the proverb.

لا يعرف الكلب باب دارهم (المحمود، 1983، ص487).

Discussion

Rephrasing is defined by Partington as a drastic change to the original form, such that the reader no longer recognises the phraseology of the original (as they do in the case of substitution). Here, the new form of the proverb is formed by rephrasing it.

Example 3:

Modified proverb:

إنّ امرأة ربّت ثوراً فلم يحرث(المحمود،1983،ص507).

A woman raised an ox, and it would not plough.

Original proverb:

االأم ربّت تور أربعين سنه ما حرث (قوشاقجي، ج1، 1977، ص57).

A woman raised an ox for forty years, and it would not plough.

Other variants:

المرة ربّت ولد ما نجح، ربّت كلب ما نبح، ربّت عجل ما فلح، و زرعت شي ما صلح (فريحة، 1953، ج2،ص651).

A woman raised a boy – he did not succeed. She raised a dog – it did not bark. She raised a calf – it did not plough. And she planted something – it did not grow.

ما في مرا ربّت تور و طلع بيحرت (لا يوجد امرأة ربّت ثوراً و طلع يحرث) (المرابط، 1995، ص202).

No woman has ever raised a bull which ploughs.

عمر المرة ما تربّي عجل و يحرت (شعلان، 2003، ص66).

No woman has ever raised a calf which ploughs.

Abū Maḥmūd used to visit a beautiful woman when he was in Argentina, and he wished that he had two young sons to marry to her two pretty daughters, although he was of the view that a woman and especially a widow is unable to rear her children.

Discussion:

Out of four variants of this proverb which I have found, two are particularly similar to the version in the novel:

<div dir="rtl">

ما في مرا ربّت تور و طلع بيحرث (لا يوجد امرأة ربّت ثوراً و طلع يحرث) (المرابط، 1995، ص202).

الأم ربّت تور أربعين سنه ما حرث (قوشاقجي، ج1، 1977، ص57).

</div>

These two proverbs seem to be the original form, but I will consider Qūšāqjī's form of the proverb as the original one since it is mentioned at an earlier time. In al-maḥmūd's version of the proverb, he used "a woman" in general, while Qūšāqjī narrowed this to "a mother". Both versions use nominal sentences. We notice that in Qūšāqjī's form there is a mixture of colloquial and Standard Arabic lexical items; while in al-maḥmūd's version, we can notice the exclusive use of Standard Arabic. Qūšāqjī's form includes the phrase *arbaʿīn sanah*, "forty years", while these words are deleted in In al-maḥmūd's version of the proverb. So, in terms of Partington's techniques, the modified proverb uses the technique of   rephrasing (507ص،1983،المحمود) إنّ امرأة ربّت ثوراً فلم يحرث.

Both proverbs use the same metaphor "ox" for "a child". Both proverbs have the same semantic effect when they are put in the same context. Both proverbs mean that a woman by herself cannot rear a child. Both are variants. The modified proverb is Standard Arabic and speaks about women in general, while the original proverb is colloquial Arabic and specifies "the mother" as it defines the years "forty years". But the overall meaning is the same. A corresponding English proverb is: A woman's work is never done.

Example 4:

Modified proverb:

<div dir="rtl">

مطرح ما يسري يهري (المحمود، 1983، ص496).

</div>

It harms as it passes.

Original proverb:

<div dir="rtl">

مطرح ما يسري يمري (زيادنة، ص131 ، 2003).

</div>

It comforts as it passes.

Umm-Maḥmūd slaughtered the only cockerel among many hens and cooked it for her guest and future son-in-law Nibrās. The hens are not happy for losing their sole male

boss, the cockerel. Therefore, they wish for those who have this cooked cock to suffer harm and never taste it well.

Usually the proverb مطرح ما يسري يمري *maṭraḥ mā yesrī yemrī* (It comforts as it passes) is said by the host/hostess to a beloved guest, friend, or child when having his/her food. It is like a prayer that he/she may have good health due to this meal. The lexeme *yemrī* in the original proverb was substituted with the lexeme *yihrī* in the modified one. Both substitutes belong to the same grammatical category of 3rd person, masculine, imperfect verb. Both verbs describe the effect of food on the human body – either it harms when it is not digested properly or it cures when it passes easily. Here the change follows the structure of the Canonical Phraseological Unit (CPhU), a term used by Martinez to refer to the canonical proverb. Martinez also uses the term Modified Phraseological Unit (MPhU) to refer to the modified proverb. In this example, the substitution is an essential process for the context. According to Tanaka (1992: 102) there are contextual effects based on the pleasure that the audience enjoys when the word play is solved and understood (Martinez, 2006, p.146). According to Partington, the technique used in this modified proverb is substitution.

Example 5:

Modified proverb:

لنأكل لحمه حيّاً حتّى لا نراه في المنام (المحمود، 1983، ص332).

Let us eat his living flesh so that we do not dream of him!

Original proverb:

أيحبّ أحدكم أن يأكل لحم أخيه ميتاً فكرهتموه! (الحجرات: 12 ،البعلبكي ، 2001، ص235).

Does one of you like to eat his dead brother's flesh when you have hated him!

The fourth part of the evening is for snitching on others. Abu Maḥmūd says this proverb. The Ḥadīṯ says: "Does one of you like to eat his dead brother's flesh when you have hated him!" It means snitching and backbiting, i.e. to speak about a person while he is absent. In the novel, the writer means: "Let us snitch him, disgrace him and have no mercy on his honour" in order to satisfy our rancour towards him, and to heal our souls of our excessive hatred towards him in order not to dream of him.

The modified proverb is in the imperative and encourages eating the brother's flesh, while the original one is in the interrogative, indicating negation of such an act – eating the brother's flesh. The modified proverb also adds three words at the beginning *a-yuḥibbu aḥadakum an*. The modified proverb substitutes the adjective *ḥayyan* which means "alive" for the adjective *mayyitan* which means "dead". The modified proverb substitutes another lexeme *fa-karihtumūhu* with *ḥattā lā narāhu fī al-manām*. The modified proverb substitutes the two lexemes *laḥma axīhi* for the lexeme *laḥmahu*. On the literal level, when reading both proverbs, they deal with "eating human flesh". On the metaphorical level, the idea is backbiting and snitching – the modified proverb encourages backbiting, while the original one negates backbiting by the use of the interrogative. However, despite the reversal of the message in the modified proverb, the reader, especially, the one who has knowledge about Islam can easily identify the original proverb. The writer has modified the original Ḥadīth to fit the context of the situation or the conversation. Doing so, he has added a humorous flavour to the text and at the same time he has given an idea about the habits and traditions of his milieu – how men in his village spend their evenings and the nature of their conversation. The technique used is Partington's rephrasing.

Example 6:

Modified proverb:

تاليف القط لا يخلّصه من مخاليه (المحمود، 1983، ص326).

Taming the cat does not save you from his claws/ scratches.

Original proverb:

إلّي بدّه يلاعب القطّ بدّه يلقى (يتحمّل) خراميشه (فريحة،1953،ج1،ص80).

He who plays with the cat should bear its scratches.

Musallim is angry at the sheikh who has criticised his way of reciting poetry. But the sheikh realizes that his criticism was said to a child and to criticise a child is not an easy matter. So, Musallim says this proverb about himself. Usually it is said about a bird or a wild animal that it is tamed, i.e. it has become familiar with a person – it does not either fear or bite him, nor does it flee from him. Perhaps it means here that taming the cat does not protect you from its claws, i.e. it does not mean that you are safe from its claws. This proverb is said to someone who does not submit to you and cannot be trusted whatever you do for him. There is a belief that the cat cannot be tamed, and however

much love it has its love for you it will scratch you with its claws. It is said with roughly the same meaning: "He who plays with the cat should bear its scratches". It means: "Always be careful! Be cautious about so and so!"

The original proverb and its modified form share the same metaphorical meaning - Be cautious about so and so as he/she will not submit to you and cannot be trusted whatever you do for him/her. Moreover, on the literal level, they both speak about the impossibility of taming the cat. So, the modified structure of the canonical proverb is synonymous to the original one. In Partington's terms, the technique used here is rephrasing.

Example 7:

Modified proverb:

أرجل قاصرة و لسان قادر(المحمود، 1983، ص113)

Incapable legs with capable tongue.

Original proverb:

لسان طويل و باع قصير (فريحة، 1953، ج2، ص571).

A long tongue and a short arm (Frayḥa, 1953, p. 571).

Zeinab's husband constantly asked and guessed why Musallim and Abū Mizyad came to the house. But his wife asked him to shut up as he was confined to his bed. She said this proverb about him. It means: "It is true that he cannot walk but nobody can compete with him in talking". It means you have only words and a tongue. It is better for you to keep silent, you who are not useful and incapable of anything. Meaning: talkative but unable to accomplish anything.

The modified proverb starts with the plural "legs" preceded by the adjective "short" and ends with "a long tongue"; while the original one begins with "a long tongue" and ends with "a short arm". So both proverbs have the same grammatical structure and the same figurative meaning. The slight modification does not affect the original proverb. The two proverbs are synonymous and variants. In Partington's terms, the technique used here is rephrasing.

Example 8:

Modified proverb:

<div dir="rtl">كلنا بالبلاء سواء (المحمود، 1983، ص598).</div>

All of us in trouble are equal.

Original proverb:

<div dir="rtl">كلنا في الهوا سوا (قوشاقجي،ج1977،1،ص296).</div>

All of us in air are equal

Šarīf says that he greets his boss, Ġālib, in all the weddings, because he supports them, especially given that they are peasants. The villagers in Kfir Šāġir reply that they are also villagers, but with the slight difference that they own their own houses. This proverb is used to show that we are in the same situation and have the same troubles. The original proverb is *kelnā bilhawā sawā* (All of us in air are equal). Another corresponding proverb is: Do not complain to me in order to cry to you. Another similar one is: Like me like you. Another one is: What you are going through, my back is also broken due to its load. A longer variant of the original proverb is كلنا في الهوا سوا و الطبيب الله (فريحة، 1983، ج2،ص545) "in love, we are all alike. The physician is God" (Frayḥa, 1953, p. 545). It is often used in the sense: We are all in the same boat. Here, I will consider Qušāqjī's version as the original one. According to Partington's classification, the technique used is substitution where the words *fī alhawā*, "in love/air" are substituted for *bilbalā'*, "in trouble", and the colloquial word *sawā*, "together", for the Standard Arabic form *sawā'*, "together".

The modified proverb substitutes two lexemes, *bi-* and *al-balā*, for the original ones: *fī* and *al-hawā*. The original proverb is colloquial Arabic, while the modified one is Standard Arabic. The use of Standard Arabic in a context where colloquial is being used elsewhere can be regarded as a defect. Arrāsī (1989, p. 196-7) comments on one of the writers called Buṭrus Ḥišmeh who used to write colloquial poems, but, sometimes, he used a few Standard words in his poetry, which appeared like a black spot on a white dress.

<div dir="rtl">كان بطرس حشمة، من الخيام، واحداً من شعراء العامّة، كان نصف أمّيّ، لم يحفظ شيئاً للمتنبّي و لم يعرف شيئاً عن ابن الرّومي، و كان يستعمل أحياناً بعض الكلمات الفصيحة في شعره، فتجيء كالرّقعة السّوداء على الثّوب الأبيض (الرّاسي، 1989، ص196-197).</div>

Kāna Buṭrus Ḥišmeh, min al-Xiyam, waḥidan min šuʿarāʾ Al-ʿāmiyyah, Kāna niṣfu
ʿummī, lam yaḥfaḏ šayʾan li-l-mutanabbī wa lam yaʿrif šayʾan ʿan Ibn al-Rūmī, wa
kāna yastaʿmilu aḥyānan baʿda alkalimāti alfaṣīḥati fī šiʿrihi, fa-tajīʾu ka-r-ruqʿati
as-sawdāʾi ʿalā aṯ-ṯawbi alʾabyaḍi.

Buṭrus Ḥišmeh, from al-Xiyām [village in Lebanon], was a semi-illiterate folk-poet.
He never memorized anything by al-Mutanabbī and never knew anything about Ibn
al-Rūmī. Sometimes he used to use certain Standard Arabic words in his poetry.
They appeared like a black spot on a white dress.

However, using the modified proverb here is necessary to convey the author's message
to the reader. Although both proverbs fulfil the same task in the context of the novel, the
modified one helps the reader pick up the prominent negative implication. According to
Partington, the technique used to form this modified proverb is substitution.

Example 9:

Modified proverb:

صيت الغنى و لا رائحة الفقر (المحمود 1983 ص124).

The reputation of wealth is better than the smell of poverty.

Original proverb:

صيت الغنى ولا صيت الفقر.

The reputation of wealth is better than the reputation of poverty (Frayha, 1953, vol
2, p. 396).

The original proverb means: let people say that you are rich even if it is a lie, because
this will give you respect with them. It is better than being rich. It is said that you are
poor due to your meanness, because people will treat you as a poor person, without
showing you any respect. Here Abū Maḥmūd says to his wife that when a beggar passes
through the village and asks about a place to dine and sleep in, the villagers
immediately guide him to Abū Maḥmūd's house, thinking that he is rich.

The modified proverb replaces the lexeme *rāʾiḥa* with *ṣīt*. Both lexemes belong to the
same grammatical category – noun. Both proverbs have the same structure and both of
them can have the same meaning in the same context. According to Kuusi's analysis,

they are synonymous variants. However, according to Partington's classification, the technique used in the modified proverb is substitution.

Example 10:

Modified proverb:

الجمل لا يرى حردبته (المحمود، 1983، ص 40).

The camel does not see his hunched back.

Original proverb:

Of the four original forms of the proverb found in various sources I will choose the first one as it is the most commonly used one on the Syrian coast.

الجمل لو شاف حردبّته، وقع و انكسرت رقبته (عبد الحميد، 2008، ص351).

Had the camel seen its hump it would have had fallen and broken its neck>

الجمل لو بشوف حردبته بيوقع بيكسر (بفك) رقبته (فريحة، ج1، 1953، ص244).

لو بشوف الجمل حردبته كان بيوقع يكسر رقبته (فريحة، 1953، ج2، ص576).

لو شاف الجمل حدبته لانكسر و انقرفت رقبته (غزالة، 2003، ص223).

Had the camel seen its hump it would have had a broken leg and neck (Ghazala, 2003, p.223).

Xaḍrā al-ᶜAlī says this to her husband, who claims that Xātūn's curly hair is lovely. This means that Abā Maḥmūd does not see this deficiency in his daughter exactly as the camel cannot see the hunch of his back which shows the ugliness of his uneven body. Looking at ᶜabd al-Ḥamīd's original proverb, it is an extended one and conditional as well. The modified proverb is in the negative form and it is an abbreviated formula of the original one – it mentions only the first half of the original proverb, with a slight substitution. In the modified proverb the lexemes *"lā"* and *"yarā"* are substituted for the lexemes *"lou"* and *"šāf"*. The verb *"šāf"* in the original proverb is in the past tense and in Colloquial Arabic, while the verb *"yarā"* is in the present tese in the modified proverb. It is easy for the reader to recall the original one. According to Partington's classification, the technique used in the modified proverb is abbreviation.

Example 11:

Modified proverb:

نقول له هكذا، يقول لنا هكذا (المحمود، 1983، ص 46).

We say to him this, but he says that.

Original proverb:

نحكي معو بالشّرق بجاوبنا بالغرب (قوشاقجي،ج1،1977، ص181).

We speak in the east, but he replies in the west.

The original proverb is more specific in using *aš-šarq* 'the east' and *al-ġarb* 'the west', instead of *hākāḏā*, "so" and *hākāḏā, "so"*. *Naqūl lahu* is substituted for *niḥkī*, and *maᶜū* and *yaqūl lanā* are substituted for *bijāwibnā*. *Niḥkī* and *naqūl* are verbs in the present tense. Both *lahu* and *maᶜū* are prepositional phrases. The two proverbs are synonymous and variants. In Partington's terms, the technique used is rephrasing.

Example 12:

Modified proverb:

المقدّر ما منه محذر (المحمود، 1983، ص 350)

Fate is inescapable.

Original proverbs:

المقدور ما منّه مهروب (فريحة،ج1953،2،ص664) and المكتوب ما منو مهروب (درويش، 2005، ص)

There is no escape from what is predestined (Frayha,1953,vol2, p. 664).

المكتوب ما منّو مهروب (قوشاقجي، ج2، 1978، ص547).

Um Maḥmūd did not become pregnant until late, and her husband's relatives kept encouraging him to marry again, saying that it was her fate not to be able to bear children up till then. Consequently, it was also her fate that her husband might marry another woman. The modified proverb is a variant of the original one and the three are synonymous according to Kuusi. However, I will consider Qušaqji's version the original one as it is the the one that I used to hear people using in the Syrian coast.

The writer used *al-muqaddar* instead of *al-maktūb* (in one of the original versions) and *maḥḏar* instead of *mahrūb* and, as well as the Standard Arabic form *minhu* instead of the colloquial *minnū*. So the modification is slight and the meaning of the original proverb is maintained. Acccording to Partington's classification, the technique used is substitution.

Example 13:

Modified proverb:

<div dir="rtl">تريديني أن أقطع بنصيب النّاس! (المحمود، 1983، ص44).</div>

You want me to prevent people from getting their livelihood.

Original proverb:

There are three versions of the original proverb, but I will consider the first two as the most similar to the ones used in the Syrian coast.

<div dir="rtl">قطع الاعناق و لا قطع الارزاق (عبد الحميد، 2008، ص64)</div>

<div dir="rtl">قطع الاعناق و لا قطع الارزاق (قوشاقجي،ج1977،1،ص253).</div>

<div dir="rtl">قطع الأرزاق مثل قطع الأعناق (فريحة، 1953، ج2، ص500).</div>

Cutting off the heads of people is better than preventing them from getting their livelihood.

Cutting off the heads of people is better than preventing them from getting their livelihood.

Cutting off the heads of people is like preventing them from getting their livelihood (Frayha, vol2, 1953, p.500).

Xaḍra Al-ʕalī asks her husband to watch over his olive grove to stop the children from stealing his olives, but he refuses to do so, saying to her that he cannot prevent what God wants them to have. The modified form is an explanation of the second half of the original proverb, and it ignores/deletes the first half of the original proverb. According to Partington's classification, the technique used is rephrasing.

Example 14:

Modified proverb:

<div dir="rtl">هذا الرزق، هل وجدته في الطريق لتستهين به هذه الاستهانة؟ (المحمود، 1983، ص 45).</div>

Did you find these daily provisions on the road, to be so scornful of them?

Original proverb:

There are four versions of the original proverb. I will consider the one commonly used in the Syrian coast, which is the first example of the following four forms:

ST

<div dir="rtl">الرّزق السّايب بيعلّم ولاد الحلال السّرقة (عبد الحميد، 2008، ص80).</div>

TT

Unwatched livelihood/sustenance teaches the legitimate sons theft/ to steal.

ST

<div dir="rtl">المال الدّاشر بيعلم الحرامي السّرقة (الأسود، ص81).</div>

TT

Unwatched money teaches the thief how to steal (al-Aswad, p.81).

المـال السّـايب بيعلّـم النّـاس الحـرام (يعقوب، ص145).

الـرّزق الـدّاشر بيعلّـم النّـاس الحـرام (يعقوب، ص86).

Umm-Maḥmūd says this proverb to her husband as she is angry because her husband has not been watching his olive groves, leaving children to steal his olives. In terms of Partington's techniques, this modified proverb is an explanation/rephrasing of the original one.

Example 15:

Modified proverb:

من يطعم التّسعة يأكل العشرة (المحمود 1983 ص214).

He who feeds nine times, eats the tenth.

Original proverb:

Out the following three forms of the original proverb, I will consider the first one as it is the most common form in the Syrian coast.

بطعمي التسعة تتاخد العشرة (عبد الحميد، 2008، ص 187).

You give/feed nine times in order to take the tenth (ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, 2008, p.187).

إلّي ما بحط التسعة ما بلاقي العشرة (فريحة، ج1، 1953، ص108).

من سلّف التّسعة نال العشرة (فريحة، ج2، 1953، ص676).

He who risks not the nine, shall not win the ten (Frayḥa, vol1, 1953, p. 108).

The peasants say that in other villages, the peasants have a boss who defends them, and accordingly, he takes most of their money. So they allow him to benefit a lot, while they themselves benefit very little. This proverb humiliates, but it is wise and real in an unwise world. It is the outcome of the bitter life which people live. It means that you should give up a lot of what you own whether money or rights in order to retain a part of your money or rights. Time, which is not controlled by law but by power, only leaves the weak in general the option of giving up their values and principles and accepting bribes. This is in order to get a part of their right (to give ninety-nine percent in order to get one percent). This is better than losing everything. There is no law to protect the weak man, and he has no power to get back his rights by his own efforts.

The modified proverb is Standard Arabic and in the affirmative form while the original one is colloquial and in the affirmative form as well, and has the same implication as

the modified one – *biṭṭaᶜmī* substitutes for *man yuṭᶜim* and, *tatāxud* for *ya'kul*. The writer puts this proverb in the mouths of peasants and it would thus have been more suitable for him to use the original colloquial one. As al-Aswad (p.3) says: "The proverb lives in its surroundings ... the proverb environment, and narrating its multiple narratives, and confirming its particular language help in understanding its significance". al-Aswad (p.3) goes on to say: "The language of the proverb involves the verb preceded by a preposition as with *birūḫ*, and uses *baddī* in the sense of *'urīd*. It also avoids the use of *hamza*, thereby facilitating the pronunciation of a lot of words as in *bīr* (instead of *bi'r*), *ᶜaḍmah* (instead of *ᶜaḍmah*) and *diris* (instead of *ḍirs*). The modified proverb and the original one are synonymous and variants of the same proverb. According to Partington's classification, the modified proverb uses the technique of substitution.

Example 16:

Modified proverb:

لا تغنّي إلّا لليلاها (المحمود 1983 ص 597).

It only sings as it likes.

Original proverb:

From the following two examples of the original proverb, I will consider the first one as it is the most common in the Syrian coast.

كل من بغنّي على ليلو (قوشاقجي، ج2، 1978، ص442).

Each one sings as he like.

كل من بغنّي على ليلاه (فريحة، ج2، 1953، ص534).

Musallim says that his village used to celebrate its normal people in festivals, not those people that hold high posts like the Aghā. So it led the life that it itself wanted. This is an allusion to love and good relations among people. The original proverb, 'each one sings as he likes' means that each person has his own individual opinion which is different from that of other people. This is an indication of disparity, disunity and disorder. This is opposite to the proverb formula used by the writer. This is a modification of the original proverb which is accepted and usable, without any objection.

The modified proverb has the negative particle at the beginning *lā* which does not exist in the original one. The verb *biġannī* is replaced by the Standard Arabic verb *tuġannī* in the modified proverb with the preposition *min* deleted. The preposition *ᶜalā* is

substituted by another preposition *li* preceded by the added exceptive particle *illā* 'except' with the pronoun suffix –*hā* added to the end of the lexeme to become *li-laylāhā*, which is Standard Arabic, while *lēlū* is colloquial Arabic. Here the writer does not use the original non-Standard Arabic form of the proverb despite the fact that the colloquial form is more suitable to the peasants' milieu. Rather, it seems that the narrator used it this way on purpose to show that Musallim is an educated man. According to Partington's classification, the technique used in this modified proverb is substitution.

Example 17:

Modified proverb:

مليحة هذه العلّيقة لهذا الحمار (المحمود 1983 ص349).

This nosebag is good for this donkey.

Original proverb:
Out of the following six forms of the original proverb, I will consider the first example as it is the most commonly used in the Syrian coast. We notice that the original proverb is written in colloquial Arabic, while the modified form of this proverb is written in Standard Arabic - *malīḥah* substitutes for *mnīḥah, ha* substitutes for *haḏihi* and *lha* for *lihaḏā*. Finally, *alḥimār* substitutes for *alkir*. According to Partington, the technique used in the modified proverb is substitution.

منيحة هالعليقة لها الكر (عبد الحميد، 2008، ص221).
طنجرة و لقيت غطاها (فريحة،1953،ج2،ص414).
الطّيور ع أشكالها تقع (فريحة،ج1953،2،ص415).
قدرة و لاقت غطاها (صناديقي، 1998، ص203).
طنجرة و لاقت غطاها (عبد الحميد، 2008، ص219).
وافق شنّ طبق (الزّمخشري، مراقبة الدّكتور محمّد عبد المعيد خان، ج1، ص271).

Šann agreed with Ṭabaq.

Musallim says that his mother is thinking of marrying him to a woman like him, in order to make him mature. A similar proverb is الطّيور ع أشكالها تقع (فريحة، 1953، ج2، (415ص "Birds perch with similar birds" (Frayha, 1953, vol2, p.415), equivalent to English "Birds of a feather flock together". Another form of the same proverb is طنجرة و لقيت غطاها(فريحة، 1953، ج2، ص414). "A pot that has found its lid" (Frayha, 1953, vol2, p.414). طنجرة و لقيت and الطّيور ع أشكالها تقع and وافق شنّ طبق and مليحة هذه العلّيقة لهذا الحمار (p.414.

غطاها are all synonymous because they have the same "ideational semantic effect" according to Kuusi.

Example 18:

Modified proverb:

لا تتدخّل بما لا يعنيك (المحمود، 1983، ص 113).

Do not interfere in something which is no concern of yours.

Original proverb:

From the following two original forms of the prover, I will consider the first example as it is commonly used in the Syrian coast.

اللّي بيتدّخّل باللّي ما بيعنيه بيسمع شي ما بيرضيه (عبد الحميد، 2008، ص 255).

TT

He who interferes in something which is not of his concern, shall hear what does not please him.

من تكلّم بما لا يعنيه سمع ما لا يرضيه (فريحة، 1953، ج2، ص672).

He who talks of something which concerns him not, shall hear words which please him not (Frayha,1953, vol2, p.672).

Zainab's husband asks his wife why both Aba Myzīad and Musallim came to his house. But Zainab asks him not to interfere in this matter. She says this proverb, which means that it is not his interest and he should not care about it. There is contempt for the husband in this answer; otherwise, what does this inexperienced husband mean? Cf. English: Eavesdroppers hear no good of themselves (Frayha, 1953, vol2, p.672).

The modified proverb is a short form of the original one. It is a warning in a negative sense. It is directed to the speaker. It has the lexeme *tatadakhkhal* instead of *byytddaxxal*. Both are verbs; but the first is in the present and the Standard Arabic, while the second, though it is in the present tense as well, is in the third person and is a colloquial form. The modified proverb begins with *lā* which is a negative particle, and the verb *ya^{c}nī* ends with the pronoun suffix *-k*, while in the original one the proverb ends with the pronoun suffix *-h*. The original proverb is in the Colloquial Arabic form and has a completing element which shows the consequence of interfering in other people's lives. The modified proverb is an abbreviated form of the original one and and it rephrases the first half of the original proverb. According to Partington's classification, the technique used in this modified proverb is rephrasing.

Example 19:

Modified proverb:

المعاملة مع الله (المحمود، 1983، ص 115).

Good behaviour is appreciated by God.

Original proverbs:

اعمل طيّب (مليح) و ارميه بالبحر، إن ما بان عند البالق ببان عند الخالق (فريحة، 1953، ج1،
ص52) and اعمل خير و فرّه في البحر (قوشاقجي،1977، ج1، ص212).

Do good and throw it in the sea. What is not clear before man will be clear before
God (Frayha, 1953, vol1, p. 52).

Do good and fling it into the sea.

The father tried to calm his son down by saying to him: "My son! Let God see our good behaviour. Let them try somebody else". *Al-m̊amleh m̊a allāh* means that the person should do good deeds to others even if they have not returned them. The good deed is seen by God and therefore rewarded. The corresponding proverb is "Do good and throw it into the sea; if it is not appreciated by ungrateful man, it will be appreciated by God" (Frayha, 1953, vol1, p. 52). This proverb gives the same idea as اعمل خير و فرّه في البحر (قوشاقجي،1977،ج1،ص212) and اعمل طيّب (مليح) و ارميه بالبحر، إن ما بان عند البالق ببان عند الخالق (فريحة، 1953، ج1، ص52). These proverbs are synonymous because they have the same "ideational semantic effect" according to Kuusi. According to Partington, the technique used in this modified proverb is rephrasing.

Example 20:

Modified proverb:

إذا كان القلب أعمى، ما فائدة البصر! (المحمود، 1983، ص143).

If the heart is blind, what is the use of sight!

Original proverb:

أعمى القلب مفتّح العينين (فريحة، 1953، ج1، ص54).

He is blind in heart, (though) his eyes are wide open" (Frayḥa, 1953, vol 1, p.54).

Umm-Maḥmūd did not like her two sons' harvesting. So she said that they had eyes but no insight, using this proverb. It is said about the person who sees with his own eyes but does not realise the significance of what he sees, i.e. he does not understand where the roads on which he walks or the deeds which he does may lead him.

The modified proverb is structured as an interrogative, with the addition of the lexemes: *iḏā*, *kāna*, the transposing of the two lexemes *aᶜmā* and *al-qalb*, and the use of the lexemes *mā*, *fā'idat* and *al-baṣar* instead of *mfattaḥ* and *al-ᶜaynēn*. Despite the huge changes in the original lexemes, the reader can still recognise the original proverb. According to Kuusi, we can consider the two proverbs synonymous. According to Partington's classification, the technique used in the modified proverb is rephrasing.

Example 21:

Modified proverb:

[أولاد الحاره الشرقية] أكثر من الحب على الزيتون (المحمود، 1983، ص 44).

[The children of the eastern quarter are] more than olives on the olive trees.

Original proverb:

و أصل المثل: أكثر من الهم عالقلب (فريحة،1953، ج1، ص60).

[This thing is available in quantities] more than the heart's worries (Frayḥa, 1953, vol1, p60).

Umm-Maḥmūd complains that her husband is turning a blind eye to people who steal his produce. She says that because his olives trees are not watched either by him or his children, the neighbours' children steal their olives and that they are as abundant as the olives on the trees.

The modified proverb substituted three lexemes *al-ḥabb*, *ᶜalā* and *az-zaytūn* for *al-ḥamm* and *ᶜal-qalb*. All the constituents belong to the same grammatical category. Both proverbs express the same idea: "abundance". They are synonymous variants of a single proverb. The writer modified the proverb to properly pass his message to the reader. According to Partington's classification, the technique used in the modified proverb is substitution.

Example 22:

Modified proverb:

[أولاد عين داؤد] يمسحون الكحل من العين (المحمود، 1983، ص 44).

[ᶜin Daūd's children] wipe the antimony from the eye.

Original proverb:

بيسرق الكحل من العين (فريحة، 1953، ج1، ص210) and بسرق الكحل من العين (قوشاقجي، ج1،1977،ص278).

He steals away the *Kohl* [= eye paint] from the eye (Frayḥa, 1953, vol1, p210).

Umm-Maḥmūd goes on complaining about the neighbours' children's skill in stealing her and her family's olives. This means that they are cunning and skilful in stealing Abū Mahmūd's olives, i.e. slick, or having very light hands in taking away things and hiding them. Both proverbs have the same metaphorical meaning. They express the same idea when one of them replaces the other in the text. So applying Kuusi's definition of synonymous proverbs, they are synonymous. The modified form of the proverb substitutes the lexeme *yamsaḥūn*, which is Standard Arabic and in the plural form and in the present tense for the lexeme *biyesreq*, which is colloquial Arabic and in the singular and present tense. According to Kuusi's definition, both proverbs are variants of a single proverb. According to Partington's classification, the technique used is substitution.

Example 23:

Modified proverb:

ابنة العم، كما يقولون، عوراء (المحمود 1983 ص 88).

The cousin, as they say, is one-eyed.

Original proverb:

بنت العم عورة (شقير، 1995، ص50).

The cousin is one-eyed.

بنت الدّار عورا (فريحة، 1953، ج1، 1953، ص197).

Ḥabīb says that Sȧda is only good for singing in weddings. Then Kafa says: "Ask your God to have a woman like her", telling him this proverb. *Bint al-ᶜam ᶜaurah, kamā yaqūlūn, ᶜaurā'* (the cousin, as they say, is one-eyed). It means that the relative is always underestimated. People do not recognize her virtues and beauty as if she was one-eyed. They prefer the stranger rather than her, even if the stranger is inferior to her in beauty and morals. "They drink her up" means that they accepted her with pleasure as if she was water being drunk by a thirsty man, who is only concerned to slake his thirst, without checking the quality of the water being drunk.

Both proverbs are synonymous and variants of a single proverb. The modified proverb has two extra lexemes, but this addition do not affect the meaning of the original one. The modified proverb is standard Arabic while the original one in colloquial Arabic. Both proverbs have the same metaphorical meaning. According to Partington's classificaiton, the modified proverb uses the insertion technique.

Example 24:

Modified proverb:

أخشى أن ستأكل أصابعك مع هذا البرغل (المحمود 1983 ص392).

I fear you will eat your fingers with this burgul.

Original proverb:

بتاكل صابيعك وراها (عبد الحميد، 2008، ص355).

You eat with your fingers behind it.

Naddūrah says this proverb to the boy who helps Karīmah in picking olives from the tree. Naddūrah brought cooked burghul to share with Karīmah, the boy and the other helper, who work in the land. This proverb is said to praise the cook for the tastiness of the food and the skill of the one who cooked it.

Discussion
The modified proverb begins with the verb أخشى *axšā* (I fear), followed by the particle أن *an* "that – neither word is in the original proverb. The original proverb begins with بتاكل *btākul* (eat). Here the verb begins with the prefix "b", while the verb in the modified proverb begins with the prefix "sa" ستأكل In the original proverb the words بتاكل *btākul* "eat," صابيعك *ṣābĭak* (your fingers) and وراها *warāhā* (after it) are all in Colloquial Arabic, while in the modified proverb, all the words are written in Standard Arabic. Instead of وراها *warāhā* (after it), we find in the modified form of the proverb مع هذا البرغل *mắ hāḏā alburghul* "with this burghul". So, we notice that the modified form of the proverb is more specific and longer than the original one. In terms of Partington's categories, the technique used in this modified proverb is rephrasing.

Example 25:

Modified proverb:

قاتل الله الجوع ما أكفره!(المحمود 1983 ص425).

TT

I wish God would fight hunger for how unbelieving is it!

Interpretation

A pious man spent a night in a house in one of the local villages. When they offered him food, he did not like it. So, he slept without eating anything. But, at midnight, he woke up starving, saying this proverb. It is said to express the severity of poverty and hunger. It is attributed to Imam ʿAlī Bin Abī Ṭālib: لو كان الفقر رجلاً لقتلته *law kāna alfaqru rajulan laqataltahu* (الجعيثن، 2007).

It means if poverty was a man I would kill him. Poverty may lead people to disbelief, and other sins – adultery, theft or even murder.

From the following two versions of the original proverb I will choose the first one as it is older in origin.

Original proverb:

لو كان الفقر رجلاً لقتلته (قول للإمام علي) (الجعيثن، 2007).

If poverty was a man, I would kill him.

الجوع كافر (فريحة، 1953، ج1، ص249).

Hunger is an atheist (Frayha, 1953, vol1, p.249).

Discussion

The original proverb is a nominal sentence. It begins with the conditional article law "if" followed by the imperfect verb كان *kāna* (was), and the third word is الفقر *alfaqr* (poverty). This is substituted by the lexeme الجوع *aljūʿ* (hunger) in the modified proverb, which is followed by the interrogative article *mā* followed by a noun, ending with the object pronoun "hu" in أكفره *akfarahu* (how great an unbeliever is he); while in the original proverb *alfaqru* is followed by the predicate of the imperfect verb *kāna*, followed by the verb لقتلته *laqataltuhu* (I would kill it). This verb ends with two pronouns – *tu* for the subject and *hu* for the object. The verb with its subject and object are the apodosis (main clause) complementing the protasis (subordinate clause) in the first part of the conditional sentence. From this analysis, we notice that the new form of the

proverb has a drastically different form from the original one. According to Partington's categorisation, the technique used in the new form of the proverb is rephrasing.

Example 26:

Modified proverb:

لا تضحك للبرغل السّخن (المحمود 1983 ص 486).

She does not even smile at the hot *burghul*.

Original proverb:
Out of the following five versions of the original proverb, I will consider the first one as it is the most commonly used in the Syrian coast.

ما بيضحك للرغيف السخن (يعقوب،102) and وج ما بيضحك لرغيف السّخن (فريحة، 1953، ج2، ص723) and وجهو ما بيضحك لرغيف السّخن (درويش ، 2005). and وجهو ما بضحك و لا للرغيف السّخن (قوشاقجي، ج2، 1978، ص353)

وجه متل قفا الصّرمايةـ وجه متل قفا المقلاية (ناشف عابس) (الأسود، ص190).

He has got a face which does not smile (lit. laugh) even at a hot loaf of
bread (Frayḥa, 1953, vol2, p. 723).

This is a metonymy for showing unhappiness, not smiling, and frowning. Whatever one does for her, she remains unfriendly as if one has killed her son. Peasants were always pleased and thankful, when somebody offered them a spoonful of yogurt or a crumb. For them, this was like a dream.

In the modified proverb, the lexeme للبرغل *lilburghul* replaces the lexeme *lilrgīf* للرغيف (bread) in the original proverb. This substitution does not affect the overall meaning of the proverb. Both substituted constituents belong to the same grammatical category - noun. When applying Kuusi's definition of synonymous proverbs and variant proverbs, it is obvious that both proverbs لا تضحك للبرغل السّخن and لا تضحك للرغيف السخن are two variants of a single proverb. According to Partington's classification, the technique used in the modified proverb is substitution.

Example 27:

Modified proverb:

لكأنّ شوكة وخزت عيني (المحمود، 1983، ص).

As if a thorn pricked my eye upon seeing them.

Original proverb:

مثل الشّوكة في العين (قوشاقجي،ج1،1977،ص321).

Like a thorn in the eye.

مثل الشّوكة بالعين (فريحة، 1953،ج2، ص634).

Såda suffered a lot when she saw Musallim and Abū Mizyad digging the land. She already knew that both children had never worked on the land before as their family had enough money for sustenance. Going to work on the land like peasants meant that their family did not have enough money left. It was as painful as getting a thorn in one's eye. There is an intended hyperbole in this simile because this pain is severe and cannot be endured or described. The modified proverb substitutes *laka'anna* for *mithl*, but both have the same meaning. The modified proverb deletes *al-* from the lexeme *aš-šawkah*. The modified proverb uses a verb *waxazat* and deletes the preposition *fī*. It also deletes the *al-* from *aĺ-ayn* and adds *-ī* instead to the end of the lexeme *ayn*. So, both proverbs give the same idea when placed in the same context. This means they are synonymous. To use Partington's terms, the modified proverb is more or less a rephrasing of the original one.

Example 28:

Modified proverb:

أين ذبت مثل الملح (المحمود،1983،ص42).

Where did you melt away like salt?

Original proverb:

فص ملح و داب (الأسود، 213).
نقص ملح و داب (عبد الحميد، 2008، ص214).

Um Maḥmūd blames her daughter while spreading the figs on the roof, asking her how she could disappear so quickly, just as salt dissolves in water. Um Maḥmūd says this proverb to Xātūn who is very slow in carrying out her work. The mother means that her daughter may be envied, and consequently, her work will be spoiled. There is a traditional belief that some people have a wicked, envious eye which may bring down the grapes from the vine. This is why they say, 'whatever God wills' and 'pray to the Prophet Muḥammad', in order to prevent the envy of the eye.

The modified proverb begins with the past tense of the verb *ḏāba* with the second person feminine singular suffix *-ti* added to it, and it is in the interrogative form. The verb *ḍubti* is Standard Arabic, while in the original proverb the verb *dāba* is colloquial and is at the end of the proverb. The modified proverb ends with *al-milḥ* 'the salt' preceded by *miṯil*, while the original proverb begins with *milḥ* without the definite article *al* 'the', but preceded by *faṣṣ*, which is a small amount of salt – it is as small as the gem of the ring. The writer slightly modified the proverb to fit the context. According to Partington's classification, the technique used in this modified proverb is rephrasing.

Example 29:

Modified proverb:

لا تبحثي فيها عن نجوم الظّهر (المحمود، 1983، ص42).

Do not look for the midday stars.

Original proverb:

رأى الكواكب مظهراً (الزّمخشري، 1962،ج2، ص92)

و تريه النّجم يجري بالظّهر (الزّمخشري، ج2، 1962، ص92). سأريك نجوم الظّهر or و الله لورجيك نجوم الظّهر (الأسود، ص214).

رأى الكوكب ظهراً (شامي، 1995، ص19).

فرجاه نجوم الضهر (عبد الحميد، 2008، ص28).

شوّفه نجوم الظّهر! (فريحة، 1953، ج1، ص382).

I will show the midday stars, *or* By God, I will show you the midday stars.

Discussion

Although the first two versions of the original proverb are the oldest ones among the following seven original versions, al-Aswad's version *Wallāh lawarjīk njūm alḏuhr* (by God/I swear to God, I will show you the midday stars) and ᶜAbd al-Ḥamīd's version (*farjāh njūm aḍḍuhr*) are the most commonly used formulas in the Syrian coast; but I prefer to consider ᶜabd al-Ḥamīd's version as it is purely colloquial, unlike al-Aswad's version, which is a mix of colloquial and standard Arabic.

The mother repeats her order to her daughter to stick to her purpose, which is here to fill the jar from the water source as soon as possible. The original proverb فرجاه نجوم الضهر *farjāh njūm aḍḍuhr* (He showed him the midday stars) means that I will beat you until you are unable to distinguish day from night.

In the modified proverb, there is advice and a warning– not to search for stars at midday in order not to be distracted from what she is going to do; while the original proverb involves the threat of a beating that will make the person unable to distinguish day from night. The modified proverb is in the negative form, while the original one in the affirmative form. It begins with the verb فرجاه *farjāh* (showed him), and is in the past tense and its metaphorical meaning in the original proverb is '[he] tortured him'. The modified proverb begins with لا تبحثي فيها عن نجوم الظّهر (Do not look in the (sky) for the midday stars). The remaining lexemes, *nujūm aḍ-ḍuhur* 'the midday stars' are shared by both proverbs. But, the lexeme *aḍḍehr* (midday) is in Colloquial Arabic in the original proverb, while it is written in Standard Arabic in the modified proverb *aḍḍuhr*. The proverb is used in a context different to its ordinary one, but still it involves the threat to beat Xatūn in case she is distracted from fulfilling her task. According to Partington's classification, the technique used in the modified proverb is rephrasing.

Example 30:

Modified proverb:

التّحصيل من النّاس صار أصعب من قلع الأضراس (المحمود، 1983، ص83).
Getting money back from people is harder than pulling teeth.

In the following example, I will present two versions of the original proverb given by al-Aswad. I will consider the second version as it is closer to the formula used by al-Maḥmūd, although both versions are commonly used in the Syrian coast.

Original proverb:

مثل قلع الضّرس (صعب).
أصعب من قلع الدّرس (الأسود، 188).

Looking at the original form of the proverb, we notice that it constitutes the second half of the modified formula, with a slight difference – the word *addirs,* 'molar' is in Colloquial Arabic and it is used in the singular; while in the modified proverb, we see the word *aḍrās,* 'molars' instead, used in Standard Arabic and in the plural. Again, in the modified proverb, the first half, *attaḥsīl min al-nās ṣāra,* (getting money back from people is …) is an addition to the original proverb. So, in Partington's terms, the technique used is rephrasing in both cases.

Example 31:

Modified proverb:

قال الغراب لسليمان الحكيم: طرت الدنيا شرقاً غرباً، شمالاً و جنوباً، فلم أجد طيراً أجمل من ابني! (المحمود، 1983،ص94).

The crow said to Sulaimān Al-hakim: I flew east and west, north and south, but did not find a more beautiful son than mine.

Original proverb:

قالوا للقاق: جيب أحسن الطّيور، راح جاب ابنو (قوشاقجي، ج2، 1978، ص462) or قالوا للغراب هات أجمل الطيور جاب ابنه (طاهر،ص232) or القاق برم الدّني، و ما لقى أحسن من إبنو (يعقوب، ص60) or القرد بعين أمّه غزال (فريحة، 1953، ج2، ص407).

The mother of a little ape thinks him as beautiful as a gazelle (lit. the ape in his mother's eye is a gazelle) ((Frayha, 1953, v2, p. 407).

Here Ḥabīb mocks Kafā's statement that her mother used to let her carry the amulet as a protection from envy/bad luck. The technique used according to Partingtos is rephrasing.

Example 32:

Modified proverb:

الدنيا لا تبقى على حال (المحمود، 1983،ص450).

Life does not remain in one state.

Original proverb:

دوام الحال من المحال (فريحة، 1953، ج1، ص310).

Continuation of (a certain state of) affairs is an impossibility (Frayha, 1953, v1, p. 310).

Xātūn says to her father about the bridegroom that he is poor and does not own anything. Her father answers that life changes, and the poor man may come to own property and become rich, while the property owner may lose his property and become in need. The two proverbs are synonymous because they have the same semantic effect when either is put in the same context. Looking at the modified proverb, we notice that Partington's technique of rephrasing is used.

Example 33*:*

Modified proverb:

ولا نتق الدم بالشغل (في الأرجنتين ليجمع مهر امرأة) (المحمود،1983،ص97).

He even did not spit blood through harsh labour in Argentine to pay a woman's dowry.

Original proverb:

Of the following four versions of the proverb, I will consider the second one as it uses very similar vocabulary to that used by Al-Maḥmūd. However, the modified proverb ولا نتق الدم بالشغل starts with the rephrased form of the original one, *wa lā nataq addam biššiġil*, (he even did not spit blood). This initial phrase is in the negative form, while the original proverb is in the affirmative form. The original proverb is a nominal sentence, while the modified one is a verbal sentence. The modified proverb is an extended form as it adds another phrase, justifying the first part of the modified form. Between the two parts of the modified proverb, there are the two lexemes: *fi alarjantīn* (in Argentina). So the modified proverb is more specific than the original one. According to Partington's classification, the modified proverb uses rephrasing.

ذاق الموت الأحمر (طاهر، ص319).

He tasted the red death.

Other variants:

لقمة مغمّسة بالدّم (فريحة، 1953، ج2، ص573).

His livelihood (lit.bread) is smeared with blood (Frayha, 1953, v2, p. 573).

الموت الأحمر (قوشاقجي، ج2، 1978، ص550).

The red death.

هو الموت الأحمر (عاصم، 1974، ص138).

It is the red death.

Saᶜda says that her husband has not travelled abroad to work hard and get money to marry her, and this is why he does not care about her. Both proverbs convey the same metaphorical message – working extremely hard to get one's sustenance. So both proverbs are synonymous.

Modified Proverbs in *Anajīl al-Xarāb*

Example 1:

Modified proverb:

أطلق لنفسي حبل الجرأة على غاربه (نيوف، 1995، ص247).

I myself set free the rope of courage.

Original proverb:

حبلك على غاربك (الزّمخشري، 1962، ج2، ص56).

أرخي لها الحبل على الغارب (زيادنة، 2003، ص22).

Xalīl is now a coward and does not dare to respond to the insults directed to him even by his friends. For instance, ʿAbd al-Karīm and his wife mock Xalīl for not being able to control his wife Fātinah. Xalīl ignores their criticism and goes to the other room. There he tries to remind himself of the change in his personality. He used to be courageous and frank in saying everything. He says this proverb to himself about his past personality. It means: "I used not to stop myself from saying what is on my mind".

From the two versions of the original proverb, I will choose the first one as it is older than the other.

Discussion:

The original proverb is a nominal sentence – a noun which ends with the pronoun *ki* (your), a preposition and a noun, ending in a pronoun *ki* (your). The proverb is addressed to a present person. The modified proverb is a verbal sentence - it starts with the verb أطلق *uṭliqu* (I set free), followed by a preposition *li* (to) and a noun *nafs* which ends with the pronoun *ī* (me), followed by the subject حبل *ḥablu* (rope), and noun الجرأة al-*jur'ah* (courage) which is preceded by the definite article *al* (the) and followed by another preposition على *ʿalā* (on) and a noun غاربه *gāribihi* which ends with the pronoun *hi*.

The original proverb is usually addressed to a woman by her husband as an announcement to divorcing her. It means that the speaker tells his soon-to-be divorced wife that she is free to do whatever she wants as she will no longer be his wife. The modified proverb is said by the speaker to himself, expressing that he has given himself the full freedom to talk. Both proverbs have the same metaphorical meaning – freedom.

They are synonymous. According to Partington, the technique used in forming the new proverb is rephrasing as there is a drastic change in the form of the original.

Example 2:

Modified proverb:

هو كالمرأة-شرّ لابدّ منه (نيوف،1995، ص 173).

It is like a woman, an unavoidable evil.

Original proverb:

المرأة شرٌ كلُّها، وشرُّ ما فيها أنه لا بدَّ منها (الإمام علي(رض) (البعلبكي،2001، ط3، ص215).

Women are all of evil; and the worst thing about them is that they are unavoidable (saying of the Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib).

Rāḍī used this proverb in his discussion about money. The original is a saying attributed to *imam* ᶜAlī Bin Abī Ṭālib. The transliteration of it is: *al-mar'ah šarrun kulluhā wa šarru mā fīhā annahu lā budda minhā*. "Women are all of evil; and the worst thing about them is that they are unavoidable". This saying shows an inherited, historical contempt for women. It means that if they were not necessary for satisfying sexual needs and bearing children, it would be better to abandon them altogether because they are all evil. This is the mentality of the uncivilized Bedouin, who used to bury female babies at birth fearing disgrace (being afraid about their honour when they grow up). The modified proverb is a shortened form of the original one, the deletion being necessary to highlight the importance of money in life. According to Partington, the technique used in forming the new proverb is abbreviation.

Example 3:

Modified proverb:

إنّما بالكلام وحده لا يحيا الإنسان (نيوف، 1985، ص14).

Man shall not live by words only.

Original proverb:

ليس بالخبز وحده يحيا الإنسان (متى: 4:4).

Man shall not live on bread alone (Mathew 4:4).

Xalīl says this proverb because he had stopped writing poetry, while others continued this activity adding that it had had no effect. The proverb means others continued the job of writing poetry and some people consider them poets, but they are not talented.

What is the advantage of being well-known when this fame is without any basis? This reminds us of Christ's saying, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.' (Bible: Luke: 2001: 4:4-4). Xalīl here modifies this Biblical verse. But its origin is known.

The first proverb here is the modified proverb of the second one, which is the canonical one. The modified proverb means: others have carried on writing poetry and some people consider them poets, but they are not talented. So, what is the advantage of being well-known when this fame is without any basis?

Here, the first two words *laysa* and *bi-l-xubzi* of the original proverb are replaced by two other words: *innamā* and *bi-l-kalāmi*. However, the wording of the original proverb is not suitable for the context. So, it is necessary to play with the wording of it to fit the situation. In so doing a humorous effect effective is achieved and the speaker gives credibility to his speech, because the use of proverbs stems from their status as a source of wisdom and truth. The sacredness of the original proverb has been violated by the new proverb. According to Partington's classification, the technique used in the modified proverb is substitution.

Example 4:

Modified proverb:

العمر يمرّ بسرعة (نيوف،1985،ص152).

Life passes quickly.

Original proverb:

العمر غفلة (أنيس فريحة،1953، ج2، ص 440).

Life is short (lit. unawareness) (Frayha, 1953, p.440).

Rāḍī said this proverb to Rābiḥah. It is an indication that he wanted to take any opportunity to acquire wealth and power quickly at any cost. He did not want to waste time putting things off or on moral considerations. He said to himself: "Today is the right time to seize the opportunity, so you should take it because tomorrow somebody else will have it". This is also how life passes without feeling it until one becomes prey to old age and regret.

In the modified proverb the lexeme *ġaflah*, which is a predicate (noun), occurs with two lexemes, *yamurru* and *bisur^cah*, which belong to different grammatical categories – verb, preposition and noun. But the replaced constituents share the same meaning as the original word. So, the modified proverb is synonymous to the original one. The technique used in forming the modified proverb is rephrasing.

Example 5:

Modified proverb:

النسيان من النسوان (نيوف، 1985، ص31).

Forgetfulness is due to women.

Original proverb:

الإنسان معرّض للنّسيان (فريحة، 1953، ج1، ص143).

Man is apt (lit. exposed) to forget (Frayha, 1953, vol1, p.143).

Xalīl says this proverb about his love for Fātinah and his inability to forget her love. In this saying, a play on words is intended to express either bitterness or joking. It accuses the woman of being the reason for man forgetting everything either because of his excessive love or excessive hatred for her.

The modified proverb changes nearly all the lexemes of the original proverb, but still the original proverb has its power. The modified proverb starts with *an-nisyān*, while the original proverb ends with the preposition *li-* and the lexeme *an-nisyān* and starts with the lexeme *al-insān*. Both lexemes are nouns. In the modified proverb these lexemes are replaced by *an-niswān* and *an-nisyān* respectively, and both are nouns. *An-niswān* is preceded by the preposition *min*, while in the original proverb there is an extra lexeme *mu^carraḍ*, which is grammatically a predicate of *an-nisyān*. An alternative version of the original proverb is: الانسان من النسيان (قوشاقجي، ج2، 1978، ص598)

The modified proverb begins with *an-nisyān* while the original one ends with *an-nisyān*. The modified proverb conveys the message that one forgets because of women, while the original one means that the human being is born to forget. In the modified proverb *an-niswān* substitutes *an-nisyān*, but both are related grammatically. This modification gives a sense of humorousness. In Partington's terms, the technique used in forming the new proverb is rephrasing.

Example 6:

Modified proverb:

الصّداقة تحجب العيوب (نيوف، 1985، ص90).

Friendship covers deficiencies.

Original proverb:

الكرم ستّار العيوب (فريحة،1953،ج2،ص518).

Generosity (is a trait which) covers all defects (Frayha, 1953, vol1, p. 518).

Fāṭina says of Rāḍī that he is a coward in reality, but he tries to hide this through his generosity with his friends. She says this proverb about Rāḍī. It means that people are considerate towards their friends – they hide their friends' deficiencies or even try not to see them. So, they only see their good characteristics and deeds, or even only try to not to see them.

The modified proverb replaces two lexemes *al-karam* and *sattār* (noun and noun predicate) with *aṣ-ṣadāqah* and *taḥjub* (noun and verb) respectively. The modification is used by Nayouf to suit the context, but the reader can still deduce the original form of the proverb. The technique used in the new proverb is substitution, to use Partington's term.

Example 7:

Modified proverb:

(نفيق) فيقة أهل الكهف (نيوف، 1985، ص125).

We woke up like the people of the Cave.

Original proverb:

نومة أهل الكهف (طاهر، ص285).

(May this sleep be) the sleep of the cave's people.

Zakī says this proverb to Xalīl. It means that we do not know what is happening but late. They are mentioned in the Qura'n as: "that the companions of the cave" (Q:18:9) [Sahih International]. The transliteration is: "'Anna 'Aṣĥāba Al-Kahfi" (Q:18:9) [Sahih International]. There are three of them and their dog is the fourth one. The Quranic verse reads: "Said a speaker from among them, "How long have you remained [here]?"

They said, "We have remained a day or part of a day." (Q:18:19) [Sahih International]. The transliteration is "Qāla Qā'ilun Minhum Kam Labithtum Qālū Labithnā Yawmāan 'Aw Ba`đa Yawmin" (Q:18:19) [Sahih International]. In reality, however, they had slept one hundred years according to the religious myth. In this context, the French proverb says: "The husband is the last to know" (it means the last to know about his wife's adultery), after the smell has spread and blocked noses. Similarly, in a political context, the late Syrian poet Mamdūḥ ᶜAdwān wrote a play with the title: *Hamlet awakens late* (in an explicit reference to *Hamlet*, the play by the great Shakespeare).

The modified proverb has the same structure as the original proverb. The lexeme *fayqit* was substituted for the lexeme *noumit*. Both substituted constituents belong to the same grammatical category – noun. Both lexemes relate to "sleep", and are antonyms. Nayouf has played with the original proverb to fit the context. In Partington's terms, the technique used in the new proverb is substitution.

Example 8:

Modified proverb:

(قرّرت أن) أضرب العصافير جميعاً بحجر واحد (نيوف، 1985، ص154).
I have decided to kill all the birds with one single stone.

Original proverb:

عصفورين بحجر (فريحة، ج2، 1953، ص432).
(To hit) two birds with one stone (Frayha, 1953, vol1, p.432).

Rābiḥa says that she will do many things at the same time – she will make Fātina angry, gain Xalīl's love, put them at odds, avenge Rāḍī and make others' hearts burn with envy. So she says this proverb. The proverb originally goes: "To hit two birds with one stone". (You throw a stone to kill one bird, but fortunately, this single stone hits two birds. What greater happiness is there more than that!) It means that he has hit two targets with one single stone. For instance, I have to travel to the capital to visit a ministry regarding my job, and at the same time, I take the opportunity to visit my sick relative as if I have come specially to visit him. Doing so, I have hit two birds with one single stone! But Rābiḥa wants to hit many targets with one single act, i.e. she will target many birds with one single stone.

In the modified proverb the number of birds is more than two *al-ᶜaṣāfīr jamīᶜan*, while in the original proverb the number of the birds is two *ᶜaṣfūrayn*, but still the metaphorical meaning of the original proverb is similar to the metaphorical meaning of the modified proverb, which is hitting more than one target at the same time. According to Partington's classification, the technique used is rephrasing.

Example 9:

Modified proverb:

الَّذي برأسي على رأس لساني (نيوف، 1985، ص73).

What is on my mind is on the tip of my tongue.

Original proverb:

اللَّي بقلبه ع راص لسانه (عبد الحميد، 2008، ص154).
إلي في قلبه على راس لسانه (فريحة،ج1953،1،ص85).
اللَّي في قلبو في تمَّو (قوشاقجي، ج2، 1978، ص623).

That which is in his heart is on the tip of his tongue (Frayha, 1953, vol. 1, p.85).

Rābiḥa says this proverb to Xalīl. It means I explicitly say what I am thinking of in front of everybody. I fear nobody and I cannot lie or be a hypocrite. I am not the kind of person who knows something and says something else.

From the above three forms of the original proverb, I will choose ᶜAbd al-Ḥamīd version as it is the most used one in the Syrian coast. In the modified proverb *al-laḏī,* which is in the standard form, is substituted for *illī,* which is in the colloquial form. Another transformation in the original proverb is using برأس *bira'sī* instead of بقلبه *biqalbu*. However, both substituted constituents *bi-ra'sī* and *bīqalbu* belong to the same grammatical categories – preposition and noun. But they are different lexemes. Another sign of change in the original form is that the original proverb is in the third person while the modified proverb is in the first person. This substitution did not change the meaning of the old proverb. Both forms of the proverb are synonymous. According to Partington, the technique used in the modified proverb is substitution.

Example 10:

Modified proverb:

انسم حاصوداً و نم بعين الشّمس (نيوف، 1985، ص11).

Be called a reaper and sleep in the sun.

Original proverb:

انسم حاصود و نام بعان الشّمس (عبد الحميد، 2008، ص321).

طلع صيتّك حاصود، إرم منجلك و اقعود (فريحة، 1953، ج2، ص410).

(Now that) you have the reputation of being an excellent harvester, throw away your sickle and sit around (Frayha, vol 2, 1953, p.410).

Xalīl says this proverb about Zakī who has not published a word for years. It means what is important is to become famous and for people to say of you that you are skilful in reaping, even if you have not harvested even an ear of corn, but sleep in the daytime. It is enough that you are known now. (Propaganda is everything. For instance, it is enough for it to be said that someone is an unrivalled surgeon, and you will find that all people say the same thing about him and visit him to be treated.)

Discussion:

From the aforementioned two forms of the original proverb, I will choose the firse one. In the modified proverb, the object حاصودًا *ḥāṣūdan* (a reaper) ends with an accusative nunation *an,* while the same word in the original proverb حاصود *ḥāṣūd,* (a reaper) does not end with أ *an,* though it has the same syntactic function – an object. Again, in the modified proverb the word نم *nam* (sleep) is a verb in the imperative and it is in Standard Arabic as well; while, in the original proverb, the same verb نام *nām*, (sleep) is in the imperative but in Colloquial Arabic instead. In the original proverb, the word بعان *biᶜān* (in the eye) consists of the preposition ب *bi* followed by the noun عان *ᶜān* (eye) in Colloquial Arabic. In the modified proverb, the same word بعين is written in Standard Arabic, the letter ي substituting the letter ا in the original proverb. According to Partington's categorisation, the technique used is substitution.

Example 11:

Modified proverb:

(مليح أنني) كسرت الدّف وطلّقت الغناء (من زمان) (نيوف، 1985، ص11).

It is good that I broke the tambourine and divorced singing a long time ago.

Original proverb:

Out of the following four original versions, I will choose one of the first two formulas as they are identical in both form and meaning, and they belong to the proverbs from the Syrian coast.

كسرنا الدّف و بطّلنا الغني (عبد الحميد، 2008، ص213).

كسرنا الدف وبطلنا الغني (درويش، 2005).

فختنا الدّف و بطّلنا الغناني (فريحة، 1953، ج2، ص466).

انفخت الدّفّ و تفرّقت العشّاق (فريحة، 1953، ج1، ص144).

We have broken the tambourine and given up singing.

Xalīl rejects poets and says that it was good that he gave up writing poetry. He says this proverb. The corresponding colloquial proverb is, "We broke the tambourine and gave up singing". It means that I will never again behave like this. We divorced this trade, which is writing poetry. May God forbid it!

The modified proverb uses the suffix –*t(u)*, which is the 1st person singular pronoun suffix with the verb *kasar-*, while in the original proverb -*nā* the 1st person plural pronoun suffix is used instead. Another modification is using the lexeme *ṭallaqt* for the lexeme *baṭṭalnā*. Both lexemes belong to the same grammatical category – verb. The two proverbs are variants and synonymous. According to Partington's classification, the technique used in the modified proverb is substitution.

Example 12:

Modified proverb:

من كبّر ما ضرب (نيوف، 1985،ص173)

He who threw [with a large stone] did not hit.

Original proverb:

إلّي بكبّر حجره ما بيضرب (فريحه، ج1، 1953، ص85).

من كبّر الحجر ما ضرب (المحمود 1983 ص374).

He who threw with a large stone did not hit.

Rāḍī said to Ilyās, "Do you not aspire to be a minister, Ilyās?" Ilyās said this proverb. It means that the person who aspires to a very high position when he does not have the qualifications to do so, will never manage it because he is bound for a lower position given his capabilities.

The modified proverb deletes the lexeme *al-ḥajar*, but this does not affect the overall meaning of the original proverb. The reader can guess the deleted part of the original proverb. The two proverbs are variants. However, according to Partington, the technique used in this new proverb is abbreviation.

Example 13:

Modified proverb:

علا الدّم إلى رأسي (نيوف، 1995، ص12).

Blood rose up my head (to my head).

Original proverb:

روحي براس مناخيري (فريحة، 1953، ج1، ص335) and واصل خلقه لراس مناخيره (الأسود، ص214).

My soul is at the tip of my nose (Frayḥa, 1953, vol1, p.335).

Xalīl is astonished at Fātina's attraction to Zakī Mannān. He says this proverb, which means "I was afflicted with anger and became nervous and inflamed with jealousy and hatred. I was about to explode".

Discussion:

From the aforementioned two forms of the original proverb I will choose the first one as it is the one mostly used in the Syrian coast. The modified proverb is a verbal sentence, beginning with the verb علا *ᶜalā*, while the original proverb is a nominal sentence. The original proverb is in the colloquial form while the modified proverb is in Standard Arabic. Both proverbs are in the first person singular. Despite the dramatic change in both the formal and the syntactical structure, both proverbs still have the same meaning, which is anger and fury. They convey the same idea but in different forms. According to Kuusi's definition of synonymous proverbs, they are synonymous. They have the same ideational semantic meaning. However, according to Partington, the technique used in this new proverb is rephrasing.

Example 14:

Modified proverb:

حان أن تميّز أخيراً بين الطّيب كالشّعر والمبادئ و بين المفيد كعصفور في اليد، بين المثالية والموضوعيّة!
(نيوف، 1995، ص117).

It is time to distinguish between what is nice like poetry and principles and between what is beneficial like a bird in hand, between idealism and objectivity.

Original proverb:

عصفور في اليد أحسن من عشره على الشّجره and عصفور بالإيد و لا عشرة عالشّجرة (درويش، 2005)
andعصفور باليد و لا عشرة ع الشّجرة (قوشاقجي، ج2، 1978، ص397).

A bird in a hand is better than ten in the bush.

Fauzī Assardād says this proverb to Zakī. It means, "Do not be idealistic, living in the world of theoretical principles and imaginary dreams". Fauzī urges Zakī to search for benefit and self-interest. It is as if he had said to him: "Sweet words remain but words and you should do everything to gain money, position and power" . Simple logic tells us: "each one of us wants to have money to protect him from the indignity of need, and he wants to have a good reputation, i.e. to have a high position. But this should not be at the expense of human dignity and natural good morals. This is what meant by Christ's saying: "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?" (Mark 8:36). The same is meant by Christ's saying: "Man shall not live by bread alone" (Luke 4:4-4). It means the person who seeks only bread (money) at the expense of principles and morals is like an animal which cares only for food. This proverb is modified and from the three original forms, I have chosen the first one: عصفور في اليد أحسن من عشره على الشّجره *ʿaṣfūr bilyad ʾāḥsan min ʿašrah ʿalā al-šajarah* (a bird in a hand is better than ten in the bush). The modified proverb is "like a bird in the hand". Although it is an abbreviated form of the original "A bird in the hand is worth ten in the bush", the reader can still recall the original. So deletion of a large part of the original proverb does not hamper identifying the original. The new extended part in the modified proverb explains the omitted part, although the lexemes are totally different. The reader can understand that to guarantee a decent life by adopting high morals and principles is as futile as guaranteeing birds on the tree, while practicality and profit are guaranteed like holding a bird in one's hand. According to Partington, the technique used in this new proverb is rephrasing.

Example 15:

Modified proverb:

الدّيك يبحث في المزبلة، على الأرض، لينتفع، ليعيش أيضاً (نيوف،1995،ص88).

The cock searches on the garbage heap, in order to get benefit, and to live as well.

Original proverb:

مثل الدّيك ع المزبلة (فريحة، 1953، ج2، ص 629).

Like a cock on a dung-hill (Frayḥa, 1953, vol2, p629).

Fātina criticizes Rāḍī because she is not an advocate of the philosophy of self-interest. Rāḍī replies, saying this proverb to her. From his point of view, we should be realistic – working with the facts on the ground, and not with morals and principles. He says that even the cock which seeks a living, looks for his food in the garbage heap and remains proud. Otherwise, it will die of hunger. This is the philosophy of cheap opportunists like Rāḍī. In reality, Rāḍī will not die of starvation if he were to keep some of his dignity. But he does not accept an honourable living. On the contrary, he wants to gain power and wealth at any expense. The only ideal he finds for himself is the cock, which feeds on garbage but keeps its head high. But it is a cock's head and not a person's! Rāḍī's name does not suggest content – the meaning of "Rāḍī" in Arabic. Rather it signifies to be contentment with humiliation and disgrace in order to satisfy the lower part of his body. According to Partington, the technique used in this new proverb is rephrasing

The modified proverb الدّيك يبحث في المزبلة has the verb *yabḥath* and the preposition *fī* and it does not begin with *mithl*, while the original proverb begins with *mithl* and it has the preposition *ᶜa*. But both proverbs have the same "ideational" meaning – describing the person who does not have principles and does not accept an honourable life, but tries to gain power and wealth at any expense, while still keeping his head held high even if he is in the dirt. According to Partington, the technique used in this new proverb is rephrasing.

Example 16:

Modified proverb:

أنت تحب الجوز الفارغ (235نيوف، 1995، ص235).

You like empty nuts.

Original proverb:

<div dir="rtl">

بطعمي حاله جوز فارغ (فريحة، ج1، 1953، ص180).

</div>

He is feeding on walnut shells (Frayha, vol1, 1953, p.180).

Iliās says this proverb to Rāḍī. It means words that do not lead to action and have no basis of truth. It is like when a person imagines something and tells it as if it is true. He does not lie but believes his own imagination, i.e. he has only the shell of the nut; but he thinks that he has the whole nut, even without the shell. In colloquial Arabic, people say *hūbarjī* 'braggart'. It means that is exaggeratedly threatening, pompous, lying and pretending. This is what is called "reverie" - when someone talks about things which have not happened yet talks about them as if they have really happened, God knows only in dreams or imagination. It is like saying, "I will be a minister in a year and will own 30 million pounds and I will do this and that". On this basis, he behaves as if he had millions and as if he was already a minister. This kind of madness is called reverie. He lies and believes himself, and wants us to believe him.

The modified proverb is in Standard Arabic and it is a nominal sentence. The original proverb is half Standard Arabic and half non-Standard Arabic – *biṭaᶜmī* is colloquial. The Standard form of it is *yuṭᶜimu. ḥālahu"* is Standard Arabic, while the colloquial form is *ḥālū*. Both proverbs have the same metaphorical meaning. They are variants and synonymous. Both have the same metaphor *jawz fāriġ* – in the modified proverb the lexeme *jawz* is preceded by the definite article *al-*, while it is absent in the original proverb. The modified proverb starts with the subject pronoun *anta* followed by the present tense verb *tuḥibbu*, while the modified proverb starts with *biṭaᶜmī*, the colloquial form of the present tense verb *yuṭᶜimu* followed by the object *ḥālahu*. The modified proverb has a first person narrator while the original one has a third person narrator. The modification suits the context. According to Partington, the technique used in this new proverb is rephrasing.

4.5 Analysis of modified proverbs in the novels

In sections 4.8.1-4.8.4.2 I will consider various aspects of the modified proverbs found in the novels *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* by Aḥmad Yusuf al-Maḥmūd, and *Anājīl al-Xarāb* by Naufal Nayūf.

4.5.1 Origins of modified proverbs in the novels

There are 33 modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*. These have the following origins:

Origin	no. of examples	percentage of total examples
Bible	1	3.0%
Hadith	1	3.0%
Religious/Imam ʿalī/	1	3.0%
Folk tradition	30	90.91%

One of the proverbs deriving from folk tradition has a fairly close Biblical correspondent. This is إذا كان القلب أعمى، ما فائدة البصر! *ʾiḏā kāna al-qalb ʿaʿmā mā fāʾidat al-baṣar* (If the heart is blind, what is the use of sight!) which can be compared to the narrative in John: 9 in the New Testament (New International Version):

> 9 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6 After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. 7 "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. 8 His neighbours and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" 9 Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man." 10 "How then were your eyes opened?" they asked. 11 He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."12 "Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said.

Another of the proverbs deriving from folk tradition, المقدّر ما منه محذر 'Fate is inescapable,' has fairly close correspondents in both the Bible and the Quran. This can be compared to Ecclesiastes 8:7 "Since no one knows the future, who can tell someone else what is to come?" (New International Version), and Ecclessiastes 9:12) "Moreover, no one knows when their hour will come: As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so people are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them" (New International Version). It can also be compared to a number of Quranic verses, such as وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ ۖ فَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ (Ch. 14, V. 4) ("And We did not send any messenger except [speaking] in the language of his people

to state clearly for them, and Allah sends astray [thereby] whom He wills and guides whom He wills." Sahih International Translation).

Even if we were to include this example under 'Bible' or 'Quran' (rather than folk tradition), and the one discussed immediately above under 'Bible' (rather than folk tradition) is clear that the vast majority of the proverbs used in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* come from folk proverbs.

There are 16 modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. These have the following origins:

Origin	no. of examples	percentage of total examples
Bible	1	6.3%
Quran	1	6.3%
Classical	1	6.3%
Folk tradition	13	81.3%

One of the proverbs deriving from folk tradition has a fairly closely Biblical correspondent. This is العمر يمرّ بسرعة 'life passes quickly', which is fairly similar to the Biblical 'What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes' (James 4: 14). However, even were we to include this proverb under 'Biblical' rather than 'folk', the large majority of proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, as in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, clearly come from folk proverbs.

4.5.2 Cultural features of modified proverbs in the novels

There are 33 modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*. These have the following cultural features:

Cultural feature	no. of examples	percentage of total examples
Human body	5	15.2%
Human social life	8	24.2 %
Agriculture	7	21.2%
Animal	5	15.2%
Natural phenomena	2	6.1%
Food	6	18.9%

There are 16 modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. These have the following cultural features:

Cultural feature	no. of examples	percentage of total examples
Women	2	12.5%
Human body	1	6.25%
Human social life	8	50.0%
Agriculture	2	12.5%
Animals	3	18.7%

None of the modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* falls under the categories of Food or Natural phenomenon, which are found in the modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*.

4.5.3 Social functions of modified proverbs in the novels

I have divided up the proverbs into a number of categories of social function, making a basic distinction between *state of affairs*, and *advice*. *State of affairs* is subdivided into a general category: 1. *describing human nature/life/emotion* and a more specific category 2. *expressing misogyny* (which is a clear feature of a number of proverbs). Advice is subdivided into: 3. *practical advice* (i.e. advice which does not have any intrinsic moral content), 4. *materialistic advice* (where the proverb advises the addressee to behave materialistically or selfishly), and 5. *moral advice* (where the proverb advises the addressee to behave morally, i.e. unselfishly). This is, of course, not the only way in which social functions could be divided, but has been chosen largely because it (i) makes use of basic notional divisions (e.g. between states of affairs and advice), and (ii) yields categories which are insightful and fairly clearly distinct.

There are 33 modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, distributed as follows according to social functions.

1. Human nature/life/emotion

There are 20 modified proverbs in this novel which have been classified as describing human nature/life/emotion.

Modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* describing human nature/life emotions		
PAGE	**ARABIC MODIFIED PROVERB**	**ENGLISH TRANSLATION**
450	الدنيا لا تبقى على حال	Life does not remain in one state
496	مطرح ما يسري يهري.	It harms as it passes
97	نتق الدم بالشغل (في الأرجنتين ليجمع مهر امرأة)	He even spat blood through harsh labour in Argentine to pay a woman's dowry
46	نقول له هكذا، يقول لنا هكذا	We say to him this, but he says that
598	كلنا بالبلاء سواء	All of us in trouble are equal
42	أين ذبت مثل الملح	Where did you melt away like salt?
349	مليحة هذه العلّيقة لهذا الحمار	This nosebag is good for this donkey
350	المقدّر ما منه محذر	Fate is inescapable
486	لا تضحك للبرغل السّخن	She does not even smile at the hot *burghul*
70	لكأنّ شوكة وخزت عيني	As if a thorn pricked my eye upon seeing them
40	الجمل لا يرى حردبته	The camel does not see his hunched back
83	التّحصيل من النّاس صار أصعب من قلع الأضراس	Getting money back from people is harder than pulling teeth
392	ستأكل أصابعك مع هذا البرغل	(I fear) you will eat your fingers with this burgul
94	قال الغراب لسليمان الحكيم: طرت الدنيا شرقاً غرباً، شمالاً و جنوباً، فلم أجد طيراً أجمل من ابني!	The crow said to Sulaimān Al-hakim: I flew east and west, north and south, but did not find a more beautiful son than mine.
487	لا يعرف الكلب باب دارهم	The dog does not know the door of their house
113	أرجل قاصرة و لسان قادر	Incapable legs with capable tongue
44	أولاد عين داؤد] يمسحون الكحل من العين	[ᶜin Daūd's children] wipe the antimony from the eye
332	لنأكل لحمه حيّاً حتّى لا نراه في المنام	Let us eat his living flesh so that we do not dream of him!
597	لا تغنّي إلّا لليلاها	It only sings as it likes
425	قاتل الله الجوع ما أكفره !	I wish God would fight hunger for how unbelieving is it !

2. Misogyny

There is 1 modified proverb in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* expressing misogyny.

Modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* expressing misogyny		
PAGE	ARABIC MODIFIED PROVERB	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
507	إنّ امرأة ربّت ثوراً فلم يحرث	A woman raised an ox, and it would not plough

3. Practical advice

There are 9 modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* giving practical advice.

Modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* giving practical advice		
PAGE	ARABIC MODIFIED PROVERB	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
44	أولاد الحاره الشرقية] أكثر من الحب على الزيتون	[The children of the eastern quarter are] more than olives on the olive trees
45	هذا الرزق، هل وجدته في الطريق لتستهين به هذه الاستهانة؟	Did you find these daily provisions on the road, to be so scornful of them?
326	تاليف القط لا يخلّصه من مخالبه	Taming the cat does not save you from his claws/ scratches
42	لا تبحثي فيها عن نجوم الظّهر	Do not look for the midday stars
143	إذا كان القلب أعمى، ما فائدة البصر!	If the heart is blind, what is the use of sight!
88	ابنة العم، كما يقولون، عوراء	The cousin, as they say, is one-eyed
124	صيت الغنى و لا رائحة الفقر	The reputation of wealth is better than the smell of poverty
44	تريديني أن أقطع بنصيب النّاس !	You want me to prevent people from getting their livelihood!
113	لا تتدخّل بما لا يعنيك	Do not interfere in something which is no concern of yours

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4. *Materialistic advice*

There are 2 modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* giving materialistic advice.

Modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* giving materialistic advice		
PAGE	ARABIC MODIFIED PROVERB	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
541	ليس بالشّعر وحده ينمو التّفّاح!	Apple trees cannot grow by poetry alone!
214	من يطعم التّسعة يأكل العشرة	He who feeds nine times, eats the tenth

5. *Moral advice*

There is 1 modified proverb in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* giving moral advice.

Modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* giving moral advice		
PAGE	ARABIC MODIFIED PROVERB	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
115	المعاملة مع الله	Good behaviour is appreciated by God

The percentages of different social functions of modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* are as follows:

Social functions of modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*		
	No. of examples	Percentage of total examples
1. Human nature/life/emotion	20	60.61%
2. Misogyny	1	3.03%
3. Practical advice	9	27.27%
4. Materialistic advice	2	6.06%
5. Moral advice	1	3.03%

There are 16 modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. These are distributed according to the following social functions.

1. *Human nature/life/emotion*

There are 3 modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* describing human nature/life/emotion.

Modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* describing human nature/life emotions		
PAGE	**ARABIC MODIFIED PROVERB**	**ENGLISH TRANSLATION**
12	علا الدّم إلى رأسي	Blood rose up my head (to my head)
125	فيقة أهل الكهف (نفيق)	We woke up like the people of the Cave
247	أطلق لنفسي حبل الجرأة على غاربه	I myself set free the rope of courage

2. Misogyny

There are 2 modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* expressing misogyny.

Modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* expressing misogyny		
PAGE	**ARABIC MODIFIED PROVERB**	**ENGLISH TRANSLATION**
173	هو كالمرأة-شرّ لابدّ منه	It is like woman, unavoidable evil
31	النسيان من النسوان	Forgetfulness is due to women

3. Practical advice

There are 8 modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* giving practical advice.

Modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* giving practical advice		
PAGE	**ARABIC MODIFIED PROVERB**	**ENGLISH TRANSLATION**
11	انسم حاصوداً و نم بعين الشّمس	Be called a reaper and sleep in the sun
154	قرّرت أن أضرب العصافير جميعاً بحجر واحد	I have decided to kill all the birds with one single stone
235	[أنت تحب] الجوز الفارغ	[You like] empty nuts
73	الّذي برأسي على رأس لساني	What is on my mind is on the tip of my tongue
173	من كبّر ما ضرب	He who threw [with a large stone] did not hit
152	العمر يمرّ بسرعة	Life passes quickly
90	الصّداقة تحجب العيوب	Friendship covers deficiencies.
11	مليح أنني كسرت الدّف وطلّقت الغناء من زمان	It is good that I broke the tambourine and divorced singing a long time ago

4. *Materialistic advice*

There are 3 modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* giving materialistic advice.

Modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* giving materialistic advice		
PAGE	ARABIC MODIFIED PROVERB	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
117	حان أن تميّز أخيراً بين الطّيب كالشّعر والمبادئ و بين المفيد كعصفور في اليد، بين المثالية والموضوعيّة!	It is time to distinguish between what is nice like poetry and principles and between what is beneficial like a bird in hand, between idealism and objectivity
88	الدّيك يبحث في المزبلة، على الأرض، لينتفع، ليعيش أيضا	The cock searches on the garbage heap, in order to get benefit, and to live as well
14	إنّما بالكلام وحده لا يحيا الإنسان.	Man shall not live by words only

5. *Moral advice*

There are no modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* giving moral advice.

The percentages of different social functions of modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* are as follows:

Social functions of modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*		
	No. of examples	**Percentage of total examples**
1. Human nature/life/emotion	3	18.8%
2. Misogyny	2	12.5%
3. Practical advice	8	50.0%
4. Materialistic advice	3	18.75%
5. Moral advice	0	0%

A comparison of the results for the social functions of modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb* shows that human nature/life/emotion is the commonest category of modified proverb in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, occurring in over half of modified

proverbs (60.61%), but is relatively uncommon in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, occurring in only 18.8% of modified proverbs.

Practical advice is the commonest social function in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, occurring in over half of modified proverbs (50.0%), and is also common in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, occurring in one third of modified proverbs (27.27%).

Materialistic advice is the next commonest social function, occurring in 18.75% of modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, and 6.06% in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*. Misyogny is fairly common in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, occurring in 12.5% of modified proverbs, but rare in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, occurring in only 3.03% of modified proverbs (1 example). Moral advice is also rare, occurring in only 3.03% of modified proverbs (1 example) in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and not occurring at all in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*.

4.5.4 Analysis of modified proverb formation in the novels

In this section I will consider the techniques used by the two novelists Aḥmad Yusuf al-Maḥmūd and Naufal Nayūf in their novels *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb* to form modified proverbs. I will make use of the four categories of techniques developed by Partington (and discussed in Section 4.4): A. Subsitution, B. Insertion, C. Abbreviation, and D. Rephrasing. I will consider first *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* ('The Dividing Place of the Rain') and then *Anājīl al-Xarāb* ('The Gospels of Destruction').

4.5.4.1 Modified proverb formation techniques in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb*

There are 33 modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*. These utilise the following formation techniques:

Formation technique	no. of examples	percentage of total examples
Substitution:	11 examples	33.3%
Insertion:	1 example	3.0%
Abbreviation:	2 example	6.06%
Rephrasing:	19 examples	57.57%

The only two formation techniques which are used extensively are substitution and rephrasing. These are the two formation techniques which most significantly alter the form of the original proverb. Rephrasing – the most extreme formation technique – is used in an absolute majority of cases (57.57%).

There are 16 modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. These utilise the following formation techniques:

Formation technique	no. of examples	percentage of total examples
Substitution:	6 examples	37.5%
Insertion:	0 examples	0.0%
Abbreviation:	2 examples	12.50%
Rephrasing:	8 examples	50.0%

Three formation techniques are used extensively in the case of modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. These are rephrasing, substitution and abbreviation. Rephrasing is the most used technique (50.0% of occurrences), followed by substitution (37.5%) and then abbreviation (12.50%). There are no examples of insertion.

Rephrasing is the highest percentage of modified proverb formation techniques used in both *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (50.0% of occurrences) and *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (57.57% of occurrences). Substitution is used more frequently in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (37.5% of occurrences), compared to only (33.3% occurrences) in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar.* Abbreviation is used less in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (with 6.06% occurrences), with a preponderance of this same technique in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (12.50%).

4.5.4.2 Semantic relationship of modified proverbs to original proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb*

The 33 modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* stand semantically in relation to their original proverbs as follows:

Semantic relationship of total examples to original proverb	no. of examples	percentage
Synonymous:	27 examples	81.8%
Antonymous:	3 examples	9.1%
Other:	3 examples	9.1%

The vast majority of the modified proverbs (81.8%) in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* are synonymous with their original proverbs. A heavy preponderance of the most extreme modified proverb formation techniques in this novel (substitution at 33.3%, and rephrasing at 57.57%), i.e. the most dramatic change in form, thus correlates with no significant change in meaning. If the form is to be changed extensively, it seems that the meaning has to be kept relatively constant in order for the new version of the proverb (the modified proverb) to remain comprehensible.

The 16 modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* stand semantically in relation to their original proverbs as follows:

Semantic relationship of total examples to original proverb	no. of examples	percentage
Synonymous:	12 examples	75.0%
Antonymous:	1 example	6.3%
Other:	3 examples	18.8%

A somewhat smaller proportion of the modified proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* are synonymous with their original proverb than in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (75.0% for *Anājīl al-Xarāb* as compared to (81.8% for *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*). The rather higher use of the less extreme modified proverb formation techniques in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* seems to allow for greater variety in the semantic relationships between the original proverb and the modified proverb. Greater similarity of form between the original proverb and the

modified proverb in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* as compared to *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* seems to allow for greater difference in meaning between the original and modified proverbs.

The general principle seems to be that either the form of the original proverb and the modified proverb are very different, in which case the meaning is kept very similar, or the form of the original and modified proverb may be more similar, in which case it is more acceptable for the original proverb and the modified proverb to have very different meanings. What is, apparently, unacceptable is for both the form and the meaning of the original proverb and the modified proverb to be very different. I suggest that the reason for this is that extreme difference in both form and meaning would make it very difficult for the reader to realise that he or she is dealing with a modified proverb in the first place – i.e. they would not easily be able to establish a link between the element in the novel (the modified proverb) and the original proverb to which it relates.

4.6 Conclusions

Both of the novels considered in this chapter employ a large number of modified proverbs of different backgrounds – religious, folkloric or even classical – as a means to convey their messages. In both novels most modified proverbs originate from folklore, with other sources such as Bible, Quran and Hadith being much less common.

Human social life is a very important cultural feature of modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (60.61% of occurrences), and rather less important, though still significant, in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (18.8%). The human body is fairly significant in modified proverbs in both novels with a preponderance of their occurrences in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (15.2%), compared to only (6.25% of occurrences) in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. Women are significant in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (12.5% of occurrences), but figure less in modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (3.03% of occurrences). Agriculture and animals are significant in modified proverbs in both novels – they form 36.4% of the occurrences in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar,* compared to only 31.2% of occurences in *Anājīl al-Xarāb.* Food and to a lesser extent natural phenomena are fairly significant in modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, but are not found at all in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*.

The commonest social function of modified proverbs, accounting for half of occurrences, in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* is practical advice. This is also very significant in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, where it constitutes nearly a third (27.27% of occurrences). The commonest social function of modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, however, also accounting for over half (60.61% of occurrences), is human nature/life/emotion, whereas this function is fairly less common (18.8% of occurrences) in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. Materialistic advice and misogyny are fairly significant in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (31.25% of occurrences of the modified proverbs), but are nearly ten per cent less in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (21.21% of occurrences). There is only one example of moral advice, in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*.

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* all four of Partington's formation techniques – substitution, insertion, abbreviation, and rephrasing – were applied to the original proverbs while in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* only three were used – substitution, abbreviation, and rephrasing. Rephrasing and substitution are common in both novels (rephrasing being the dominant formation technique in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, accounting for the majority of modified proverbs). Insertion is rare even in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (with only one example). One most striking difference in terms of formation techniques between the two novels is that abbreviation is rather more common in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (12.5% of occurrences), but occur less in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (6.06% of occurrences).

The dominant semantic relationship of modified proverbs to their original counterparts in both novels is synonymy. Antonymy, while found in both novels, is fairly rare in both. Other techniques are also found in both novels, particularly in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*.

Chapter 5: Curses in and *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb*

5.1 Introduction

This chapter considers curses in the two novels which are the focus of this study, *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* ('The Dividing Place of the Rain') and *Anājīl al-Xarāb* ('The Gospels of Destruction'). The chapter first considers definitions of curses by different scholars and shows their motifs (Section 5.2). It considers curses in Mesopotamian literature (Section 5.3), the Bible (Section 5.4), Ancient Greece (Section 5.5), and the Quran, Hadith, Islam and Arab culture (Section 5.6). Then it reviews cursing in Modern Greece, especially on the Island of Karpathos (Section 5.7). It presents the curses used in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* showing how these fit into various different categories (Section 5.8), in relation to the views of different scholars, followed by a statistical analysis of curses in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (Section 5.8.1). It then presents curses in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (Section 5.9), followed by a statistical analysis of curses in the novel (Section 5.9.1). It finally presents a discussion of statistical analysis of curses in both novels - *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (Section 5.10). Section (5.11) provides a conclusion.

5.2 General features of cursing

A general definition of cursing is that it is the use of offensive emotional language to express one's emotions and communicate them to others (Jay, 2005, p.63). A curse, more specifically, is defined as "an utterance consigning, or supposed or intended to consign, (a person or thing) to spiritual and temporal evil, the vengeance of the deity, the blasting of malignant fate, etc. It may be uttered by the deity, or by persons supposed to speak in his name, or to be listened to by him" (*Oxford English Dictionary* Online, 2014).

According to Masliyah (2001, p.268), "a curse is a wish expressed verbally for something bad to befall a certain person or object. It is also an insult to a person's honour and prestige. Curses also express disapproval or displeasure, but the manner in which they are pronounced ranges from spontaneous to explosive rage. Curses may or may not take the form of a prayer. Not every expression of a wish is a prayer. It is a

prayer if God is addressed either directly or indirectly and is asked to fulfil the wish. Insults are not as much dreaded as curses but are greatly disliked. In insults no supernatural power is addressed".

According to Avdikos (2011, pp.91-2), "Richard and Eva Blum (1970) also approach curses as communicative acts, arguing that a curse is nothing more than a definite and disastrous application of the power of words in order to manipulate other people's fates according to the wishes of the curser. However, what distinguishes a curse from other speech acts is the mesh of relations within which it is uttered. The two persons, transmitter and recipient (curser and cursed), are connected in a relation of hierarchical opposition. Uttering a curse presupposes that the curser has suffered some kind of damage on the part of the cursed, calling into question established social relations between the two parties (Mauss 1972:148). The curse restricts or rejects domination; consequently, a curser utters it — or threatens to do so — as a means of equalizing and restoring social relations. Bourdieu's theory offers a framework in which verbal exchanges are also interactions of symbolic domination, allowing us to understand the ritual action of cursing as a process that legitimizes the curser's power to present himself/herself as a supporter of the social equilibrium" (1977:41).

According to Jay:

> Cursing is an emotional element of language that alters the way we view ourselves and others. The aggressive person learns aggressive curse words and uses them to express his/her aggression towards others; he/she perceives others on the basis of how others use aggressive language. The sexually anxious person uses sexual terminology in a manner that exposes his/her underlying anxiety through hesitation, word choice, and avoidance. The sexually anxious person experiences and interprets sexuality of the self and others through a forbidden language of sexuality. *Asshole, bastard, bitch, cunt, prick, motherfucker, chicken-shit, nigger, dyke,* and *honkey* are not just words we say to each other. How we use these curse words portrays our deep emotional investment in a personal identity which we used to experience the world, to differentiate ourselves from others, and to express our feelings and attitudes about others. The use of these words tells us who we are and how we fit in the world. We do not just utter curse words; curse words are part of our identities (Jay, 2000, pp.81-2).

In Jay's (2000, pp.19-20), Neuro-Psycho-Social (NPS) theory, the lingual and meaning anatomy of the usage of a malediction is regulated "by the psychological system. In the psychological system, it is assumed that a speaker acquires linguistic competence and exhibits linguistic performance as the result of psychological development within a

socio-cultural language context. Different cultures and different languages, of course, present different sets of linguistic and semantic constraints on dirty word use". Thus although "individual speakers in one society might learn to speak the dominant language, each person's use of curse words is determined by his or her psychological development within a given linguistic, familial, and cultural environment. Psychological development includes variables that directly affect cursing, such as temperament, personality traits, religiosity, social rewards, and punishments" (Jay, 2000, p.20).

Jay distinguishes between controlled and automatic cursing. "Controlled cursing occurs when a speaker constructs a joke or thinks about how to insult someone. Cursing also frequently occurs automatically, with minimal conscious monitoring. After experiencing sharp pain, a speaker may automatically shout, "Damn!" Neuropsychology research shows that cursing operates at different levels of control and is not restricted to automatic processing" (Jay, 2000, p.34).

Jay (2000, p.84) argues that individuals vary in employing curses/operating curses in variant ways due to the difference in their attributes. Some "people have difficulty restraining their use of curse words; they use curse words to achieve personal states or effects (e.g., for stress reduction) and to affect others (e.g., for bullying). Thus, one's personality is associated with cursing in productive and reactive ways. One's personality is expressed through motives behind cursing and/or the needs behind restraining cursing. One's personality is also reactive to others' use of offensive speech" (Jay, 2000, p.84).

For Jay, (2000, pp.84-5), *"name calling" is one of the potential ways of casting* a passive influence on the hearers. For example, children insult their peers by mentioning their physical characteristics (e.g., *fatty, four-eyes, spaz).* But this act of name calling provides information about how the speaker views him/herself in relation to others, in addition to affecting (e.g., angering, humiliating) the listener and thus having practical utility for the speaker. Name calling can reach an extreme where participants engage in acts of verbal duelling or ritualistic insulting which produces both psychological and cultural effects". Regarding insulting rituals, Crystal notes: "The subject matter ranges from subtle forms of intellectual sarcasm and humour to the crudest possible attacks on a person's courage, sexual prowess, or relatives. At one level, attacks may be subtle and indirect, involving allusion and figurative speech; at another, there may be explicit

taunts, boasts, name calling, and jokes at the other's expense" (Crystal, 1987, p. 60). There is a controversy over the significance "of name calling and verbal aggression" (Jay, 2000, p.85). According to Jackson, "to use words to disrespect somebody is preferable to practising violence against the same individual: "It has been said that he who was the first to abuse his fellow-man instead of knocking out his brains without a word, laid thereby the basis of civilization" (Jackson, 1879/1958, p. 179).

A few individual features are linked with anathema, i.e. "The formal act, or formula, of consigning to damnation" (Oxford English Dictionary Online, 2014). They can fall into two divisions: "motives that instigate acts of cursing and restraints that suppress acts of cursing" (Jay, 2000, p. 87).

According to Jay (2005, p.65), "Cross-cultural coprolalia [involuntary swearing] reveals the universal use of religious, sexual, scatological and animal references". Culture, to some extent, plays a prominent role in the way of shaping a curse. For instance, when taking religion/sex binary opposition, the cultural influence becomes clearer through the proportional recurrence of these allusions/utterances. "Whether a Touretter [a sufferer from Tourettes syndrome] utters profanities or not depends on his or her culture (Jay, 2005, p.65). As Lees' work and that of others (Shapiro, A., Shapiro, E., Young and Feinberg, 1988) indicated, English coprolalia most frequently employs obscenities ('fuck', 'cocksucker', 'shit', 'cunt', 'motherfucker') and socially offensive words such as 'bitch', 'bastard' and 'nigger'. Obscenities and socially offensive words predominate over milder profanities (hell, damn, Jesus). One theory is that obscenities relieve the stress associated with coprolalia more effectively than mild profanities" (Jay, 2005, p.66).

Jay (2005, p.63) studied from the gender point of view trends in cursing in American society over a ten years' time span (1986-1996). He found that "cursing is ubiquitous in American social life" (Jay, 2005, p.63). Jay (2005, p.65) argues that "American cursing is fairly stable, involving a small set of words repeated frequently, mainly obscenities and profanities. The stability of these cursing patterns over ten years suggests that cursing in public has not undergone dramatic changes" (Jay, 2005, p.65).

Jay (2005, p.65) argues that the employment of obscene or profane lexemes differ. There is an inter-play between the sex of the person and the community in which he/she lives and between the fluctuating use of either profanity or obscenity: "Speakers in a college community rely heavily on obscenity ('fuck', 'shit') and profanity ('hell', 'Jesus', 'goddamn', 'damn', 'god'). Males tend to use more obscenities than females, who use more profanities than males. Interestingly, one finds the opposite emphasis (more profanity and few obscenities) in a nursing-home setting, where speakers in their eighties and nineties are less likely to utter strong obscenities" (Jay, 1996).

5.3 Curse in Mesopotamian Literature

According to Ben-Dov (2006, p.445), in Mesopotamia, when people cursed, they supplicated to Šamaš, the sun god, to bring justice to them. "He who breaches his vow will be captured by Šamaš" (Ben-Dov, 2006, p.446). So, the vicious man who cheats in selling by playing with the actual measures will be condemned by Šamaš: "With regard to the evil man it is stated (lines115-117) that he will incur guilt (*biltu*, literally "burden") and that his offspring will not get to inherit him. Whoever harms another's property will be harmed by his own and his heir's property" (Ben-Dov, 2006, p.446).

According to Ben-Dov (2006, p.448), Psalms 109:1-19 explain the process of cursing: "After an initial plea (v.1) and a prologue (vv. 2-5) there is a lengthy prayer (vv.6-19), which includes a series of wishes for calamity". Moreover, vv.6-19, are synthesised "in the formal structure of a curse, possibly directed at a non-specified supernatural power, what is termed in Classical studies "automatic curses" (Ben-Dov, 2006, p.449).

5.4 Cursing in the Bible

According to Masliyah (2001, p.270), "in Biblical times, religious curses (as well as blessings) served several purposes, most notably the harassment of enemies, the enforcement of law and doctrinal discipline, proper behaviour, and the protection of sacred places and objects. They had considerable influence in the making of morality, especially in the sphere of goodwill, faith, and honesty".

Masliyah (2001, p.270), gives an example of the ancient use of curses by prominent religious figures, notably the prophets. One of these is Moses, who relentlessly

supplicated to God to punish disobedient people. Moses asked God to make the earth swallow those who refused to acknowledge the ten commandments. Masliyah (2001, p.270), explicates Moses' curse:

> in the case of a challenge to his [Moses] authority by a faction of 250 powerful men led by Korah, Datan, and Abiron, Moses asked God to authenticate his mission. The sign of the divine approval God specified would be the opening of the earth under the rebels: 'Hardly Moses had spoken when the ground beneath them split; the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their houses' (Num. 16: 1-35).

Another scholar speaks about curses in the Bible. Ben-Dov (2006, p.432) argues that the target of the "Covenant Code" in the Scripture is to protect the "the poor" (Exod. vv. 24-26). Ben-Dov goes on to explain how a person can be accursed by violating the 'Pledge Laws' in the Bible. Ben-Dov (2006, p.431) says:

> The pledge, and especially the pledge of garments which is a common scenario (e.g. Deut. Xxiv 17; Amos ii 7; Prov. xx 16; xxvii 13; Job. xxii6; xxiv 7-10), is what creates the dramatic situation in Exod. xxii24-26. It is the confiscation of clothing that ultimately leads to YHWH's intervention. The law commands one who takes a garment in pledge to return it before sunset, so that he will be able to sleep in it. Garments were valuable in Biblical times, so that [...] 'a change of clothing' was considered a costly gift (Gen. xIv *passim*). Commoners in the Biblical period normally owned one set of clothes, and probably wore an additional undergarment. While working in the sun they would remove their outer garment and work wearing only an undergarment, or may be not even that. After finishing their work they would wear their garment again, and use it as a blanket at night (cf. Deut xxiv 13; Jer. Iii 2; Amos.ii 8; Job. xxiv 7, 10)". [...] the "Pledge Laws in the Pentateuch, in their laconic style, sketch an array of religious and social costumes which are present in the procedure of debt collecting. In this setting while the powerful side uses violent means to retrieve its money, the poor's last choice is prayer for revenge.

Ben-Dov (2006, pp.435-6) explains that the pledge laws are keen to stand by "the poor" through announcing this doctrine: "act cautiously with the poor, for it is within their power to cause destruction, which will annihilate the oppressor's property and damage his well-being" (Ben-Dov, 2006, p.432). However, "the destruction comes through YAHWH himself, who arms himself with a sword to avenge the iniquity" (Ben-Dov, 2006, pp.432-3). YAHWH, enraged by the violation of justice, threatens to take a sword in his hand, "and I will put you to the sword", "until your own wives shall become

widows and your children orphans" (Ben-Dov, 2006, p.437). In Exod. xxii 26 the prayer/curse of the poor will be answered "I will pay heed" (Ben- Dov, 2006, p.438).

According to Masliyah (2001, p. 287), The Bible contains a number of curses relating to health. Masaliyah gives examples of these: 'The Lord shall smite thee with consumption' (Deut. 28:22; Lev. 26:16); 'The Lord shall smite thee with the botch of Egypt and with the scab and the itch' (Deut. 28:27, 35); ''The Lord shall smite thee with fever and with an inflammation and with extreme burning' (Deut. 28:22); 'The Lord shall smite thee with madness' (Deut. 28:22; Zech. 12:22); 'The Lord shall smite thee with astonishment of heart' (Deut. 28:28).

According to Masliyah (2001, p.287), some curses in the Bible are also directed at the person's livestock, residence, and stability: 'Cursed be the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days' of thy life' (Gen. 3:17); 'Cursed be the flocks of thy sheep' (Deut. 28:18, 31); 'You have built houses of hewn stones, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them' (Am. 5:11).

5.5 Cursing in Ancient Greece

Lindsay Watson states that in ancient Greece: "perhaps the most constant motive for pronouncing a curse was the attaining of justice … It was, equally, because curses were thought of as the implement of justice that they are frequently resorted to by persons who have no other means of redress" (Ben-Dov, 2006, p. 444).

In Greek mythology, the person who utters the curse is pleading to the 'Erinyes' as well as 'other gods' to avenge the persecutor or the oppressor. Ben-Dov (2006, p.444) gives an example:

> The ones sounding a curse often approach the Erinyes, along with other gods, as seen in the curse of the hero, Ajax, in Sophocles' play bearing that hero's name (lines 1389-1391). Another divinity who takes the path of retributive justice is the goddess of justice […], who is described as one who never sleeps, always standing watch over the Earth and searching for injustice, which she meticulously avenges.

Ben-Dov (2006, p.441) presents the beggar as a vulnerable person who is in need of help and protection. He explains how the divinities are keen to guard the beggars: "gods disguise themselves as wanderers to test the piety of mortals, therefore the attitude towards strangers and beggars is crucial to define piety towards gods and men" . In the Odyssey, Odysseus the beggar is subject to insults and ill-treatment, as well as a fair share of blows and kicks. At this point, before Odysseus's true identity is revealed, his response is not fighting back, as befits a hero, but rather uttering prayers or curses, as befits a beggar. The first respondent to such harassment was Odysseus's mate, Emaeus (lines 240-246). When the beggar arrives at the suitor's banquet, Telemachus serves him meat and bread, and he blesses him in response (line 354-355): "King Zeus, grant, I pray thee, that Telemachus may be blest among men, and may have all that his heart desires" (Ben-Dov, 2006, p.441). When the beggar Odysseus asks Antinous to give him food, he showed ruthlessness toward the needy man. Odysseus replies (475-476): 'Ah, if for beggars there are gods and Furies […], may the doom of death come upon Antinous before his marriage' (Ben-Dov, 2006, p.442). Odysseus's wife, Penelope, in turn, covertly curses Antinous (494): 'Even so may your own self be struck by the famed archer […] Apollo (Ben-Dov, 2006, p.442).

According to Ben-Dov (2006, p.445), "Greek literary curses contain a wide variety of bad wishes, commonly death by sword, hunger, thirst and poverty. One of the main themes in the choice of curses is *lex talionis,* retributive justice". The same subject of cursing occurs "in Exod. xxii 23 and Telemachus' curse to the suitors" (Ben-Dov, 2006, p.445).

5.6 Cursing in the Quran, Hadith, Islam and Arab culture

According to Masliyah (2001, p.270), Islam does not differ from Christianity in terms of acknowledging the recourse to curses on certain occasions and for certain reasons. This shows that curses were not an ultimate taboo, but specify the kind of the cursed people: "unbelievers, the wrongdoers and infidels. According to the Qur'an, 'Those who reject the faith and die rejecting it, on them is God's curse and the curse of angels and all mankind' (Q. 2: 88,161; 33:64)". In the following sections I will consider cursing in the Quran, the Hadith, and Islamic culture more generally.

5.6.1 Cursing in the Quran

The Quran contains a number of curses. According to Masliyah (2001, p. 275) "there are many Quranic verses and traditions that enumerate those whom God cursed. Among these are homosexuals, the perpetrators of incest, bestiality, and those who dress as transvestites and those who torture animals. The unbelievers, wrongdoers, and those who are involved in selling alcohol, engaged in bribing, stealing and lending money with interest, and the Jews who build synagogues on the ruins of cemeteries and those who sell forbidden meat are cursed too. In particular, the transgressors who change the landmarks of their property are cursed as well".

According to Masliyah (2001, p.275), "a curse upon parents affects the entire family and the forthcoming generations, and therefore must be prohibited. In the Bible (Exod.21:17, Lev. 20:9, 14, 22:28; 24:15 Eccl. 10:20; James 4:11 and the Quran (13:14; 17:23; 29:8; 46:15-18), it is especially forbidden to curse parents, the helpless, the dead, and the king among other people. Cursing parents is considered a sin that deserves death".

5.6.2 Cursing in the Hadith

According to Masliyah (2001, p.274), "the general belief is that curses should not be used, for a curse 'is not allowed to be used even to a dog', says one *hadith.* Other *hadiths* teach that the Muslim should not get accustomed to cursing, and the Muslim who allows others to insult him is cursed".

According to Masliyah (2001, p.276) "we read in the Bible (Deut. 23:5; Prov. 22:23, 26:2) and *hadīṯ* literature that undeserved cursing has no effect or it may even be turned in some cases by God into a blessing. Abu Dawud relates that the Prophet said that when a worshipper curses someone, the curse rises to heaven, the gates of heaven close in front of it, it descends and the gates of the earth close in front of it, and it turns left and right. If it does not find an easy access (i.e. the accursed person does not deserve the curse), then it returns to the originator of the curse. It also reverts to the accuser if the accursed is innocent".

5.6.3 Cursing in Islam

The Islamic view of cursing is that "The Quranic word, *la^{c}nah* means being far removed from the mercy of Allah, extremely debased and disgraced. Anyone under *la'nah* from Allah cannot be close to Him. For such accursed ones admonitions are very stern. This is their disgrace in the present life – the disgrace in the *akhirah* will be far too grim to contemplate" (Admin, 2012).

The same source goes on:

> *La'nah* is the denouncing of something or the calling down of evil on someone. Curse is the most widely used equivalent for it. Two formal substitutes for 'curse' in this sense are 'execration' and 'imprecation'. Execration is the face-to-face denunciation of the ill-wished, while imprecation is somewhat privately expressed. Call it by whatever name, the act of invoking *la'nah* is a terrible thing to do. Because of the amount of evil it releases, corresponding heavy restrictions have been placed against its use. Invoking *la'nah* against a Muslim is *haram* and the sole condition when this can be done against a *kafir* is that the imprecator must be sure that the disbeliever will die clinging to his disbelief. Given below are some authentic sayings of the Prophet […] on this subject: "According to Ibn Mas'ud […], the Prophet […] said, "A true Muslim is no taunter or imprecator, nor is he foul-mouthed." [Tirmidhi, from Mishkat] Abu al-Darda […] says that he heard the Prophet […] say, "When a servant of Allah curses something, the curse goes up towards the sky whereupon the doors of the sky are closed on it. After that, it comes down towards the earth whereupon the doors of the earth are closed on it (that is, the earth does not accept this curse). After that, it takes a right, and then a left, but as it finds no access anywhere, it returns to the one who was cursed. So, if he is really deserving of it, on him it falls; otherwise, it returns back to its pronouncer and falls on him" (Abu Dawood, cited by Mishkat).

5.6.4 Cursing in contemporary Arab culture

Masliyah (2001) makes a number of interesting observations about curses in Arab culture, with specific focus on Iraq, which are summarised in the following paragraphs.

> The most frequent verbs used in Iraqi curses are the imperfect of *la^{c}an* and *ni^{c}al*. The classical language gives the following definition of the verb *La^{c}ana: la^{c}anahu ay taradahu wa-'āb^{c}adahu mina-al-xayri wa-'āxazau wa-sabbahu,* 'He drove and sent him away from grace, put him to disgrace and insulted him'. *Al-La^{c}nu* is then the driving away of the servant by God from His grace in cutting away every success from the accursed in this world and in the world to come by punishing him with the most severe requital (Masliyah 2001, p.268).

Masliyah (2001, p. 276) goes on to give examples of the Bible's view about cursing parents: "Curses of parents are dreaded (Gen. 9:25; 27:12; Lev. 20:9, 24:15; Eccl. 10:20, Prov. 20:20, 30:11), especially if the person cursed has deserved such an imprecation, because 'the wrath of the father comes from God's own wrath, *{ġaḍab il-ʿāb min ġaḍab il-rabb)"* (Masliyah 2001, p.276).

Masliyah (2001, p.274), gives accounts of various specific kinds of cursing. Curses, for instance, may involve the lexeme 'burn' *(ḥiraq/g).* This word has associations with hell and the inhabitants of hell. Masliyah (2001, p.274) says: "Hell is believed to be the dwelling place of Satan and wishing a person to be burned or swallowed by the fire of hell means wishing God's everlasting curse".

It is possible to humiliate and disgrace a person by simply spitting at him. However, to make the curse more potent, the spit should be on the face. This type of cursing occurs in the Bible, e.g. "in (Deut. 25:9; Isa. 50:6; Matt. 26:17, 27:37)" (Masliyah 2001, p.279). Masliyah (2001, p.279), goes on to show the vitality of such curses in contemporary Iraq, where: "Saying *tju, tfu 'alek,* 'may you be spat at', takes the place of spitting".

Masliyah (2001, p.279), notes the link between the emotional attitude of the individual and the type of the curse he or she utters. Thus an upset person may use certain words such as *alf marra* (a thousand times) in order to multiply or maximise the harm intended to cause by the curser on the cursed. Masliyah (2001, p.279) says: "To give the curse the strongest possible power, several Iraqis say, *allah yil'anak alf marra,* 'may God curse you one thousand times'. It happens that an excited person utters in one and the same breath several curses".

In Iraqi Arabic, there are a number of animals that play a significant role in the realm of insults and curses, and Iraqi folklore counts several animals in this category. "The dog and the pig seem to have a deeper religious nature than others because they are regarded as impure and possess a type of filthiness according to the Jews and Muslims" (Masliyah 2001, p.293).

Masliyah (2001, p.294) notes that certain animals are negatively perceived by specific religions. "Throughout the Arab world, 'dog' is the most severe term of reproach for

impure and profane peoples. One proverb from Basra says, il-kalib mā-yiṭhar, 'the dog [never] becomes pure'. The Hebrews similarly used the word 'dog' to reproach the gentiles (Deut. 23:18). Evil-doers are compared with dogs (Ps. 22:16, 20). The pig, for every Muslim (Q. 2:173, 5:3; 6:145) and Jew (Ps. 80:14, 11:12) is the most unclean and voracious animal (compare with Isa. 66:3; Matt. 7:9). To compare a person with one of these animals is to wound his dignity deeply".

According to Masliyah (2001, p.282), asking God to transform a person into the form of an animal is considered a very strong curse. Masliyah (2001, p.282), goes on to give an evidence of such transformation in Islamic theology; specifically, in "Qur'an [which] speaks of human beings who were changed into apes and pigs (Q. 2:65, 173; 5:63; 6:145)". Then he proceeds to present how the connotations of certain animals serve as powerful curses. Masliyah (2001, p.282) says: "the word *qird,* which means literally 'monkey', is used as a synonym of Satan. al-Bustanī writes in *al-Muḥīṭ, wa-baᶜḍu al-ᶜāmmati yastaᶜmiluna-al-qirda bi- maᶜnā al-šaytāni* (some people use the [word] monkey to mean Satan)".

There are a number of curses involving animals in our two novels, including قرد بالعلم و بأصحابه (المحمود، 1983، ص 490) (a monkey in knowledge and its people!). ليت الضّبع تتعشّاك (409 ص ،1983 ،المحمود) (May a hyena have you as its dinner!). جعل الله فيها ألف قرد و قرد (165 ص ،1983 ،المحمود) (May God bring to it a thousand and one monkeys!). يا دب الهيش (You, bear of the *hīš*), ألف قرد و قرد يضرب النّاس ص ،1983 ،المحمود) (295 (A thousand and one monkeys hit the people) ابن الخنازير، مثل عزرائيل، ساعة الشّدّة لا أحد يراه (30 ص ،1983 ،المحمود) (487 (Son of pigs, like Azrael, when he is urgently needed nobody finds him). كنت أنقص من كلبة نشوارة (30 ص ،1983 ،المحمود) (You were more despicable than a stray dog). يا بقرة الكلاب (29 ص ،1983 ،المحمود) (You, the cow of dogs!).

A number of curses have dishonour connotations. In this respect, Masliyah (2001, p.284) says: "The greatest disgrace for any Iraqi is to be called *nagal,* or *negel* (BJ)[Baghdadi Jewish], *ibn ḥarām, ibn zinā,* 'bastard' or *ibn ḥēḍ,* 'a son of menstruation', which means that the mother was menstruating when her son was conceived"

Stewart is another scholar who investigated curses and their function as redeemers of one's self-esteem. Stewart (1997, pp.332-3) says:

the curses in general invoke some sort of higher or supernatural agency but only rarely mention God specifically. Some curses refer to demons, as in *miskak 'afrit,* 'may a demon grab you!' or *rikbak 'afrit,* 'may a demon mount you!' Others simply mention the immediate affliction or agent which will cause the hoped-for damage, such as *namit 'alek heta,* 'may a wall fall on you!' As in ordinary curses and blessings, God may be designated using the term *allah,* 'God' as in *allah yiftah nafūxak,* 'may God open up your skull!', or *rbina,* 'our Lord' as in *xadak rabbina,* 'may our Lord take you!', or understood through ellipsis, as in *fatah fi-rāsak ṭā'a,* '(may God) open a window in your head!' God appears as agent, whether implicit or explicit, in cognate curses much less often than in ordinary curses such as *(allah) yixrib betak,* '(may God) destroy your house!' *(alldh)yin^cal 'abilk,* '(may God) damn your father!', or *(allah) yiḥra dinak,* '(may God) burn your religion!'; God is the direct agent in only five of the curses in the corpus.

5.6.5 Cognate curses in Arabic

Stewart (1997, p.344) mentions that there are diverse kinds of curses. One group "of cognate and paronomastic curses are retorts to terms of address". Their task is to subvert the control and intimacy dimensions in a relationship. Stewart (1997, p.344) gives an example: "In Syrian Arabic, if a husband trying to ingratiate himself with his angry wife addresses her as *ya ruḥi* 'O my soul' (= 'my dear'), she might respond *tirūḥ rūḥak* 'may your soul expire!' Given that terms of address are one of the most prevalent methods of establishing relative rank and levels of familiarity and obligation in an exchange, it is not surprising that mechanisms would exist in the language by which their use could be rejected" (Stewart, 1997, p.345).

A cognate curse is a curse response to an earlier curse. Stewart (1997) considers cognate curses in various contexts, including the Quran: "the Qur'an itself includes at least one cognate curse: *wa-qālat al-yahūdu yadu Allāhi maġlūlatun — ġullat 'aydi-him wa-lu^cinu bi-mā qālu,* 'The Jews said: "God's hand is fettered" — May *their* hands be fettered and may they be cursed for what they have said!' (Q 5:64). The famous *Book of Misers* by al-Jahiz (d. 255/869) recounts the story of a host who asks a guest several times to divide up some bread among his companions. When the guest ignores his requests, the host upbraids him with a cognate curse: *mā la-ka wayla-ka lā tuqattī^cu-hu baynahum qaṭa^ca Allahu awṣāla-k,* 'why, damn you, don't you cut up the bread among them — may God cut off your limbs!'".

According to Stewart (1997, p.330), the division "of cognate curses stands at the intersection of two extensive speech categories in Egyptian and other Arabic dialects, responses or retorts *{radd, rudud),* and blessings and curses *(da^cwah, da^cawāt)"*.

Stewart (1997, p.346), explains another usage of cognate curses in everyday life as the prompt answer to general talks: "The cognate curse retorts register an emphatic rejection, putting the interlocutor on the defensive and signalling that over-familiarity, rudeness, or insubordination will not be tolerated". A sub-classification of this usage is when cognate/ paronomastic curses are used as quick and witty answers with certain verbs: "as replies to a command, expressing protest at having to carry out some task, or indignant refusal to do it. Thus in response to the imperative *hud,* 'take (this)' one might reply *hadak 'azra'tl,* 'may 'Azra'll (the angel of death) take you!'" (Stewart, 1997, p.347).

According to Stewart (1997, p.333), some curse are figurative as they use the same word as found in a curse, but have a totally different meaning. Stewart says:

> the curses are usually puns in that they do not repeat the same semantic sense of the verb but rather emphasize another possible sense of the particular root. For example, the phrase *nāmit ^calek ḥeṭa* exploits the meaning 'to lie down' contained in *n-w-m* as opposed to the meaning 'to go to sleep'. The curses associated with the root *la^cab,* 'to play' use the less common sense of the same root, 'to drool' as in *li^cbit ^calek nifsak,* 'may your appetite drool' and *li^cbit nifsak ^cala 'aššāya,* 'may your appetite drool over a piece of straw!' Similar examples of the exploitation of different semantic senses of the same verb include *raddit il-mayya f-zorak,* 'may the water come back up your throat (so that you choke)', a response to, e.g., the imperative *rudd,* 'answer (me)!' As often occurs in puns, the meaning of the root-echo verb in the curses is stretched or understood figuratively to fit the context. Thus, *nāmit ^calek ḥeṭa,* 'may a wall lie down on you' is understood to mean simply, 'may a *wall fall* on you!', as are the other verbs which appear in conjunction with this ever-threatening wall, such as *'a^cadit,* 'sat', *ḥaṭṭit,* 'alighted, came down', or *ṭabbit,* 'fell down'.

Stewart (1997, p.329) goes on to present another type of curse – the cognate curse – which is used widely in the Arab world, but with slight differences in form. He explains that some of these curses may be found in one or more countries, but not necessarily in all Arab countries: "modern Arabic dialects from Morocco to Iraq show a wide variety of cognate curses. To the statement *bahibbik* from an unwanted admirer, a girl in Damascus might respond with the curse *habbak il-habb,* 'may pimples/ pustules kiss

you!', whereas a girl in Cairo would respond *habbak burs,* 'may a gecko kiss you!' The specific curses used vary considerably from one region to another, though the general principles regulating the genre are the same. The common Syrian or Palestinian paronomastic curse response to the question *šū,* 'what?', *šāwi yiswtk,* 'may a griller grill you!', is not found in Egyptian dialect, where the initiator *šū* does not occur".

5.7 Curses in Karpathos

Not many studies have been conducted in modern societies which are similar to those of the Arab world. One very relevant study, however, is that of Avdikos (2011), who looked at curses on the Greek island of Karpathos.

According to Avdikos (2011, p.95), "in the curses of Karpathos, God is invoked as the ultimate authority. This is an acknowledged axiom that reflects the way in which Karpathians grow up and situate themselves in the local cosmology, which is at once a product of the official religion and of folk beliefs (Wolf 1966:103). God is virtuous, but he is a punisher too, safeguarding the moral norm. The curser seeks recourse to the all-seeing divine force in order to have the moral rule restored. He/she wishes and expects the intervention of God so that the abuser "is paid back" or "finds it." Usually, the invocation of God to balance social relations is general and refers to a counterbalancing action. Reference to specific ways of punishment ("withering," "roasting") is rather unusual. The involvement of God helps us understand the way in which the Karpathian perceives religion and the bonds he/she establishes with the divine".

According to Avdikos (2011, p.100), in Karpathian culture, it is a shame for a man to marry a woman from another village. Such a marriage will affect the familial structure and power. So, curses are used as a means of retaliation: "cursing expresses the frustration of expectations that encompass all the intensity of pain; as a result, the physical extermination of the recipient can be seen as an equivalent to the social death that a marriage to a foreign woman has caused: να σε νεκροφιλήσω [May I kiss you in your coffin] (Artemis) την κατάρα μου να' χεις μέχρι να πεθάνεις [My curse upon you until you die]7 να ανοίξει η γη να σε καταπιεί [May the ground open and swallow you]. (Dimitris, Olymbos)".

According to Avdikos (2011, p.107), certain death-curses are directed to the body, though most of them avoid mentioning the word "death", as in this example, "Πού να τρώης τσαι να κράτσης [May you eat so much that your stomach bursts]". Avdikos (2011, p.105) justifies that "Folk speech evades literal expression".

5.8 Curses in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*

In this section, I will consider a number of curses from *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*. I will first present each curse and its English translation. I will then provide a general *interpretation* of the curse, in the context in which it occurs in the novel. Finally, I will provide a *discussion* of the curse, relating it to the notions discussed in the previous sections, especially in relation to Arab and Islamic culture (sections 5.6-5.6.5). The curses are listed in the same order as they occur in the novel.

Example 1:

ST

حرق الله عظام أبائهن و أجدادهن. من هنّ هؤلاء لأذهب، و أبعج بطونهن؟ (المحمود، 1983، ص 16)

TT

May God burn their fathers' and grandfathers' bones. Who are they that I should go and slit open their bellies?

Interpretation

Musallim asks about the oranges, and when his mother tells him that the women who visited her have eaten them, Musallim curses angrily. This is an expression of anger, and condemnation by cursing them, asking God to burn their fathers' and grandfathers' bones for eating the oranges which were a rare and precious thing for the peasant. He threatens to slit open their bellies in revenge for those women whom he holds in contempt for having eaten the oranges. Who are they? And what is their worth that they eat such precious fruit! Here it is deprivation of every delicious thing that is talking. For the poor person, nobody deserves this fruit except highly-esteemed guests, and lowly and ignoble women.

Discussion

Here Musallim mentions God in his curse as the great avenger. Musallim's curse takes its authority not only from having the word "God", but from using the word "burn", *ḥaraqa* as well. As discussed in Section 5.5. according to Masliyah (2001, p.274), writing about Iraq, "The strongest curses are those using the word, 'burn' *(biraq/g),* for burning in hell is the most severe punishment". The curser, Musallim, beseeches God to cause the eternal suffering of the women's dead fathers and forefathers by roasting them in hell and not allowing their souls to have any peace whatsoever. According to Stewart (1997, p.333), God is either overt or covert in a few curses, as discussed in Section 5.5.4. According to Stewart, "God" is obvious as the super-power who will act on behalf of the curser to attain justice. In Islam, cursing deceased people is prohibited. Violating the sacredness of both the dead and parents is another factor in perceiving the awfulness of this curse: "Still worse than other curses are those directed against the family. The father, mother, and ancestors are the main objects of such imprecations. (Masliyah 2001, p. 298). A similar example from Iraqi culture is: "*an'al abug labul-laffig* (s.f), 'I curse your father and the father who reared you'" (Masliyah 2001, p.298). Another corresponding curse from Iraq is: "*ihterag abiigi,* 'may your (f.s.) father be burned [in hell's fire]" (Masliyah 2001, p. 299). Another corresponding Iraqi curse: "*an'al salfat salfdh,* 'may the forefathers of his forefathers be cursed'" (Masliyah 2001, p.299). So, this curse explicitly employs the word "Allah", "God", and this shows that the person believes in God as a super power who can act to help the curser to get justice. It is confirmed by Avdikos (2011, p. 95), that in the curses of Karpathos, God is invoked as the ultimate authority (cf. Section 5.7). Though Musallim indirectly admits the extreme force of God to regain equity, he also wants to carry out his part of avenging himself: من هنّ هؤلاء لأذهب، و أبعج بطونهن؟، من هنّ هؤلاء لأذهب و (المحمود، 1983، ص16) أبعج بطونهن؟ (Who are they that I should go and slit open their bellies?). For him, the ones who ate the oranges are women and not dignified men. This reflects his prejudice against women. It also helps the reader to decode the culture in which Musallim lives. It is a patriarchal society par excellence.

Example 2:

يا بنت الملاعين !(المحمود، 1983، ص17).

TT

Daughter of the cursed!

Interpretation

Musallim says this curse to Asstāsyoun who claims that she has brought his little sister from Argentina. It is a kind of cursing or mild insult. It means the daughter of the cunning. *Mal^{c}ūn* in Arabic is one who deserves to be cursed and its plural is *Mal^{c}ūnūn*. But *malā^{c}īn*, in colloquial Arabic, is the plural of *mal^{c}ūn.* It means cunning, sly, clever, devilish, or shrewd. Here it is "the daughter of the sly".

Discussion

"Execration is the face-to-face denunciation of the ill-wished" (Admin, 2012). So, the significance of this curse here is "execration." He calls her as the daughter of a cursed parents/family. It is mentioned earlier that it is hateful to damn family in general and parents in particular. All religious books banned cursing parents (Masliyah, 2001, p. 275), "Cursing parents is considered a sin that deserves death" (cf. Section 5.6.1). In the initial pages of the first book of the Torah, it is obvious that the diction has its own strength. This justifies the stress on prohibition to say a curse. Similarly, in the Quran, the curse's consequence will be remarkable when harkening to it. "There is abundant Biblical evidence for the ancient belief in the effective power of the spoken word — human as well as divine. A curse uttered casually and without heat may still be effective. The Talmud (Jewish Law) holds that the mere power of the spoken word is efficacious *(Zera'lm: Berakhot,* 190a, 56a.) and even an angry look may be considered a curse. In Islam, an important detail is the audibility of the curse and blessing (Masliyah, 2001, pp. 268-9). A similar Iraqi curse is: "*Ya man^{c}ūl il-wālden,* 'O, the one whose parents are cursed'" (Masliyah 2001, p. 298). In terms of Jay's analysis (2005), this curse is a mixture of profanity and socially offensive words.

Example 3:

واللهِ لأتركن دمك خطّاً (المحمود، 1983، ص17).

TT

God, I will leave your blood lined.

Interpretation

Musallim feels angry at Asstāsyoun and curses her because she brought him a baby girl. It is a threat to kill her. He will slaughter her or stab her violently until her blood runs non-stop (line-like) rather than sporadically. It means he will kill her because flowing blood causes bleeding that leads to death.

Discussion

In this curse a death-wish is implied without mentioning the word "death". According to Masliyah (2001, p. 299), "Death constitutes a major motif in Iraq (compare with Exod. 22:24; Job 5:4 and the Qur'an 3:185; 8:50-4; 16:28-9). Iraqis wish death to someone in curses in many formulae".

Example 4:

ST

ابن حرام، يا عزرائيل، من يطلبك لا يجدك (المحمود 1983 ص23).

TT

You bastard Azrael, the one who wants you does not find you.

Interpretation

Umm-Maḥmūd is angry because God has granted her neither a good husband, nor obedient children, nor productive livestock. She laments her luck and wishes death; but her wish does not become true. So, she curses Azrael.

Discussion

In Jay's (2005) terms, her curse is a profanity. As noted in Section 5.6.4, "The greatest disgrace for any Iraqi is to be called *nagal,* or *negel* (BJ), *ibn ḥarām, ibn zinā,* 'bastard' or *ibn ḥēḍ,* 'a son of menstruation', which means that the mother was menstruating when her son was conceived" (Masliyah 2001, p.284). Here, Umm-Maḥmūd calls The Angel of Death *ibn ḥarām.* This is blasphemy as "Azrael" is considered the Angel of Death in many sects and cultures. In Iraq, it is possible to curse somebody wishing him death by saying: *xadak ᶜazra'īl,* 'may 'Azra'il (the angel of death) take you!'" as an immediate answer to ordering somebody by saying *xud,* 'take (this) (Stewart, 1997, p. 347).

Example 5:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

الملائكة أولاد حرام، يا بنت ألف ألف حرام (المحمود 1983 ص23).

</div>

TT

 Are angels bastards, you, daughter of a thousand thousand illegitimacies.

Interpretation

In the novel, this example follows on from the previous one. Abū Maḥmūd reviles Umm-Maḥmūd for cursing the Death angel, Azrael, for not responding to her when she asked her to relieve her from this miserable life by taking her soul.

Discussion

 Abū Maḥmūd uses the word *alf* twice in his curse, uttering more than one single curse at once. To use Masliyah's terms, this repetition strengthens the curse on his wife. Being a religious person, the husband wants immediate retaliation on behalf of this deity. As noted in Section 5.6.4, according to Masliyah (2001, p.279), "to give the curse the strongest possible power, several Iraqis say, *allah yilʿanak alf marra,* 'May God curse you one thousand times'. It happens that an excited person utters in one and the same breath several curses". In Jay's (2005) terms, this curse is a mixture of profanity and socially offensive words. Putting in mind one of Stewart's (1997) conception of cognate curses, this is a cognate curse as it is a reply to a previous curse. The option of being impartial or hot in one's response to a curse differs from one individual to another. This is emphasised by Masliyah (2001, p.278), "A curse is answered as a rule by another curse, and an insult by a stronger one. Everyone implicated in such a wordy quarrel thinks that his honour requires him to stand firm".

Example 6:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

إن شاء الله، لا يأتيني إلّا أخبار الاثنين معاً (المحمود 1983 ص27).

</div>

TT

I wish to God that nothing will ever come but the news of both of you.

Interpretation

Um Maḥmūd expels her two daughters to her sister's house, in order to get rid of the little baby's crying for a while, cursing them and wishing that she would be informed of their death.

Discussion

Parents are highly considered in all religions. This is a scary curse as it is uttered by the mother to her two daughters. We cannot see the word "death" in its structure, but wishing death for both of them is covert. According to Masliyah (2001, p.277), "The curses of dying persons, of the parent on his son, and of the blind are feared and said to be quickly answered". But, this may not always be the case, as when the mother and not the father reviles her child. So, if we agree with Stewart, the curse uttered by a mother has to be really sincere. This means the mother should honestly mean what she says, i.e. God will not carry out His revenge against her child without her own inner agreement. This is confirmed by Stewart's (1997, pp. 350-1) view in this context:

> Cultural ideals hold that the mother does not actually desire harm to come to her child when she utters such curses. Her curse serves to call the child's attention to the fact that he or she is teetering on the brink of disaster and at the same time violating maternal authority. In fact, mothers see the curses as having a salutary effect on their offspring, even though they seem to be demanding, literally, that various forms of death, destruction, or torment befall them. This apparent contradiction is succinctly expressed in the maxim, *il-lisān biy'ul 'allah wi 'l-'albi biyi'ūl 'ism-allah,* literally, 'the tongue says "God" but the heart says "the name of God"'. This elliptical phrase is taken to mean that while the tongue says 'may God *take you!',* the heart says, 'May God *protect you!';* the mother ostensibly asks that the child be harmed, but her intentions are nearly the opposite. Women interviewed continually stressed that such language was used for the benefit of the child, to prevent dangerous, reckless, rude, or irresponsible behaviour in both the present and the future. That the curse of a child is the special prerogative of the mother and cannot be uttered by others without serious consequences is seen in the saying *adī͑ ͑ala waladi w-akrah min yi'ūl amin,* 'I curse my son but hate those who say "Amen"' *(DEA,* 38). For an outsider to chime in with 'Amen' would rob the parental curse of its special status and make it a literal, ordinary curse, one which has the potential danger of actually working as stated. The mother has, as it were, jurisdiction over her child, and her curse hangs in limbo, contingent upon her satisfaction with her child's general behaviour and compliance with her desires.

Example 7:

ST

و اللّه، و اللّه، يا محروقة النّفس (المحمود، 1983، ص 29).

TT

By God, by God, you, burnt breath!

Interpretation

Umm-Maḥmūd curses the cow's stomach. It is also a curse on a person or an animal. It means that he/it will burn in hell. His breath will burn because he is cursed and does not deserve God's mercy.

Discussion

The intimate relationship between Umm-Maḥmūd and her cow makes her treat it as a human being. She strongly damns the cow by using the word *maḥrūq*, "burnt". She also believes in God as the highest wrecker, using the word "God" and even repeating it twice.

Example 8:

ST

يا بقرة الكلاب (المحمود، 1983، ص 29).

TT

You, the cow of dogs!

Interpretation

Umm-Maḥmūd curses the cow's stomach. The direct meaning is that it is not a cow that belongs to humans but rather to dogs. It means that it is cursed and neither moral nor disciplined. Usually, this curse is said to a cow from elsewhere and not to one that is originally from one's own household. But the intended meaning is a curse on the cow as if it was living with dogs rather than human beings. This is a deficiency in it and a curse on it at the same time.

Discussion

In this curse, animals are used to humiliate the anthropomorphic cow and its owners as well. This cow is treated like a human being being when simultaneously Umm-Maḥmūd talks to and damns it. As mentioned earlier by Masliyah (2001, p.294), in Arab culture, it is disgraceful to call somebody "a dog" as it is a strong admonition (cf. Section 5.6.4). Here, both the owners of the cow and the cow itself are shamed. But in the context of the novel, we find out that the cow is no more an animal; but a human being who can comprehend the curser's words. In Islamic tradition, it is not prohibited for the person to curse himself/herself. Umm-Maḥmūd reviles herself by cursing the cow's owners.

Example 9:

بلاه اللّه بالفزر! (المحمود، 1983، ص 29)

TT

 May God slit it (your stomach) open!

Interpretation

Umm-Maḥmūd continues cursing her cow after finding it inside the house eating the bread. She expresses annoyance or anger at her cow for being greedy and insatiable.

Discussion

This curse mentions God explicitly. This proves its potentiality. This curse also echoes one of Avdikos' (2011, p.107) views about curses that: "certain death-curses are directed to the body, though most of them avoid mentioning the word "death" (cf. Section 5.7). The difference between this curse and Avdikos' examples is that this one is directed at an anthropomorphic animal, the cow, while Avdikos' are aimed at a person.

Example 10:

إي و اللّه، يحق لك، يا بقرة الملاعين أن تزفّري هذا العلف (المحمود، 1983، ص 30).

TT

O God! You cursed cow, are entitled to spoil this fodder!

Interpretation

Umm-Maḥmūd notices that the cow eats only the thin pieces of straw and leaves the thick ones. She rebukes the cow saying this curse.

Discussion

This curse mentions God explicitly and the word "cursed", *malaᶜīn* which is the colloquial plural form of "malᶜūn" (see discussion above). The word "curse" here refers to the cow and the people who own it. It means you are cunning as a devil and you live with demonic people as well. Umm-Maḥmūd utters this curse out of fury. She curses both the cow and herself as the owner of the cow. "While the Muslim is by law not prevented from uttering a curse upon himself, the Jews of Iraq strictly abstain from

cursing themselves lest in that very moment a hidden angel appear and hear the curse and say Amen" (Masliyah , 2001, pp270-1).

Example 11:

ST

ليتك تأكلين سمّاً (المحمود، 1983، ص 30).

TT

May you eat poison!

Interpretation

Umm-Maḥmūd reproaches the cow for entering her house and eating the bread instead of eating the hay, the proper fodder for cows. She wishes that it might eat poison. This is a curse for those whom you hate. You wish them death by poison for two reasons: first, they may live long if you wish them only illness; and secondly, due to hatred, you wish your enemy to die an evil death. Is there any death worse than dying by poison which cuts through the intestines!

Discussion

According to Avdikos (cf. 5.7), in this curse, desiring death is prominent, but without uttering the word death. It is interesting to find the resonance between curses in the Syrian coast and curses in Modern Greece. This example shows that in both cultures there is an indirect death-wish fulfilment in cursing the other. Umm-Maḥmūd retaliates by orally rebuking her anthropomorphised cow. According to Masliyah (2001, p.268), "a curse is a wish expressed verbally for something bad to befall a certain person or object" (cf. Section 5.2). Here, the word *laitaki* implies *in ŝā' allah*. So, the angry Umm-Maḥmūd expresses her fury by covertly asking God to transform the bread that the cow had into a killing poison.

Example 12:

ST

ابن الخنازير، مثل عزرائيل، ساعة الشّدّة لا أحد يراه (المحمود، 1983، ص 30).

TT

Son of pigs, like Azrael, when he is urgently needed nobody finds him.

Interpretation:

Umm-Maḥmūd threatens her cow with being sold to ᶜalī Assixī who will definitely slaughter it. But she is enraged because when she needs this man he does not appear. She damns him by saying that he is "a son of pigs". She simultaneously and in one curse rebukes both this person, who is a herd trader, and Azrael, the Angel of Death: what is more painful than death is to desire death and not being able to die because the Angel of Death does not carry out your invocation.

Discussion

Umm-Maḥmūd damns ᶜAlī al-Sixī by saying that he is "a son of pigs". This is very humiliating since, in Islam, pigs are loathsome and unclean animals. This is confirmed by Masliyah (2001, p. 293; cf. Section 5.5). Umm-Maḥmūd rebukes Azrael, *Malāk al-Mout* (Angel of Death) because she is angry with this Angel. Using the curse, "son of pigs", Umm-Maḥmūd denigrates and reviles Azrael as well. So as the proverb says: she hits two birds with one curse. To explain more, Umm-Maḥmūd employs the same curse for two purposes—to curse a human and to curse an angel. However, in both cases profanity is involved (cf. section 5.6.4), where Masaliyah (2001, 294) gives full explanation.

Example 13:

ST

كنت أنقص من كلبة نشوارة (المحمود، 1983، ص 30).

TT

You were more despicable than a stray dog.

Interpretation

"So-and-so goes from house to house". This is shameful and not accepted by the honourable man. Usually, wild dogs which do not have an owner to feed them are the ones which go from house to house when they smell either bread or food. Then they start wagging their tails and begging people to throw them a crumb or a bone. *Našwāra* 'begging from house to house' is an unforgivable deficiency in both the human being and the animal. Umm-Maḥmūd humiliates her anthropomorphised cow by likening her to an ownerless dog. So, she is relegating her to a despicable position. This is confirmed by Masliyah (2001, p. 293), "The dog and the pig seem to have a deeper religious nature than others because they are regarded as impure and possess a type of filthiness according to the Jews and Muslims".

Discussion

Umm-Maḥmūd humiliates her anthropomorphised cow by likening her to an ownerless dog. So, she is relegating her/it to a lower and despicable position. Umm-Maḥmūd is very furious about her cow's behaviours. Through cursing, she tries to regain her stability and social position as the owner who has control over her property and possession. As confirmed by Masliyah (2001, p. 293), "The dog and the pig seem to have a deeper religious nature than others because they are regarded as impure and possess a type of filthiness according to the Jews and Muslims" (cf. Section 5.6.4). Umm-Maḥmūd is unhappy with her cow and feels that this cow has abased her. So, the only device Umm-Maḥmūd has is to orally revile her cow. According to Masliyah (2001, p.268), "Curses also express disapproval or displeasure, but the manner in which they are pronounced ranges from spontaneous to explosive rage" (cf. Section 5.2).

Example 14

ST

لو طلعت عيناك من وجهك (المحمود، 1983، ص31- 30).

TT

Even if your eyes came out of your face!

Interpretation

Umm-Maḥmūd argues with the cow which chooses what it likes of the hay and leaves what it does not. She says this curse to it: "Even if your eyes came out of your face!" I will never change things. Stay like that. As long as the cow is used to being spoiled and proud, it will not accept what people offer it. Its owner resists and defies it saying that she will not change its food. She will not give the cow anything else even if its eyes burst with hunger and obstinacy. This curse is a metaphor which means, "even if you died a horrible death due to hunger, stubbornness, persistence, etc."

Discussion

A similar curse involves one of the human body organs, namely, the eye, is used by Baghdadi Jews in Iraqi culture: *tal'it 'enak* 'may your eyes pop out'" (Masliyah, 2001, p.289). But, here, the curse's implication is to affect the damned person by depriving him of his sight, while in al-Maḥmūd's novel, Umm-Maḥmūd wants her anthropomorphised cow to be afflicted with death, not only impairment.

Example 15

<div align="right">ST</div>

<div align="right">إن شاء الله لن تفسريه (المحمود، 1983، ص 31).</div>

TT

God willing you will not digest it.

Interpretation

Xaḍrā Al-ʿalī, Umm-Maḥmūd, condemns the cow and curses it because it entered the house and stole the bread while Xaḍrā was sleeping. She asks God not to leave the cow alive even to have the time for digesting the eaten bread.

Discussion

Umm-Maḥmūd is furious because of her greedy cow. She curses this anthropomorphised cow wanting her/it to die. It is a wish for death (a prayer for the cow to die). This is an indication of the poverty of the peasant, who does not have anything more than the basics to assuage his hunger. As noted in Section 5.2, according to Masliyah (2001, p.268), "Curses may or may not take the form of a prayer. Not every expression of a wish is a prayer. It is a prayer if God is addressed either directly or indirectly and is asked to fulfil the wish. Insults are not as much dreaded as curses but are greatly disliked. In insults no supernatural power is addressed". This curse explicitly invokes "God". This proves its potentiality. This curse also echoes one of Avdikos' (2011, p.107) views about curses: "certain death-curses are directed to the body, though most of them avoid mentioning the word "death" (Section 5.7). Here, the curse is directed to the digestive system or the stomach.

Example 16

<div align="right">ST</div>

<div align="right">إن شاء اللّه، جاءت في أم رأسك (المحمود، 1983، ص 33).</div>

TT

 God willing! It will come on top of your head.

Interpretation

Umm-Maḥmūd is angry with the hens which keep coming into the house and courtyard, instead of staying and playing in the field. She curses them. She throws a stone at them wanting to hit at least one of them and kill it. It is an expression for a great anger and the wish for ultimate evil and harm for the other and even death.

Discussion

As noted by Masliyah (2001, p.268), "Curses may or may not take the form of a prayer. Not every expression of a wish is a prayer" (cf. Section 5.2). Here the wronged side not only curses verbally but with acts as well. Umm-Maḥmūd intends to kill the hen herself with the help of God. She still clings to God as the ultimate power who can direct the stone to the intended target to relieve the hen's owner. Some critics consider that oral reviling is a preferable device to somatic force as in Jay (2000, p.85), who mentions that according to Jackson, "to use words to disrespect somebody is preferable to practising violence against the same individual (cf. Section 5.2). But here, the wronged woman, Umm-Maḥmūd, uses both devices.

Example 17

ST

لعن الله هذه الحجارة، كأنّ لها عيوناً (المحمود، 1983، ص 34).

TT

God curse these stones as if they had eyes.

Interpretation

Umm-Maḥmūd is astonished that the stones do not hit the hens. It is as if stones have eyes and intentionally avoid hitting the hens. It means that the problem is with the stones and not with her bad throwing or even in her intention not to hit them in order not to lose them.

Discussion

Umm-Maḥmūd curses the stones for not responding to her will and hitting the hens. Although this curse is directed to a thing and not a person, it is still potential as it employs both the word "God" and the verb "curse". Talking to the stones implies considering them to be living. This shows the similarity between Syrian and Iraqi culture, as people in both countries still curse objects. As noted by Masliyah (2001, p.302), the cursing of objects also occurs in the Bible: "In Matthew 21:18, the fig tree is cursed". Similarly, certain kinds of flora are cursed in Islam: "The Qur'an mentions a cursed tree, namely the *Zaqqiim* Tree (Q. 17:23- 4; 29:8; 31:14; 37:62-5; 56:51-2). This tree is believed to be bitter and pungent and is described as growing at the bottom of Hell. The fruit-stalks of this tree resemble the head of the devil" (Masliyah, 2001,

p.302). In Iraqi culture, people animate the inanimate by cursing them: "Curses directed against inanimate objects are clear proof of the primitive ideas still prevalent in Iraq personifying such objects. They are spoken of as living, having parents, professing a religion, and possessing the ability to multiply. Examples: *yil'an din hal-zinbil ishgad thigil,* 'damn this basket, how heavy it is!' (lit. 'may God curse the religion of this basket, how heavy it is!' said of a heavy object (also of a slow person)" (Masliyah, 2001, p.302).

Example 18

ST

بعيونكم عود، و لا رحم الله لكم الآباء و الجدود (المحمود، 1983، ص 74).

TT

(May) a stick be in your eyes, and may God not have mercy on your fathers and grandparents.

Interpretation

The peasants mock both brothers, Musallim and Abū Mizyad, for working on the land – digging and ploughing. Then Musallim climbs on top of a rock and starts cursing them loudly. "biᶜyūnekem ᶜūd" is a curse/prayer used to wish harm on reviled people. It is a hidden supplication to God to afflict these peasants in their eyes, i.e. to destroy their eye-sight in order to stop looking at him and his brother. The main function of this curse is to prevent the affliction of the eye and to protect someone from envy. The rest of the saying is another curse/prayer to God to deprive their fathers and grandparents of mercy after their death. This is a curse for which blood can be shed if it is said to somebody.

Discussion

This is a composite curse, giving the curse more authority and power. It is a combination of a covert and an overt supplication to God to act, bringing justice to the curser. For more explanation, cf. 5.5.4. Although all of Judaism, Christianity and Islam forbid children from reviling their parents, Musallim's fury cannot be quenched without saying such potent curses. For more illustration, cf. 5.5.3. In a way, both brothers were harassed by the peasants, who made fun of them. Musallim's response was instant. As Jay (2000, p.84) argues, individuals employ curses in various ways due to the difference in their characteristics. Some "people have difficulty restraining their use of curse words;

they use curse words to achieve personal states or effects (e.g., for stress reduction) and to affect others (e.g., for bullying)".

Example 19

<div align="right">**ST**</div>

<div align="right">ليتَك تسقطين في ديسة (المحمود، 1983، ص 80).</div>

TT

May you fall into brambles.

Interpretation

Ḥabīb says this curse to Kafā as she tells him that he and his other siblings have inherited stupidity from their relatives from the father's side.

Discussion

Ḥabīb's fury takes the shape of a curse. God is not overtly employed in this curse. Ḥabīb tacitly asks God to inflict her with injury. According to Stewart (1997, pp. 332-3), in Arab culture, "curses in general invoke some sort of higher or supernatural agency but only rarely mention God specifically (cf. Section 5.6.4).

Example 20

<div align="right">**ST**</div>

<div align="right">أخ، لو كان معي سكّين، لقطعت لسانك الآن (المحمود، 1983، ص 102).</div>

TT

 Oh, if I had a knife, I would cut out your tongue right now!

Interpretation

This is Ḥabīb's answer to Sulaymān's defence for his own wife. It means that he should not defend a woman. However, his words deserve the harsh penalty of cutting out his tongue and making him dumb or unable to say such nonsense.

Discussion

Ḥabīb is frustrated with Sulaymān for being very soft with his wife. He curses Sulaymān, wishing to harm him for being so gentle in treating his wife. By cursing, Ḥabīb tries to assert his patriarchal view of women. He wants to restore men's superiority to women and asserts women's subjugation to men. So, Ḥabīb's curse is an oral act to restore the social order in his society. According to Avdikos (2011, pp.91-2), "Richard and Eva Blum (1970) also approach curses as communicative acts, arguing

that a curse is nothing more than a definite and disastrous application of the power of words in order to manipulate other people's fates according to the wishes of the curser" (cf. Section 5.2).

Example 21

ST

ليته يأكل حنطة ويطرحها شعير (المحمود، 1983، ص 112).

TT

May he eat it as wheat and defecate it as barley.

Interpretation

When both Musallim and his brother, Abū Mizīad, asked their cousin Sheikh Maḥmūd to lend them the *Azzīr Sālim* volume, he wanted to know who told them about him possessing it. When they admitted to him that Muḥammed al-Miḥīā was the one who told them, Sheikh Maḥmūd cursed him.

Discussion

Sheikh Maḥmūd avenges himself by cursing the informant Muḥammed al-Miḥīā. This curse voices his desire to inflict severe harm on Muḥammed al-Miḥīā for reporting him. It means to afflict him with a trouble that makes him die painfully like a dog. Here God is implicit. So, wishing the other to be tormented will relieve the curser. Similar curses occur in the Bible: (Masliyah 2001, p. 287; cf. Section 5.4).

Example 22

ST

يا مهتوكة الشّيبة! (المحمود، 1983، ص 118).

TT

You, of disgraced grey hair!

Interpretation

When Umm-Maḥmūd tells her husband that he has become old when returning from Argentina, her husband angrily says this curse in answer. *Mahtūket al-šaybeh!* is a curse and a wish of disgraced later life. *Hatek* is disgrace and the spreading of a scandal. This cry: *Ya Mahtūket al-šaybeh!* expresses a curse and humiliation. It means that he suspects her honour – fornication and adultery – despite her old age and grey hair. This is traditionally regarded as worse than fornication committed by young people.

Discussion

This curse is said to dishonour a person. According to Masliyah (2001, p.283), "The worst curses and insults are those which concern the most sensitive point in the moral character of a person, namely his chastity and honour". Here the curse is more hurtful as it involves disgracing an old lady, Umm-Maḥmūd. Masliyah (2001, p.283) explains how Judaism, Christianity and Islam perceive prostitution: "Whoredom was deeply detested in the Qur'an (17:32; 24:33) and by all writers of the Bible (Exod. 22:15, 32; Lev. 19:29; Judg. 11:1; 2 Kgs. 23:7; Paul 3:5). As in Biblical times (Gen. 18:24; Deut. 22:21), whenever an Iraqi girl or a woman falls and loses her honour (*'ard)* she is slain in order to wash away this stain, and thus keeps the name of the family pure". Here, the husband scandalises his wife by accusing her of losing her purity.

Example 23

ST

ضربة تخلع رقبتك (المحمود، 1983، ص 144).

TT

A blow that decapitates you!

Interpretation

Umm-Maḥmūd answers her son Musallim who reminds his mother that his father prevented her from swearing. She scorns him wishing for him to be beheaded. It is a curse on someone to be afflicted with great harm or to die a horrendous death which is caused by a blow that displaces his head from his torso.

Discussion

A corresponding curse used by Iraqi Jews is: *"inqat'itgheqbetu* (BJ), 'may his neck be chopped'" (BJ) (Masliyah, 2001, p.300). This curse is said by Umm-Maḥmūd to her son Musallim. It is appalling for mothers to damn their children as their curse may have an instant influence. As noted in Section 5.6.4, according to Masliyah (2001, p.276), "Curses of parents are dreaded [..., especially if the person cursed has deserved such an imprecation, because 'the wrath of the father comes from God's own wrath'".

Example: 24

<div align="right">

ST

الله لا يرحم فيها عظماً (المحمود، 1983، ص157).

</div>

TT

May God not have any mercy on any bone in her!

Interpretation

Abū Maḥmūd tells his children that he intended to buy some land after his return from Argentina; but his mother did not let him buy it. So he curses her saying this curse. It is a curse that expresses extreme resentment towards a person. He asks God even to deprive that person of any trace of mercy. It is not only like saying: "May God have no mercy on him/her!", but rather "May God deprive him/her of any trace of mercy". It is an exaggeration in wishing a severe punishment on a foe.

Discussion

Abū Maḥmūd is angry and curses his deceased mother by asking God to deprive her of His mercy. It means that he is supplicating to God to leave his mother in eternal Hell. Abū Maḥmūd's curse violates the ethics of all three religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – for both cursing the dead and the parent.

Example 25:

<div align="right">

ST

جعل الله فيها ألف قرد و قرد (المحمود، 1983، ص 165).

</div>

TT

 May God bring to it a thousand and one monkeys!

Interpretation

Ḥammūrah damages the high-standing crops that belong to Musallim's family and other peasants. So they rebuke the cow by saying this curse which is a direct supplication to God not to bless the cow- to become mad, weak and useless and for nothing to be left to her/it but being slaughtered. The monkey is a sign of ill-fortune in popular mentality.

Discussion

All the peasants revile the anthropomorphised cow. They ask God to make monkeys dwell in this cow which means to be inhabited by demons. Masliyah (2001, p.282) "The worst divine curse is changing a human being into an animal" (cf. Section 5.6.4 for

further discussion). Another idea about demons is their close connection with diseases. So, the peasants desire that this cow be inflicted with diseases as well. This idea is confirmed by Masliyah (2001, p.285), "Many Iraqis believe that diseases are curses from the Almighty" (cf. Section 5.6.4, for further discussion).

Example 26:

ST

العزا والشّحّار يطليها (المحمود، 1983، ص 171).

TT

May she be coated by condolences and soot.

Interpretation

Musallim told his mother that he had found Ḥulwah who told him about his sister Rayyā. But his mother became angry and cursed her, saying: 'May she be coated by condolences and soot on her'. This phrase is commonly used in the daily life of the Syrian peasant. This is a curse through which the curser wishes trouble and evil on the cursed one. *Azā* means consoling a person when somebody dies, and *šiḥḥar* is soot, with which people, in the old days, used to paint their faces as a sign of grief. Black is a symbol of grief upon the death of a loved one. Nowadays this phrase lacks an evil tone, and is used in a lighter way. But it is still better not to use it with a neighbour, friend, or stranger – only with enemies.

Discussion

A similar Iraqi curse is presented by Masliyah (2001, p.303), "A curse heard all over Iraq is *saxxam allah wujjak,* 'May God blacken your face with shame ('soot')' which means to lower the honour, the name, and the dignity of a person. Similar ideas about black existed in Biblical times (Dan. 12:6; Jer. 8:21; Joel 2:6; Nah. 2:6; Lam. *4:7, 8* and in the Qur'an, 3:106, 107; 20:2; 27:32). Among other such insults are *imsaxxam il-wujj,* 'O the one whose face is blackened with soot' (as a sign of mourning)". Both the Syrian and the Iraqi curses have the same connotation, which is wishing somebody to be stripped of his dignity or a catastrophe to befall him.

Example 27:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

ضربة تكسر جحش حنكك وحنكها معاً (المحمود، 1983، ص 172).

</div>

TT

(May) a blow break both your jaw and hers as well.

Interpretation

Xaḍrā al-ᶜAlī, Umm-Maḥmūd, condemns her son, Musallim, for defending Hulwā (Rayyā's friend). She is his deceased sister's friend. This curse involves a wish for evil for both Umm-Maḥmūd's son and her deceased daughter's friend, Hulwā.

Discussion

This curse indirectly calls God to act by hurting two persons at once. Umm-Maḥmūd's fury is alleviated by cursing, which is her medium to present her supremacy over the reviled persons – her child and her deceased daughter's friend. This curse states a negative consequence for a present person and an absent one. The curser, Umm-Maḥmūd, invokes God to harm certain parts of the cursed people's bodies. According to Masliyah (2001, p.303), "The body in general and specific body parts are a favourite motif in Iraqi Arabic curses. Hardly any body part of importance is left out of these curses". As noted above (Example 6), according to Masliyah (2001, p.277), "The curses of dying persons, of the parent on his son, and of the blind are feared and said to be quickly answered", though this is not true of the mother (see Example 6 above, for further discussion).

Example 28:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

لأريتّك الدّنيا بالمقلوب (المحمود، 1983، ص 177).

</div>

TT

(By God) I will show you the world upside-down.

Interpretation

Hulwā curses Musallim and this curse is a kind of threat as well. She warns that she will beat him severely until he loses his consciousness if she ever notices him later in this place (near the water spring).

Discussion

In this curse, God is indirectly invoked. The curser tacitly asks the help of God to enable her to punish the cursed person in case the wrongdoer did not submit to her will. It is a *conditional curse* involving an immediately prior conditional clause in *ra'aytaka marrah ṯāniyah ʿalayhā* [the water spring]", إن رأيتك مرّة ثانيّة عليها; i.e. the cause of the curse is mentioned before the curse. Masliyah (2001, p.271), defines the conditional curse and presents its types:

> The conditional curse suggests the reason for the curse. This may either be explicit, as in 1 Sam. 26:19: 'Let them be cursed... because they have driven me out this day...', or more commonly implicit in the subject itself (Deut. 27:17). The conditional phrases in such curses are either explicit or implicit in [Iraqi Arabic] too.11 Compare the following [Iraqi Arabic] curses where the conditional phrases are mentioned with the Bible (Gen. 27:29; Num. 24:9; Deut. 27:15-26; Ps. 119:21). It appears that some of these Iraqi maledictions revolve around the intertwined notion of lies and punishment, because a lie of some kind is the transgression which motivates a retaliatory curse against the transgressor. Examples: *maḥšarī jihannam iḏā da akḏib,* 'let hell be my place of resurrection if I am lying'; *marti ṣārat uxtī iḏā sawwet haššī,* (Samarra') 'may my wife become my sister if I do this thing', i.e. he will not have a sexual relationship with her; *mā li gabur ben il-gbur iḏā da akḏib,* 'may I not have a grave among the graves if I'm lying'.

Masliyah (2001, p.271) also discusses another type of conditional curses where the "conditional phrase is suppressed but understood", as in (Gen. 27: 29; Num. 24:9; Deut. 27:25-6; Judg. 21:18; I Sam. 14:24, 28; Ps. 119:21). Some Iraqi curses follow the same pattern as in: *atbarra min din muhammad,* '[may] I disown the religion of [the prophet] Muhammad' (Masliyah 2001, p.272).

Example 29

ST

ليت روحك هي الّتي تروح (المحمود، 1983، ص 177).

TT

 May your soul be the one which goes.

Interpretation

Musallim is angry with Ḥulwah and asks her/tell her روحي: *rūḥī* (go away). Her response is ليت روحك هي الّتي تروح: *lait rūḥak hyy il-letī trūḥ* (May your soul be the one which goes).

Discussion

This is a cognate curse used as the quick answer to an order. Its task is to sabotage the earlier speaker's sovereignty. Stewart (1997, p.346) explains fully this specific usage of cognate curses in everyday life as the prompt answer to general talks/asking for a duty: "The cognate curse retorts register an emphatic rejection, putting the interlocutor on the defensive and signalling that over-familiarity, rudeness, or insubordination will not be tolerated". A sub-classification of this usage is when cognate curses are used as quick and witty answers with certain verbs: "as replies to a command, expressing protest at having to carry out some task, or indignant refusal to do it. Thus in response to the imperative *hud,* 'take (this)' one might reply *hadak 'azra'tl,* 'may 'Azra'il (the angel of death) take you!'" (Stewart, 1997, p.347). Ḥulwah's curse manipulates the sense of the same word/curse which was used by Musallim. So, pun is involved in this retort. This is emphasised by Stewart (1997, p.333), who says "the curses are usually puns in that they do not repeat the same semantic sense of the verb but rather emphasize another possible sense of the particular root. For example, the phrase *nāmit 'alek heta* exploits the meaning 'to lie down' contained in *n-w-m* as opposed to the meaning 'to go to sleep'. The curses associated with the root *l-'-b,* 'to play' use the less common sense of the same root, 'to drool' as in *li'bit 'alek nifiak,* 'may your appetite drool' and *li'bit nifiak 'ala 'assdya,* 'may your appetite drool over a piece of straw!' Similar examples of the exploitation of different semantic senses of the same verb include *raddit il-mayya f-zorak,* 'may the water come back up your throat (so that you choke)', a response to, e.g., the imperative *rudd,* 'answer (me)!' As often occurs in puns, the meaning of the root-echo verb in the curses is stretched or understood figuratively to fit the context. Thus, *nāmit 'alek ḥeṭa,* 'may a wall lie down on you' is understood to mean simply, 'may a *wall fall* on you!', as are the other verbs which appear in conjunction with this ever-threatening wall, such as *'aᶜadit,* 'sat', *ḥaṭṭit,* 'alighted, came down', or *ṭabbit,* 'fell down'".

Example 30:

<div align="right">

ST

ليت الضّبع تتعشّاك (المحمود، 1983، ص 209).

</div>

TT

May a hyena have you as its dinner!

Interpretation

When Umm-Maḥmūd insists on Sulaimān joining them for dinner to discuss the threshing of her crop, Sulaimān refuses the invitation, adding that he has just had his dinner: الآن قمت عن العشاء *al-ʾāna qumtu ᶜan alᶜašā'*. Umm-Maḥmūd disappointedly and quietly responds: ليت الضّبع تتعشّاك *Laita aḍḍbᶜa ti-tᶜaššāk* (May a hyena have you as its dinner!)

Discussion

This is a cognate curse. In this curse, supplication to God is sensed. It is as if she is saying "I ask God to send you a hungry heyna to devour you". Umm-Maḥmūd uses this mechanism of cursing to vent her frustration and anger. She wants the other side in the conversation to be ripped to pieces. Umm-Maḥmūd implicitly asks God to send a hyena to eat Sulaimān, simply because has not been sincere to Umm-Maḥmūd and her husband. This is wishing death for the reviled person.

Example 31:

ST

يا دب الهيش (المحمود، 1983، ص 295).

TT

You, bear of the *hīš*.

Interpretation

Musallim struggled to find a peer to play with when he was a child. Whenever he tried to play with the children who were older than him, they would tell him to go away and play with the children of his own age. However, when he went to play with those children who were younger than him, they would tell him that he was older than them and curse him saying: "You, bear of the *hīš*". This curse is said to the person who is big but clumsy - he cannot do anything well nor can he understand matters as he should. This reminds us of the bear which wanted to guard its dear friend, who one afternoon, fell asleep in the shadow of a tree. When a fly landed on his forehead, the bear wanted to push it away in order to let his friend have a nice sleep. So, it picked up a rock and threw it at the fly but it smashed the poor man's head.

Discussion

This curse clearly employs the animal "bear" and indirectly the "donkey", as "hīš" is what we say to the donkey to urge it to move on, i.e. to communicate with it. So, likening Musallim to a donkey means that he is imbecilic. Likening him to a bear means that his body is bigger than the normal size – he is as big as a bear. In both cases, it is demeaning to the person. For Jay, (2000, pp.84-5), "name calling" is one of the potential ways of casting a passive influence on the hearers. For example, children insult their peers by mentioning their physical characteristics (e.g., *fatty, four-eyes, spaz).* But this act of name-calling provides information about how the speaker views him/herself in relation to others, in addition to affecting (e.g., angering, humiliating) the listener and thus having practical utility for the speaker. However, Masliyah (2001, p.293) perceives the interrelatedness between calling somebody an animal name and the purpose behind it. "Male buffalo *(jāmūs), jibish,* 'sheep', the donkey *(zumāl, jahaš, ḥmār),* and the ox are synonyms for stupidity and foolishness".

Example 32

ST

عرّفك الله قرط الفحم (المحمود، 1983، ص 460).

TT

 May God let you know the embers.

Interpretation

Xātūn expresses her anger at getting married to a serf or a peasant who does not possess either a house or land. She tells her mother: لا يعرف بأيّ ضيعة يصيّف، و إذا صيّف لا يعرف إذا كان سيشتّي في الضّيعة نفسها, *lā yaᶜrif bi 'ayy ḍayᶜah yuṣayyif, wa iḏā ṣayyaf lā yaᶜrif iḏa kāna sayušattī fī aḍḍayᶜah nafsihā* (He does not know in which village he will spend his summer, and whether he will spend his winter in the same village). Her mother, Umm-Maḥmūd, responds: عرّفك الله قرط الفحم *ᶜarrafaki allah qirṭ al-faḥim,* (May God let you know the embers).

Discussion

Here, Umm-Maḥmūd objects to her daughter, Xātūn's perception of her future bridegroom. She uses this curse as a clever and manipulative answer to her daughter's outcry. Stewart (1997, p.346), explains one usage of cognate curses in everyday life as the prompt answer to general talks: "The cognate curse retorts register an emphatic

rejection, putting the interlocutor on the defensive and signalling that over-familiarity, rudeness, or insubordination will not be tolerated" (cf. Section 5.6.5).

Example 33

<div align="right">ST</div>

<div align="right">ألف قرد و قرد يضرب النّاس (المحمود، 1983، ص 487).</div>

TT

A thousand and one monkeys hit the people.

Interpretation

Umm-Maḥmūd's daughter, Xātūn, complains about her fiancée. She tells her mother that people in the village advise her not to marry him because he is stingy and a serf who has no possessions whatsoever. But the mother defends her daughter's fiancée, saying that nobody can satisfy everybody. She adds that before betrothing her daughter, they kept praising him; while now after her daughter has become engaged to him, they have started to dispraise him by talking about his and his family's negative attributes. The mother's curse means, 'Who are these stupid people? Do not listen to their ridiculous opinion!'

Discussion

In this curse, the word قرد *qird* (monkey) is used. It means "May God reincarnate these liars as monkeys. It means also, "may Satan/demons dwell in them". This indicates the curser's desire to see the cursed ones ill and unhealthy. Masliyah (2001, p.283) notes how Arabs in Iraq relate Satan to bringing illness: "Many Iraqis believe that diseases are curses from the Almighty by which a person becomes inhabited by demons. There are also those who believe that diseases are caused by demons. Traces of this belief may be found in the Bible (Gen. 6.1-4; Lev. 16: 6-10; Isa. 34:14; Job, 6: 4; Ps. 91:5). This idea later developed to a belief that demons invade human bodies and personalities causing mental illness and physical diseases. Calling upon a disease to befall a person means calling the demon that brings that particular disease. Masliyah (2001, p.282), "the Qur'an speaks of human beings who were changed into apes and pigs (Q. 2:65, 173; 5:63; 6:145) (cf. Section 5.6.4). It is interesting to note that the word *qird,* which means literally 'monkey', is used as a synonym of Satan. al-Bustānī writes in *al-Muḥīt, wa-baᶜḍu al-ᶜāmmati yastaᶜmiluna-1-qirda bi maᶜnā al-šaytān* 'some people use the [word]

monkey to mean Satan"'. This is a multiple curse as it uses the number "one thousand" which fortifies the curse and increases its potential.

Example 34

ST

قرد بالعلم و بأصحابه (المحمود، 1983، ص 490).

TT

A monkey in knowledge and its people!

Interpretation

Abū Maḥmūd defends his future son-in-law and his family. He tells his wife that they are knowledgeable. But she mocks him and curses those who are educated. By cursing them, she demeans both knowledge and literate people who cannot benefit from their education to help get a better life. What is the use of his knowledge while they are still slaves? What is this knowledge that does not protect us from slavery?

Discussion

Again in this curse the mother Umm-Maḥmūd uses the word "monkey", which means "may Satan/evil dwell in these educated people and harm them, and may a demon obliterate knowledge". The curser gives voice to her disappointment.

Example 35

ST

الله يقطعهم، ما كان في واحد منهم دم! (المحمود، 1983، ص490).

TT

May God cut them off [from having an heir], no one of them had blood inside them!

Interpretation

Abū Maḥmūd speaks about the oppression of the landlord. He says that the owner of Al-Gnājeh village killed one of fourteen people and his friends did not try to defend him. So Umm-Maḥmūd curses them asking God to deprive them of an heir: الله يقطعهم. It means "May God deprive them of offspring and descendants and may God inflict death upon them".

Discussion

In this curse, God is called as the highest power who can achieve justice. Umm-Maḥmūd invokes God to take revenge upon the coward peers of the murdered friend for not being faithful. It is a strong curse expressing a death-wish for all the other 13 remaining men and a prayer as well for its obvious recourse to God. Masliyah (2001, p.263), notes that "Curses may or may not take the form of a prayer. Not every expression of a wish is a prayer. It is a prayer if God is addressed either directly or indirectly and is asked to fulfil the wish. Insults are not as much dreaded as curses but are greatly disliked. In insults no supernatural power is addressed" (cf. also Section 5.2).

Example 36

ST

الله يلعنك، يا إبليس (المحمود، 1983، ص 500).

TT

God damn you, you devil!

Interpretation

Umm-Maḥmūd curses the devil because she feels ashamed of not being properly hospitable to her future son-in-law. She indirectly apologises to him through cursing the devil, who was the cause of her not being able to keep some ghee aside. She thinks that her guest does not eat well because he does not like using olive oil instead of ghee for frying the onion and sprinkling it on the cooked *burghul*.

Discussion

A similar curse is found in Iraq: "*allah yilᶜan iblīsak,* 'may God curse your Devil'" (Masliyah, 2001, p.301). In certain situations, Iraqi people rebuke the Devil/Satan, for instance, when they are not completely satisfied with their actions. "Curses against the Devil and Satan are said when one is annoyed, in trouble, or when one's affairs are not going well" (Masliyah, 2001, p.301).

5.8.1 Statistical Analysis of Curses in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*

The curses in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* can be categorised under the following categories – with most curses belonging to two or three of these categories:

> *A. Reference to God*
> 1. A1. Implicit reference to God
> 2. A2. Explicit reference to God
> *B. Wish for something bad*
> 3. B1. Wish for death
> 4. B2. Wish for harm
> 5. B3. Wish for dishonour
> *C. Reference to other specific notions*
> 6. C1. Reference to the notion 'burn'
> 7. C2. Reference to animals
> *D. Use of specific linguistic features*
> 8. D1. Word/curse-strengthening
> 9. D2. Root-echo curse

The 36 curses found in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* are analysed statistically in terms of these categories as follows:

A. Reference to God

A1. Implicit reference to God

14 curses contain an implicit reference to God.

A2. Explicit reference to God

14 curses contain an explicit reference to God.

8 curses contain no reference to God (whether implicit or explicit).

B. Wish for something bad

3. B1. Wish for death

15 curses contain a wish for death.

4. B2. Wish for harm

9 curses contain a wish for harm.
2 curses contain a wish for both death and harm.

5. B3. Wish for dishonour

5 curses contain a wish for dishonour
1 curse contains a wish for both harm and dishonour

10 curses do not contain a wish for something bad.

C. Reference to other specific notions

6. C1. Reference to the notion 'burn'

2 curses contain a reference to the notion 'burn'.

7. C2. Reference to animals

8 curses contain a reference to animals.

26 curses do not contain a reference to the notion 'burn' or to animals.

D. Use of specific linguistic features

8. D1. Word/curse-strengthening or *root echo*

7 curses use word/curse-strengthening

Of these 3 make use of the word ألف *alf* (thousand) to strengthen the curse.

9. D2. Root-echo curse

3 curses use root-echo.

26 curses do not use word/curse or repetition of the word *alf* for strengthening or root-echo.

5.9   Curses in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*

In this section, I will consider curses from *Anājīl al-Xarāb,* as follows:

Example 1:

ST

إن شاء الله تشتهي الموت و ما تلاقيه، يا ظالم! (نيوف، 1995، ص9).

TT

God willing, you will desire death and not find it, you oppressor!

Interpretation

Xalīl said that he used to laugh when he heard his neighbour curse the tobacco estimator, for estimating the tobacco at less than her calculations. She says this curse which means that he may suffer from terrible physical and psychological health, preferring to die rather than live this horrible life, but his wish will not be fulfilled. Metaphorically speaking, this means to be tortured.

Discussion

The neighbour is angry because she has been oppressed by the tobacco estimator who has cheated her – estimating the tobacco at less than her own calculations. As we mentioned earlier, according to Masliyah (2001, p.275): "There are, however, many Quranic verses and traditions that enumerate those whom God cursed (cf. Section 5.6.1). Torment and unrest are embedded in the woman's curse. She is supplicating to God as the ultimate authority to make this immoral man live a bitter and awful life – a life full of agonies and sorrows. According to Masliyah (2001, p.274):

> The Qur'an and the Bible supply examples of the ancient idea that the name of the Lord might be used with advantage in any curse. The name of Allah is mentioned more often than the other names, because He is the most powerful and the greatest avenger, (Deut. 2:42, 32:89; 1 Sam. 2:6; 2 Kgs. 5:7; Hos. 5:7; Job 20:26 and this compares with Q.2: 26, 38, 105; 3:189; 4:126; 51:58; 67:1). God is addressed as the right and severe judge (Job 9:15; Ps. 35:1, 43:1; Lam. 3:89) and this compares with the Qur'an (4:40; 21: 47).

Example 2:

ST

قيامة أليعازر، يا عبد الكريم؟ (نيوف، 1995، ص 239).

TT

(May it be) the resurrection of Lazarus, you ꜥAbd al-Karīm?

Interpretation

When ꜥAbd al-Karīm woke up from his drunken sleep, Rābiḥa said this curse to him. It means: "I wish you had died and come to life again like Lazarus" (John 11:39-44). According to the religious myth, this figure was raised from the tomb four days after dying.

Discussion

Here Rābiḥa is angry with ꜥAbd al-Karīm and curses him by asking God covertly to inflict death on him. For Masliyah (2001, p.295): "Death constitutes a major motif in Iraqi Arabic. Iraqis wish death to someone in curses in many formulae.

Example 3:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

عليك اللّعنة، يا ناب الأفعى و ذنب العقرب. فعلاً، دعاء الأوباش كشهادة الزّور لا يستحق غير العقوبة. تدعوني للمنادمة و تبهدلني؟ (نيوف، 1995، ص234).

</div>

TT

Damn you, you snake's fang and scorpion's tail. It is true the bastards' invocation/prayer is like perjury which does worth nothing but punishment. You call me for good company and curse me?

Interpretation

Munādamah comes from the word *nadīm*. A *nadīm* is a person chosen by someone (especially under the ᶜAbbāsīd and most of the Omayyad Caliphates) to be his drinking companion. A *nadīm* is a person whom you love to chat and listen to and to disclose what is in your heart to. It is because drinking loosens the tongue. Ilyās says this curse to Rāḍī. It means he is as poisonous as both the snake and the scorpion. Rāḍī asks Ilyās to come and spend a good time with him, but when he responds Rāḍī curses him all the time. Ilyās is angry with Rāḍī for choosing him to be his own drinking companion but never stopping cursing and humiliating him.

Discussion

Baghdadi Jews curse the malignant person by likening him/her to "*'agurbah safrah,* 'a yellow scorpion" (Masliyah, 2001, p.295). In ancient times, the snake was connected with the spring of evil. This is clearly mentioned in the scriptures. In Genesis 3, there is a connection between the origin of evil, temptation and the snake.

Here, likening Rāḍī to the most effective and poisonous part of the serpent relegates Rāḍī to be an enemy rather than a benign friend. Ilyās continues cursing when likening Rāḍī to a liar who deserves retribution. Ilyās has the conviction that he has done nothing wrong to Rāḍī. So, Rāḍī's curses will be futile. We read in the Bible (Deut. 23:5; Prov. 22:23, 26:2) and *ḥadīṯ* literature that undeserved cursing has no effect or it may even be turned in some cases by God into a blessing (cf. Section 5.6.2). This curse is a strong one because it contains the word "curse" and is a combination of two curses. This point is fully illustrarted by Masliyah (2001, p.279) when he describes the combined curse as particularly strong (cf. section 5.6.4). Ilyās continues to humiliate Rāḍī by describing him as a bastard.

Example 4:

<div dir="rtl">

ST

ابن الحرام دائماً يلصق صفاته بالآخرين (نيوف، 1995، ص34).

</div>

TT

The illegitimate son always accuses others of having his bad attributes.

Interpretation

First Xalīl humiliated Rābiḥah by calling her "*Fājirah*" which means "a prostitute" in front of his friends.When Xalīl spoke cuttingly to her in front of other people, Rābiḥah answered with this curse. Her response was harsh and brief and this made him shut up! She firstly accused him of being an illegitimate son; and secondly, she made him understand that such bad attributes are nothing but his own attributes.

Discussion

As noted in Section 5.6.4, "The greatest disgrace for any Iraqi is to be called *nagal,* or *negel* (BJ) [Baghdadi Jews], *ibn ḥarām, ibn zinā,* 'bastard' or *ibn ḥēḍ,* 'a son of menstruation', which means that the mother was menstruating when her son was conceived" (Masliyah 2001, p.284). Here, Rābiḥah is angry and tries to restore her dignity in front of her and Xalīl's friends by reviling Xalīl who harmed her honour. He called her "*Fājirah*", which means "a prostitute". In return, she called him "*Ibn ḥarām*" which means "illegitimate son". By doing this, she achieved justice on the psychological level at least. This is further discussed in section 5.2.

5.9.1 Statistical Analysis of Curses in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*

The 4 curses found in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* are analysed statistically in terms of these categories as follows:

A. Reference to God

A1. Implicit reference to God

2 curses contain an implicit reference to God.

A2. Explicit reference to God

1 curse contains an explicit reference to God.

B. Wish for something bad

3. B1. Wish for death

2 curses contain a wish for death.

4. B2. Wish for harm

1 curse contains a wish for harm.

1 curse contains a wish for both death and harm.

5. B3. Wish for dishonour

1 curse contains a wish for dishonour

C. Reference to other specific notions

6. C1. Reference to the notion 'burn'

No curses contain a reference to the notion 'burn'.

7. C2. Reference to animals

1 curse contains a reference to animals.

D. Use of specific linguistic features

8. D1. Word/curse-strengthening

1 curse uses word/curse-strengthening.

9. D2. Root-echo curse

No curse uses root-echo.

5.10   Discussion of statistical analysis of curses in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb*

While there are a large number of curses in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (36), there are only 4 in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. The two authors thus differ widely in their use of curses. Given this, it is best to consider their use of curses separately.

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, the great majority of curses, 77.78% (i.e. 28 out of 36 curses), make either implicit or explicit reference to God. This reflects the centrality of God in Islam as well as the prevalence of God in cursing in contemporary Arab culture (sections 5.6-5.5.6.4). While 10 curses out of 36 (27.78%) do not wish harm on the person being cursed, 26 (72.22%) do. Of these, the majority (15 out 26) wish for the death of the person being cursed – perhaps not surprising given that death is the ultimate form of harm one can wish on anybody. Of the remaining 10, 9 wish for harm (including 2 which wish for both death and harm), while 5 wish for dishonour (including 2 which wish for both death and dishonour). It is noticeable that of the 36 curses, only 5 (13.89%) wish dishonour on the person being cursed, despite the importance of honour and dishonour in Islamic, Arab and Middle Eastern societies. This is surprising, taking into consideration that usually honour is highly signficant in small, closed communities, where people are uneducated and, thus, traditional mores prevail and have the mastery over their lives. Colonialism, however, played a very important role in depriving the peasant of his honour, as this peasant does not own his own land. *al-Maḥmūd* has made this point explicit in this proverb: لا عرض لمن ليس له أرض *lā ʿirḍ liman laīsa lahu ‘arḍ* (there is no honour for anyone who does not own land). This, in turn, may give a hint about the humiliation and oppression which the peasant experiences in his daily life. The colonial occupier has put this villager in a strange position, where honour is easily violated. Consequently, this traditional view of honour becomes very trivial when compared to the practical facts of destitution. This reflects the peasant's surrender to the bitter life of colonialism.

A small number of curses (2 out of 36, or 5.56%) in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* make reference to burning, while a rather larger number (8 out of 36, or 22.22%) refer to animals. This seems to reflect the traditional, rural setting of the novel itself. There are a significant number of cases of word/curse-strengthening in curses in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* – 7 out of

36 curses (19.44%). Of these, 3 (8.33%) employ the word *alf* (one thousand). Similarly 3 curses (8.33%) make use of root-echo (cf. Section 5.6.5).

As there are only 4 curses in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, the results for them lack statistical reliability. However, it is noteworthy that 3 of these curses make reference to God (2 implicit, and 1 explicit). As with *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, this can be taken to reflect the centrality of God in Islam and the prevalence of God in cursing in contemporary Arab culture (sections 5.6-5.5.6.4). All three curses contain a specific negative wish – 2 for death, 1 for harm (with 1 of these for both death and harm). There is only one curse wishing for dishonour in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (25%) out of the total number of curses in *Anājīl al-Xarāb,* compared to 6 for dishonour (with 5 for wishing dishonour and 1 wishing for both harm and dishonour) in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (16.67%). This suggests that dishonour is more significant in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* than in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar.* No curses in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* contain a reference to burning, though 1 refers to animals. 1 curse uses word/curse-strengthening, but none uses root-echo.

5.11 Conclusion

Both of the novels considered in this chapter employ a number of curses of different types – reference to God, whether explicit or implicit; wish for something bad like harm, dishonour and death as the ultimate level of harm; a reference to other specific notions such as burning or an animal; and finally, the use of specific linguistic features, such as the repetition of the word ألف *alf,* the recurrence of the word لعن *la^can* (curse) or a curse involving a root-echo. In both novels most curses use God as the ultimate power to help the curser regain his status of authority, at least on the psychological level. The more prolific use of curses in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (set in a very rural environment) than in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (which has a more urban setting) may suggest that people who live in villages curse more than their counterparts who live in cities. As mentioned earlier, in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 36 curses are used, in comparison with the only four curses in *Anājīl al-Xarāb,* i.e. nearly twelve times as many curses are used in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* as in *Anājīl al-Xarāb.*

God is a very important cultural feature of curses in both *Anājīl al-Xarāb* and *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*. Wishing harm for people is fairly significant in curses in both novels. Dishonour is prominent in curses in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (25% of all curses), though it fetaures in 16.67% of the curses in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*. Animals are fairly significant, occurring in 22.22% of curses in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, but are found in only one curse in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. The rural environment of *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* is prominently reflected in the fairly large number of curses involving animals. In this context, the locus of the events in the narrative plays a role in giving an indication about the nature of people, about whom the writer writes. In al-Maḥmūd's novel, the characters are villagers, who mainly depend on animals in their daily lives. This dependence on animals may take many forms: transport, food or even economic exchange. By economic exchange, I mean a villager may pay eggs, rather than money, for buying a comb – simply because he has many chickens which are prolific egg-layers. Similarly, the location of Nayouf's narrative, together with its characters, explains the relative lack of animals in curses in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, where the characters mainly dwell and meet up in the university, the café or urban houses, particularly in Damascus. This means that their lifestyle is urban rather than rural, which is a major feature in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*. No curses in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* contain a reference to burning, while 5.56% of the curses make reference to "burning" in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*. While three out of four curses in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* make reference to harm, the curses in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* less commonly refer to harm and more commonly to death.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the thesis. The following section (6.2) recapitulates the thesis structure and discusses the results. Section 6.3 provides some general conclusions of the study, Section 6.4 discusses limitations, and Section 6.5 gives recommendations for future research.

6.2 Recapitulation of thesis - structure and discussion of results

This thesis consists of six chapters. The first chapter was an introduction and covered the following points: statement of the research gap (1.2), aims of the study (1.3), theoretical models (1.4) and an overview of the thesis (1.5).

The second chapter considered definitions of proverbs by different scholars (section 2.2), and views about the historical origins and aspects of proverbs (section 2.3). Sections 2.4- 2.4.1.3 discussed the formal features of proverbs – phonic features, alliteration and assonance, rhyme, and poeticity respectively. Sections 2.4.2-2.4.2.2 presented other formal features of proverbs such as archaicness (section 2.4.2.1) and figurativeness (2.4.2.2). Sections 2.5-2.5.5 considered the structural-semantic features of proverbs with their sub-categories – equational structure (section 2.5.1), antithesis (section 2.5.2), valuation (section 2.5.3), cause and effect (section 2.5.4), and finally, repetition (section 2.5.5).

Sections 2.6-2.6.2.6 considered the semantics of proverbs with its two sub-divisions – proverbs as multi-word units (section 2.6.1) and figuration in proverbs (section 2.6.2). This latter sub-section consisted of five further sub-sub-sections - definition of metaphor (section 2.6.2.1), definition of synecdoche (section 2.6.2.2), definition of metonymy (section 2.6.2.3), definition of hyperbole (section 2.6.2.4), definition of personification (section 2.6.2.5), and finally, definition of irony (section 2.6.2.6). Section 2.6.3 discussed the differentiation of proverbs from other tropes.

Sections 2.7-2.7.2 considered non-standard types of proverbs – imported proverbs (section 2.7.1) and modified/adapted proverbs and anti-proverbs (section 2.7.2). Cultural features of proverbs were discussed in section 2.8, and further explanation of this point was provided in the following sections - bond with nature and domestic life (section 2.8.1), traditionality of content (section 2.8.2), features of proverbs in different cultures (section 2.8.3), and potentially localized nature of proverbs (section 2.8.4). The last sections (2.9-2.9.4) tackled the social functions of proverbs in general, considering specific areas such as the functions of proverbs in everyday life (section 2.9.1), in education (section 2.9.2), the functions of proverbs in political speeches (section 2.9.3), and in literature (section 2.9.4).

Chapter three looked at proverbs in *Muftaraq al- Maṭar* and *Anajīl al-Xarāb*. It began with an introduction providing biographical information about Yūsuf al-Maḥmūd, followed by a summary of his novel *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, and then biographical information about Naufal ꜥAlī Nayouf, followed by a summary of his novel *Anajīl al-Xarāb*. Section 3.4 presented the number of proverbs, curses, invocations and other similar features in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*. Section 3.5 presented the number of proverbs, curses, invocations and other similar features in *Anājīl al-Xarāb.*

Section 3.6 talked about formal features of the proverbs. Sub-section 3.6.1 showed that in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, 364 proverbs (70% of the total number of proverbs in the novel) displayed a significant degree of alliteration and/or assonance. It also gave examples of proverbs which displayed significant alliteration and/or assonance in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*. The same sub-section demonstrated that in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, 92 proverbs (72.44% of the total number of proverbs in the novel) displayed a significant degree of alliteration and/or assonance. Examples of proverbs which displayed significant alliteration and/or assonance in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* were provided as well. In 3.6.2 rhyme was discussed with examples from both novels. Of the 521 proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, 70 (13.46% of the total number of proverbs in the novel) had rhyme. Of the 127 proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, 5 (3.94% of the total number of proverbs in the novel) had rhyme. Section 3.6.3 considered archaicness in the two novels, showing that a number of proverbs had archaic origins, even though the proverbs themselves were still current.

Section 3.7 dealt with structural-semantic features of the proverbs. Section 3.7.1 discussed the occurrences of equational structures in proverbs in both novels. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, out of 521 proverbs 47 (9.02%) proverbs had an equational structure, while in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 14 out of 127 (11.02%) proverbs had an equational structure. Section 3.7.2 considered antithesis in the proverbs in both novels. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, out of 521 proverbs, 64 (12.28%) proverbs made use of antithesis. In *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, out of 127 proverbs, 14 (11.02%) proverbs made use of antithesis. Section 3.7.3 talked about valuation in the proverbs in both novels. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, out of 521 proverbs, 136 (26.10%) proverbs involved valuation, while in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, out of 127 proverbs, 14 (11.02%) proverbs involved valuation. Section 3.7.4 talked about cause and effect in the proverbs in both novels. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, out of 521 proverbs 53 (10.17%) proverbs involved cause and effect, while in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, out of 127 proverbs there were 8 (6.29%) proverbs which involved cause and effect.

Section 3.7.5 considered repetition, with its variant types: (i) root repetition, (ii) pattern repetition, and (iii) lexical repetition – or combinations of these involving different words. Of the 521 proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*: 47 (9.03 %) displayed root repetition only, 65 (12.5 %) displayed pattern repetition only, 48 (9.23%) displayed lexical repetition only and 8 (1.53 %) displayed both root and lexical repetition. Of the 127 proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, 10 (7.874%) displayed root repetition only, 6 (4.724%) displayed pattern repetition only, 17 (13.385%) displayed lexical repetition only and 2 (1.5746%) displayed both root and lexical repetition.

Section 3.8 discussed figurative usages. Section 3.8 - 3.8.9 looked at figurativeness of proverbs – metaphor, synecdoche, metonomy, simile, hyperbole, metaphor/hyperbole, personification irony and euphemism. Of the 521 proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, 390 (75%) were figurative – 271 displayed metaphor (52.12%), 26 displayed metonymy (5%), 61 displayed simile (11.73%), 23 displayed hyperbole (4.42%), 2 displayed irony (0.38%) and 1 displayed euphemism (0.19%). Of the 127 proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, 102 (80.31%) are figurative – with 86 displaying metaphor (67.72%), 0 displaying metonymy, 14 displaying simile (11.02%), and 2 displaying hyperbole (1.57%).

Section 3.9 considered the standardness of the proverbs. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, 13 (2.5%) were standard proverbs taken from written sources (poems, the Quran, etc.), 79

(15.19%) were modified proverbs (adaptations of existing, established proverbs), 32 (6.15%) were general Syrian/Shami proverbs (i.e. found in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan), 18 (3.46%) were local only (found only in the village which is the focus of the novel), 9 (1.73%) were found in the wider Arab World, 72 (13.85%) were local with non-local variants, 7 (1.35%) were unidentified and 290 (55.77%) were found on the Syrian coast only. In *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, 13 (10.25%) were standard proverbs, 40 (31.50%) were modified proverbs, 10 (7.87%) were local with non-local variants, 11 (8.66%) were General Syrian/Shami proverbs, 0 (0%) local only, 3 (2.36%) were wider Arab World, 49 (38.58%) were Syrian coast only and 1 (0.79%) was unidentified.

Section 3.9.1 considered the language of the proverb: Standard Arabic vs. Colloquial Arabic. Section 3.9.1.1 dealt with Standard - from original Standard. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* there are 97 proverbs (18.65%) used in Standard Arabic which also originated in Standard Arabic. Some of these were given in their original Standard Arabic form, while others were modified. Similarly, in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* there were 61 proverbs (48.03%) used in Standard Arabic which also originated in Standard Arabic. Some of these were given in their original Standard Arabic form, while others were modified. Section 3.9.1.2 dealt with *Standard - from Unidentified*. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* there were 14 proverbs (2.96%) used in Standard Arabic which could not be traced back to any written reference, but which sounded like proverbs. In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* there were no Standard Arabic proverbs of unidentified origin. Section 3.9.1.3 dealt with *colloquial (from colloquial)*. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* there were 15 proverbs (2.88%) used in colloquial Arabic which also originated in colloquial Arabic. Some of these were given in their original colloquial Arabic form, while others were modified. Similarly, in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* there were 4 proverbs (3.15%) used in colloquial Arabic which also originated in colloquial Arabic. Some of these were given in their original colloquial Arabic form, while others were modified. Section 3.9.1.4 dealt with *Mixed (Standard and colloquial)*. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* there were 44 proverbs (8.46%) either used in mixed Standard and colloquial Arabic, or which had the same form in both Standard and colloquial Arabic. In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* there were 5 proverbs (3.94%) either used in mixed Standard and colloquial Arabic, or which had the same form in both Standard and colloquial Arabic. However, In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* there were 389 proverbs (74.81%) used in Standard Arabic which derived from proverbs in colloquial Arabic. In *Anājīl al-Xarāb*

there were 57 proverbs (44.88%) used in Standard Arabic which derived from proverbs in colloquial Arabic.

Section 3.10 dealt with religious orientations of the proverbs - 41 proverbs (13, i.e. 10.24% of the total number of proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, and 28, i.e. 5.38% of the total number of proverbs, in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*) related to various religious sources and orientations. This section discussed in detail the number/percentage of the proverbs which related to each specific religious sub-category. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar,* 4 proverbs were Quranic (0.77%) of the total number of proverbs, 9 proverbs are originally religious (1.73%), 0 Biblical, 1 derived from Hadith (0.19%), 2 represented Imam ᶜalī's sayings (0.38%), 4 were semi-religious proverbs (0.77%), 3 were anti-religious (0.58%) and 5 were religious (of which 1 is originally Biblical, 2 originally Hadith, and 2 originally Quran), making 0.95% (of which 0.19% was originally Biblical, 0.38% originally Hadith, and 0.38% originally Quran). In *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, 4 proverbs derived from the Quran (2.35%), 5 was originally religious (2.94%), 1 proverb was Biblical (0.59%), 1 Hadith (0.59%), 1 said by Imam ᶜalī (0.59%) and 1 was semi-religious (0.59%).

Sections 3.11-3.11.20 dealt with the cultural features of the proverbs. Sub-section 3.11.1 dealt with agriculture. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 34 proverbs (6.93%) had as their dominant element agriculture, while In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 6 proverbs (4.72%) had as their dominant element agriculture. In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 1 proverb had as its dominant element the human body and agriculture. Section 3.11.2 dealt with agriculture and traditionality of content In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 1 proverb had as its dominant element both agriculture and traditionality of content. Section 3.11.3 dealt with animals. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 79 proverbs (15.19%) had as their dominant element animals; while in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* only 11proverbs (8.66%) had as their dominant element animals. In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 2 proverbs (1.58%) had as their dominant element both animals and nature. Section 3.11.5 dealt with domestic life. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 252 proverbs (48.46%) had as their dominant element domestic life, while in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* only 49 proverbs (38.58%) had as their dominant element domestic life. Section 3.11.6 dealt with both domestic life and household. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) had as its dominant element domestic life and the household, while in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 1 proverb (0.79%) had as its dominant element domestic life and the household. Section 3.11.7 dealt with

domestic life and the human body. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) had as its dominant elements domestic life and the human body. Section 3.11.8 dealt with domestic life and nature. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 2 proverbs (0.38%) had as their dominant elements domestic life and nature. Section 3.11.9 dealt with domestic life and traditionality of content. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* no proverbs had as their dominant elements domestic life and traditionality of content. In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 1 proverb (0.79%) had as its dominant elements domestic life and traditionality of content. Section 3.11.10 dealt with the household. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 42 proverbs (8.08%) had as their dominant element the household, while in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 12 proverbs (9.45%) had as their dominant element the household. Section 3.11.11 dealt with household and animals. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) had as its dominant elements the household and animals. Section 3.11.12 dealt with household and traditionality of content. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) had its dominant elements the household and traditionality of content, while in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 2 proverbs (1.58%) had as their dominant elements the household and traditionality of content. Section 3.11.13 dealt with the human body. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 64 proverbs (12.31%) had as their dominant element the human body; while in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* only 15 (11.81%) proverbs had as their dominant element the human body. Section 3.11.14 dealt with the human body and nature. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 3 proverbs (0.58%) had as their dominant elements the human body and nature, while in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 1 (0.79%) proverb had as its dominant element the human body and nature. Section 3.11.15 dealt with the human body and traditionality of content. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) had as its dominant elements the human body and traditionality of content; similarly, in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 1 proverb (0.79) had as its dominant elements the human body and traditionality of content. Section 3.11.16 dealt with nature. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 28 proverbs (5.38%) had as their dominant element nature, while in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 9 proverbs (7.09%) had as their dominant element nature. Section 3.11.17 dealt with nature and the household. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 1 proverb (0.19%) had as its dominant elements nature and the household; similarly, in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 1 proverb (0.79%) had as its dominant elements nature and the household.

Section 3.11.19 dealt with traditionality of content. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 12 proverbs (2.31%) had as their dominant element traditionality of content. The most interesting of these were 8 (1.54%) proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar,* which could be related back to

specific stories; similarly, in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* 12 proverbs (9.45%) had as their dominant element traditionality of content. The most interesting of these were 5 (3.94%) proverbs, which could be related back to specific stories. Sub-section 3.11.20 dealt with the weather and nature. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 14 proverbs (2.69%) had as their dominant elements the weather and nature, while in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* only 1 proverb (0.79%) had as its dominant elements the weather and nature. Section 3.12 dealt with relationship to traditional activities and crafts. In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* 20 proverbs (3.85%) involve traditional crafts, while in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* only 7 proverbs involve (5.51%) traditional crafts. The specific traditional crafts were further discussed in sections 3.12.1 -3.12.15.

Chapter four considered modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. It defined modified proverbs (Section 4.2), considering the place of these modified proverbs in literature (Section 4.3). It presented the modified proverbs which were used in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb* showing how these fitted into various different patterns (Section 4.5), in relation to their origins (Section 4.5.1), cultural features (Section 4.5.2), social functions (Section 4.5.3), and formation (Section 4.5.4). Section 6 provided a conclusion.

Chapter five looked at curses in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. It first reviewed definitions of curses by different scholars and showed their motifs (Section 5.2). It considered curses in Mesopotamian literature (Section 5.3), the Bible (Section 5.4), Ancient Greece (Section 5.5), and the Quran, Hadith, Islam and Arab culture (Section 5.6). Then it reviewed cursing in Modern Greece, especially on the Island of Karpathos (Section 5.7). It presented the curses used in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* showing how these fit into various different categories (Section 5.8), in relation to the views of different scholars, followed by a statistical analysis of curses in the novel (Section 5.8.1). It then presented curses in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (Section 5.9), followed by a statistical analysis of curses in the novel (Section 5.9.1). It finally presented a discussion of the statistical analysis of curses in both novels (Section 5.10). Section (5.11) provided a conclusion.

6.3 Conclusions

The most general conclusion to be drawn is that proverbs are very common in both the novels considered, with 521 proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (Section 3.4) and 127 proverbs in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (Section 3.5). This contrasts with the situation in modern English-language novels written in Britain, and its former settler colonies, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, where poverbs seem to be rarely used in novels. A random selection of novels from a few English-speaking countries shows the following results:

The NewZealand writer Maurice Gee in his novel, *In My Father's Den*, does not use any proverbs or modified proverbs.

Lloyd Jones, another NewZealand writer, employs one traditional proverb and one modified proverb in his novel, *Mr. PIP*.

In the Canadian novel, *Beautiful Losers*, Leonard Cohen uses one original proverb and three modified proverbs.

In the British novel, *The Milestone*, Margaret Drabble does not uses any original proverbs, and uses seven modified proverbs.

By contrast, a random selection of a few novels from different countries in the Arab World shows the following results:

In the Libyan novel, *al-Xusūf 3: ʿĀxbār al-Ṭūfān al-Ṯānī*, Ibrāhīm al-Kōnī uses four original proverbs and twenty modified proverbs.

In the Algerian novel, *Nisīān.com*, ʿĀḥlām Mustaġānmī uses nineteen original proverbs and thirty-two modified proverbs.

In the Egyptian novel, *Ḥarīq al-ʿAxyīlah*, Idwār al-Xarrāṭ uses three original proverbs and thirteen modified proverbs.

In the Syrian novel, *Madīḥ al-Karāhyyah*, Xālid Xalīfah uses two original proverbs and sixteen modified proverbs.

Putting the two novels *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb* in a wider context, we notice that both writer are prolific in their use of both proverbs and modified proverbs. *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* has a particularly wide use of proverbs and modified proverbs in comparison to the novels considered in this section, whether English-language or Arabic.

It is noteworthy that in his collection of short stories, *Ḥārat al-Niswān* ('TheWomen's Quarter'), al-Maḥmūd uses the same writing style, using one hundred and four modified proverbs, forty-two original proverbs. Ten proverbs and modified proverbs are found more than once in *Ḥārat al-Niswān*. There are twenty-four proverbs and modified proverbs which are found in both *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Ḥārat al-Niswān*.To mention a few examples, in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, al-Maḥmūd uses لا يطعمونهم من الجمل إلّا أذنه *lā yuṭʿimūnahum min al-jamal 'īllā 'uḏnahu* and in *Ḥārat al-Niswān,* al-Maḥmūd uses أدركت أنّي لم أطعم من الجمل إلّا أذنه *adraktu 'ānnī lam 'uṭʿam mina al-jamal 'īllā 'uḏnahu.* Both proverbs are adapted or modified forms of the proverb (عبد ما عطاه من الجمل دانه *mā ʿaṭāh min al-jamal dānuh*. Another example which occurs in الحميد، 2008، ص165) both *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Ḥārit al-Niswān* is من يطعم التّسعة يأكل العشرة *man yuṭʿim al-tisʿah ya'kul al-ʿašrah* and *lan ta'kul al-ʿašrah mā lam tuṭʿim al-tisʿah*. Both aforementioned proverbs are transformations of the original proverb بطعمي التسعة تتاخد العشرة (عبد الحميد، 2008، ص187). An example of an original proverb which appears in both works by al-Maḥmūd is كانون، كن في بيتك، يا مجنون *kānūn, kin fī baitak, yā majnūn.* This proverb is repeated in its original form in both *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Ḥārat al-Niswān.*

A few modified proverbs appear in both novels *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. For instance, in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar,* the original proverb المرأة شرّ كلّها وشرّ منها أنّه لا بدّ منها *al-mar'ah šarrun kulluhā wa šarru minhā 'annahu lābudda minhā* is used in its modified form هو كالمرأة-شرّ لابدّ منه *huwa k-al-mar'ah šarrun lābudda minhu* in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. Another example of the common use of similar proverbs is al-Maḥmūd's employment of the modified proverb ليس بالشّعر وحده ينمو التّفّاح *Laysa bi-l-šiʿri waḥdahu yanmū al-tuffāḥ* in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and Nayūf's use of إنّما بالكلام وحده لا يحيا الإنسان *'innamā bi-al-kalāmi waḥdahu lā yaḥyā al-'insān* in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. Both of these are different modifications of the original proverb:ليس بالخبز وحده يحيا الإنسان *laysa bi-l-xubzi waḥdahu yaḥyā al-'insān.*

It is interesting that local proverbs are more common in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar,* while standard proverbs are more common in *Anājīl al-Xarāb.* The reason behind that may be because the characters in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* are university students, while most of the characters in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* are illiterate and there are only two characters with intermediate education—Musallim and his father.

The employment of proverbs is a significant feature of older British writing (e.g. Shakespeare) and of some English-language novels written elsewhere in the world, such as novels by the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe (Section 2.9.4), but not – as suggested by the examples of English-language fiction considered above this section – of English-language writing in Britain, or parts of the world colonised by British settlers. The prevalence of proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (Section 3.4) and *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (Section 3.5) gives an evidence of the continuing importance and widespread use of proverbs in everyday conversation throughout the Arab world (cf. Section 2.9.1

A number of formal features are particularly prominent in proverbs in both *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb*: assonance and alliteration (Section 3.6.1) and morphological and lexical repetition (Section 3.7.5). This highlights the poeticity of the writing style of both writers. Other formal features which are typically regarded as prominent features of proverbs in the literature – rhyme (Section 3.6.2), equational structure (Section 3.7.1), valuation (Section 3.7.2) and cause and effect (Section 3.7.4) - are not particularly prominent in these two novels.

Figuration is important in both in both *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* and *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (Section 3.8), with metaphor being the dominant figure of speech in both novels. This is evidence of both writers' skill in using indirect communicative tools. In addition, it is a sign of their ability to manipulate language. Despite the importance of religion in Middle Eastern societies, the proportion of proverbs in both novels having a religious orientation is low (Section 3.10). This may demonstrate the writers' secular orientation.

The dominant cultural feature in proverbs in both novels is domestic life (Section 3.11.5), though numerous other cultural features are also found (sections 3.11-3.4, sections 3.6-3.20).

Most proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (55.77%) are used on the Syrian coast only, giving the novel a very local orientation (Section 3.9). In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* this percentage is rather smaller (38.58%). In *Anājīl al-Xarāb* a large proportion of the proverbs are used in a Standard Arabic form and also originate in Standard Arabic (48.03%), while in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* this type of proverb is much less common (18.65%). The percentage of proverbs used in Standard Arabic which derive from proverbs in colloquial Arabic in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (74.81%), by contrast, is higher than the percentage of proverbs used in Standard Arabic which derive from proverbs in colloquial Arabic in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (44.88%).

While 15.19% of proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* are modified proverbs (79 modified proverbs), in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* this proportion is much higher at 31.50% (40 modified proverbs). Both novels employ a large number of modified proverbs of different backgrounds – religious, folkloric or even classical – as a means employed by both authors to convey their messages. In both novels the great majority of modified proverbs originate from folklore, with other sources such as Bible, Quran and Hadith being much less common (Section 4.5).

Human social life is a very important cultural feature of modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (60.61% of occurrences), and rather less important, though still significant, in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (18.8%) (Section 4.5.2). Agriculture and animals are significant in modified proverbs in both novels, forming 36.4% of the occurrences in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar,* and 31.2% of occurences in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (Section 4.5.2).

The commonest social function (Section 4.5.3) of modified proverbs, accounting for half of occurrences, in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* is practical advice. This is also very significant in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, where it constitutes nearly a third (27.27% of occurrences). The commonest social function of modified proverbs in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, however, also accounting for over half (60.61% of occurrences), is human nature/life/emotion, whereas this function is much less common (18.8% of occurrences) in *Anājīl al-Xarāb*. Materialistic advice and misogyny are fairly significant in both *Anājīl al-Xarāb* (31.25% of occurrences of modified proverbs), but and *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* (21.21% of occurrences).

In *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* all four of Partington's modified proverb formation techniques – substitution, insertion, abbreviation, and rephrasing – were applied to the original proverbs, while in *Anājīl al-Xarāb* only three were used – substition, abbreviation, and rephrasing (Section 4.5.4.1). Rephrasing and substitution are common in both novels (rephrasing being the dominant formation technique in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, accounting for the majority of modified proverbs). The dominant semantic relationship of modified proverbs to their original counterparts in both novels is synonymy (Section 4.5.4.2).

There are a significant number of curses (36) in *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, though these only constitute 5.19% of the phraseological units examined in the novel (Section 3.4). In *Anājīl al-Xarāb*, there are only a few curses (4), constituting 2.37% of the phraseological units examined (Section 3.5). God is a very important cultural feature of curses in both *Anājīl al-Xarāb* and *Muftaraq al-Maṭar*, and wishing people harm is also fairly significant in curses in both novels (Section 5.10).

6.4 Limitations of the study

This study has been limited to two novels from the Syrian coast: *Muftaraq al-Maṭar* by Yūsuf al-Maḥmūd, and *Anājīl al-Xarāb* by Naufal Nayouf. Due to the extraordinarily dense use of proverbs by al-Maḥmūd and to the relatively dense use of proverbs by Nayouf, it has not been possible to include in my thesis all the proverbs that I collected in my data. Another hindrance has been that although I have examined various novels from different Arab countries, the results of this study cannot be automatically generalised to novels from Syria or the wider Arab world. While a wide range of phenomena have been considered in this novel, such as the formal features of proverbs, other phenonema could, of course, have been considered. To mention one example, it would have been possible to study the number of proverbs that are accompanied by proverbial tokens such as "as the proverb said" or "as the Lebanease say" or "this is what my mother used to say" or "as the peasants say". The focus on certain phenomena to the exclusion of others is thus a second limitation of this study.

6.5 Recommendations for future research

The present study could be developed by studying a wide range of modern Arab novels, to get a clearer picture of how modern Arab novelists typically make use of proverbs, modified proverbs and curses in their work. It would also be possible to study limited aspects of proverbs and related phenomena – e.g. their use of figuration – in a number of modern Arabic novels, to provide statistically more robust evidence of typical usages in modern proverbs.

The use of proverbs in other modern literary forms could also be studied using the techniques developed in this thesis – e.g. modern Arabic poetry and modern Arabic short stories. It would also be possible to study the deployment of proverbs in older Arabic literary forms, such as the Classical *qaṣīdah* or the *maqāmāt*.

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