

## ***Wannous* as an Adaptation of the Faust Theme: An Investigation of Adaptation Shifts and Interpretive Categories**

**Dr. Rania Mohammed Abdel Meguid Abdel Kader**  
Lecturer, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty  
of Arts, Alexandria University

### **Abstract**

Literary adaptations have become part and parcel of the film and television drama industry. Adapters, however, introduce modifications in the process of adaptation for creative, economic and/or social reasons. This is especially true in cross-cultural adaptations where the original text needs to be brought closer to the target audience. *Wannous*, an Egyptian television series which is an adaptation of the Faust theme, is a case in point, especially with the adaptation of the spirit of the original plays and the creation of a totally new story. Using the adaptation shifts and interpretive categories, proposed by Perdikaki (2016), to analyze *Wannous*, this study aims to investigate how the original Faust theme is recontextualized in the Egyptian culture through employing Setting, Plot structure, Narrative technique and Characterization shifts and how creative, economic and social triggers account for such shifts so the adapted version would become close to the Egyptian audience and serve the adapter's ideology.

**Key Words:** Adaptation, Adaptation Shifts, Faust Theme, Interpretive Categories, *Wannous*

## مسلسل "ونوس" بوصفه اقتباساً أدبياً لتيمة فاوست: دراسة لتحويلات الاقتباس والفئات التأويلية

د. رانيا محمد عبد المجيد عبد القادر

مدرس بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية وآدابها، كلية الآداب، جامعة الإسكندرية

### ملخص

لقد أصبحت الاقتباسات الأدبية جزءاً لا يتجزأ من صناعة السينما والدراما التلفزيونية، إلا أن القائمين على عملية الاقتباس الأدبي يقومون بإجراء عدد من التحويلات في أثناء عملية الاقتباس لأسباب إبداعية، أو اقتصادية، أو اجتماعية، أو جميعها، وينطبق ذلك بشكل خاص على الأعمال الأدبية التي يتم اقتباسها عبر الثقافات، في محاولة لجعل تلك الأعمال أقرب إلى الجمهور المستهدف. ويُعدّ المسلسل المصري "ونوس"، الذي يقتبس تيمة فاوست، مثلاً على ذلك، خاصة أن المسلسل يقتبس روح الأعمال الأصلية، رغم أنه يقدم قصة مختلفة. تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى تحليل تحويلات الاقتباس والفئات التأويلية في مسلسل "ونوس"، وذلك باستخدام الإطار النظري الذي تقدمه بيرديكاكي (٢٠١٦)، في محاولة لدراسة الآليات المستخدمة في نقل تيمة فاوست إلى السياق الثقافي المصري من خلال تعديل الحبكة الدرامية، وأساليب السرد، والشخصيات، والزمان والمكان، لأسباب إبداعية، واقتصادية، واجتماعية، وبهدف خلق قصة جديدة تناسب الجمهور المصري وتخدم أيديولوجية الكاتب.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الاقتباس، تحويلات الاقتباس، تيمة فاوست، الفئات التأويلية، ونوس.

***Wannous* as an Adaptation of the Faust Theme: An Investigation of Adaptation Shifts and Interpretive Categories**

**Dr. Rania Mohammed Abdel Meguid Abdel Kader**

**1. Introduction:**

Films and television series adapted from works of art have become a crucial part of the film and television drama industry. Adaptation for a long time has been a key topic in the field of translation studies. Perdikaki (2017) argues that the relationship between a film and the novel it is based on is similar to the relationship between a source text and its translation; both translation and adaptation include the transfer of semantic content from one text to another and from one context to another. A translated/adapted text, just like the source text, has a context of production and reception in which the translator/adaptor is assigned the role of the writer or mediator (pp. 4-5). Adaptation mainly presents the adapter's "reinterpretation" of the original work, especially in cross-cultural adaptations, and such reinterpretations are influenced by economic, political and ideological factors (p. 5).

Various works of art are constantly being adapted into films and television series shortly after they are published, especially if they have already succeeded in attracting a wide readership. However, classics, too, do not cease to be adapted. Adapters of old works of literature may retain the details of the original story, or they might introduce modifications so that the adaptations may be more relevant to the context of production (the spatio-temporal context) in which they are produced. For example, adaptations of Shakespeare tend to modernize the source so that it would fit modern values and ideas in order to guarantee the product's appeal to contemporary audience (Weissbrod, 2006, p. 51). Such modifications may be more drastic if the adaptation targets an audience in a different culture, resulting in a more domesticated version of the original work. *Wannous*, an Egyptian adaptation of the Faust theme, is a case in point.

*Wannous* is an Egyptian television series that was first broadcast in 2016 and that is adapted from Western works of art tackling the Faust theme. In his attempt to bring the story closer to the Egyptian audience, the scriptwriter displays his talent through creating a new story based on the same theme. However, the adapter “recontextualizes” his story through employing a number of shifts that would make the story of Faust more suitable to the new (i.e., Egyptian) context. Using the model of adaptation shifts proposed by Perdikaki (2016), this study aims to investigate the shifts employed by the scriptwriter of *Wannous* in order to create a version of the story that the audience of the target culture can identify with. In addition, Perdikaki (2016) proposes a number of interpretative categories which will be used to investigate the triggers of the adaptation shifts in *Wannous*.

## 2. Review of the Literature:

The notion of adaptation was often discussed in the field of translation studies. After all, translation studies and adaptation studies “are both concerned with the transformation of source in target texts under some condition of “invariance”, or equivalence” (Cattrysse, 1992, p. 54). In addition, the process of adaptation is very close to Jakobson’s (1959) intersemiotic translation which is “an interpretation of verbal signs by means of nonverbal sign systems” (p. 233). This is because adaptation involves a transfer to a different medium, which makes it a translation “from one sign system (for example, words) to another (for example, images)” (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 16). Nevertheless, adaptation has often been criticized in the field of translation studies on grounds of being an “abusive” form of translation (Vandal-Sirois and Bastin, 2012, p. 21). However, Ulrych (2000) argues that any translated text by necessity involves a degree of manipulation (conscious or unconscious) as translation is mainly a “mediating activity” performed to serve the translator’s own ends (p. 128). This manipulation is connected with “cultural adaptation” which involves “a rather free translation directed at a special clientele with a different cultural background” (Boltuc, 2021, p. 229).

Hence, an adaptation of a text, Chan (2004) argues, should be regarded as a form of “free translation” as opposed to strictly literal or formal renditions of texts (p. 467); the translator deciphers the meaning of the source text and then expresses it in the target language, which makes the translator both a reader (of the source text) and a writer (of the target text) and makes adaptation “a writerly activity deployed for readerly ends” (p. 468). Such ends are subject to various text-internal and text-external factors as well as the target audience and the culture in which such adaptation is to be presented (Boltuc, 2021, p. 231).

Sanders (2006) defines adaptation as “a specific process involving the transition from one genre to another: novels into film; drama into musical; the dramatization of prose narrative and prose fiction; or the inverse movement of making drama into prose narrative” (p. 19). Accordingly, adaptation by necessity represents a case of intertextuality for in an adapted text, previous texts are present at varying levels. As Minier (2014) argues, what makes a film an adaptation is the intertextuality it bears to pre-existing, or rather co-existing, texts (p. 30). Hence, calling a work “an adaptation” is an overt announcement of its relationship to another work or works (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 6). However, an adapted work, especially one that is to be presented in a different culture, is not a replica of the original work for it is created with an eye on the target audience. As Bryant (2013) puts it, an adaptation is subject to “cultural revision” for adapters re-author original works, generating “new versions” of a text which are appropriate for the new context (p. 48). Accordingly, adaptation is a process of interpretation (p. 49), and adapters could be regarded as “revising readers” who alter the material text so the adapted text would enact their own interpretation of the original (p. 50). That is why, Andrew (1984) argues, adaptation has much in common with interpretation theory for adaptation consists in “the appropriation of meaning from a prior text” (p. 97).

Presenting an adapted work to the audience of a different culture involves presenting it in a new context (i.e., recontextualizing it). Hickey (1998) defines recontextualization as a radical approach to the translation of a particular text, which consists of totally or partially abandoning the literal, propositional or locutionary level, while maintaining the illocutionary act (usually ‘telling’) as far as possible and focusing strongly on the perlocutionary effect, directly or accurately reproducing it. (p. 222)

In other words, the adapter does not focus on the literal meaning of the original work but rather on its effect on the target audience. That is why adapting a work into a different culture is not only a matter of translating words; Hutcheon (2006) holds that cultural and social meaning too needs to be adapted to the new environment (p. 149) for there are different versions of traveling stories, depending on the time and place in which such stories are told and shown (p. 160). Hence, the adapter’s aim is “situational equivalence” (Vandal-Sirois and Bastin, 2012, p. 22), rather than literal equivalence, in order to achieve “communicative interaction” (Landa, 2005, p. 182) for one of the adapter’s key concerns is dealing with the cultural issues that might affect the target audience’s reception of the original text. That is why “the possible response of the target audience to a story is always going to be a concern of the adapter(s)” (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 114), which explains why adaptation can be regarded as functional translation (Vandal-Sirois and Bastin, 2012, p. 25). Adapted movies, in particular, are to a great extent influenced by the cultural and social climate within which they are produced (McFarlane, 1996, p. 21). The same could be seen as applying to adapted television series; the success of a television series does not depend on how faithful it is to the source text but rather on how it is reinterpreted so that it would achieve “cultural proximity” through reflecting the social, ideological and political values of the host culture (Er, 2016, p. 6). Therefore, adaptations undergo a process of “cultural appropriation” in which foreign signs are integrated into one’s own cultural environment in what appears to be a naturalized work even

though such work may still retain its *other* status (Saglia, 2002, p. 98). Accordingly, the process of adaptation involves appropriation through filtering the source text based on the adapter's own interests, sensibility and talents in order to create a work that is appropriate for the target audience, which means that "adapters are first interpreters and then creators" (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 18). That is why the cultural, regional or historical specifics of the work being adapted need to be altered in order to appeal to a particular market (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 30).

As a result of the alterations that an adapted text undergoes, the question of fidelity is one that is frequently raised with regard to adaptation. Hutcheon (2006) states that the source text in translation studies is given primacy, which dictates the faithfulness of the target text to the source text (p. 16). On the other hand, an adapted work has a different agenda from the original, depending on the interests of the adapter(s) (Landa, 2005, p. 182). In addition to presenting an adapted text in a specific cultural context, adaptation implies moving across two different, even clashing, media, which constitutes an aesthetic challenge that involves adapting words into images, novels into films, etc. The process of adaptation, therefore, leaves its marks on the text (Minier, 2014, p. 30). Adaptation, Hutcheon (2006) argues, is "a derivation that is not derivative – a work that is second without being secondary" (p. 9), which makes an adaptation a self-acclaimed work with an artistic and cultural value of its own right (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 33). Accordingly, the study of adaptation has become more concerned in recent years with issues of agency, intertextuality and contextualization than with fidelity to works of literature. This is because total fidelity to the source text is almost unattainable when a work of art is adapted into a different medium like a film (Yau, 2014, p. 499) for several reasons. First, an adapted movie may be guided by the source work of art on the narratological level, but it certainly will depart from the source text with regard to other aspects which did not originate in the literary text such as sound, music, costume, setting, architecture and lighting (Cattrysse, 1992,

pp. 61-62; Hutcheon, 2006, p. 37), all of which are items which make the cinema actively engage with the senses, mostly hearing and seeing (Bruhn, 2013, p. 79), as opposed to a work of literature. In other words, film, Hutcheon (2006) argues, has at its own command various techniques that verbal texts do not have access to (e.g., directors' use of close-up to create psychological intimacy for powerful and interior revealing ironies) (pp. 59-60). Hence, film adaptation should be regarded as "a set of discursive (or communicated, or semiotic) practices, the production of which has been determined by various previous discursive practices and by its general historical context" (Cattrysse, 1992, p. 62). Another reason why an adapted work cannot be completely faithful to the source literary text is that no matter how much an adaptation attempts to be faithful to the original text, it remains subject to the interpretation of the adapter. Accordingly, "every adaptation is an instance of textual *infidelity*" (Carroll, 2009, p. 1) because a work of literature invites various re-readings and rewritings which can be manifested in different adaptations (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 34). Mostly, adapters do not attempt to remain completely faithful to the original text; they exert effort to appropriate their adaptations so they could bring them closer to the target audience, which is a key reason for infidelity. As Sanders (2006) puts it, adaptation and appropriation are fundamental to the enjoyment of literature (p. 1), and Vandal-Sirois and Bastin (2012) hold that domesticating an adapted work "ensures an optimal reception experience" (p. 26). Accordingly, adapters tend to domesticate their adaptations so that such adaptations would be "relevant" and "easily comprehensible" to the target audience (Sanders, 2006, p. 19). This can be done through recontextualizing the adapted works in temporal, spatial and social terms. Such alterations put adaptations at the very point of infidelity (Sanders, 2006, p. 20) for recontextualization consists in "the extrication of some part or aspect from a text or discourse, or from a genre of texts or discourses, and the fitting of this part or aspect into another context" (Linell, 1998, p. 154). Hence, in adaptation, a sign or a word is taken from its previous context, "recycled" and turned into something new that is inserted into a



new context (Greenall and Løfaldli, 2019, p. 6). The success of adaptation depends to a great extent on how much it reflects its new context (Beeden and de Bruin, 2010, p. 5) for the context influences the narration and the interpretation of a story (Vallittu, 2018, p. 160). Hale and Upton (2014) use drama as an example where the characters, dialogue and action are altered so they would be accessible (if not totally familiar) to the target audience (p. 1). As Greenall and Løfaldli (2019) put it, recontextualization manifests itself in various forms of surrounding discourse (p. 4) for “[e]very word is changeable, malleable, adaptable in new contexts” (p. 6). Hence, the concept of fidelity does not appear to be very relevant in the context of adaptation as there are always “adaptation shifts” which signal departure from the original text.

### 3. Methodology:

This section presents an overview of the framework used to analyze the data under investigation. The study makes use of the model of adaptation shifts, proposed by Perdikaki (2016), in order to investigate how *Wannous*, an Egyptian adaptation of the Faust theme, departs from the Western works of literature which tackle the said theme. In addition, this section presents a number of interpretative categories, proposed also by Perdikaki (2016), which will be used to investigate the triggers of such shifts.

#### 3.1. Adaption Shifts:

Perdikaki (2016) proposes three types of adaptation shifts that take place when a work of art is adapted into a motion picture: modulation shifts, modification shifts and mutation shifts. Modulation shifts have to do with foregrounding/backgrounding aspects of the narrative. Modification shifts refer to changes in the narrative units. Mutation shifts refer to the addition/excision of narrative units (p. 76). The narrative aspects that are affected by such shifts are the Plot structure, the Narrative techniques, the Characterization and the Setting. These narrative aspects “can be

used as a skeleton onto which adaptation shifts are mapped” (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 76).

### 3.1.1. Plot Structure Shifts:

Plot structure refers to the events that constitute a story (Chatman, 1978, p. 43). **Modulation** in Plot structure can be of two types: **amplification** and **simplification** (highlighting vs. downplaying an event in the adaptation compared to the source novel) (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 76). **Modification** in Plot structure refers to changing the events compared to the source novel, resulting in an **alteration** of major or minor events in the story (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 77). **Mutation** refers to the **addition/excision** of events in the adaptation (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 77).

### 3.1.2. Narrative Techniques Shifts:

Narrative techniques refer to “the ways in which the events of the fictional story are communicated to the reader/viewer” (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 74). They can be divided into two subcategories: temporal sequence and presentation. Temporal sequence has to do with the manipulation of the order and duration of the events in the source text while presentation has to do with how the story is communicated (e.g., through voice-over, a succession of images, or both) (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 74).

With regard to temporal sequence, **modulation** refers to the manipulation of the **duration** of the events of the story; it can be prolonged, in which case there is a pause, or abridged, in which case there is ellipsis (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 77). **Modification** refers to the manipulation of the **order** of the fictional events, which may result in analepses (i.e., flashbacks) or prolepses (i.e., flash-forwards) (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 78). **Mutation** depends on Plot structure as the addition/excision of events affects the temporal sequence (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 78).

With regard to presentation, shifts have to do with how far the mode of communication of the story is changed (i.e., whether the verbal narration of the source text remains as such in the movie or is replaced by visual narration) (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 78). Since monstration (i.e., the deployment of visuals) is part and parcel of a motion picture, even if a movie makes use of verbal narration, it

has to be accompanied by a degree of monstration as well, in addition to other cinematic components like sound and music (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 78). **Modulation** in presentation occurs when the first-person or third-person verbal narration in the source text is communicated via verbal narration in the motion picture (via voice-over and/or film dialogue). **Modification** occurs when the verbal narration of the source text is rendered primarily with monstration in the motion picture (i.e., showing the events instead of telling them) (Perdikaki, 2016, pp. 78-79). **Mutation** in presentation depends on Plot structure mutation (i.e., the addition or excision of story events) (Perdikaki, 2016, pp. 78-79).

### 3.1.3. Characterization Shifts:

Characterization refers to the construction of the characters of the fictional story and the relationships between them (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 79). Like in Plot structure, **modulation** of Characterization is of two types: **amplification** (i.e., emphasizing the aspects of a character) or **simplification** (i.e., downplaying the aspects of a character) (Perdikaki, 2016, pp. 79-80). **Modification** refers to “pronounced changes” in characters, resulting in their **dramatization, objectification** or **sensualization**. Finally, **mutation** refers to the **addition/excision** of characters in the adapted version (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 80).

### 3.1.4. Setting Shifts:

Setting is the fictional world in which the events of a story take place. It has a temporal dimension and a spatial dimension, both of which can encompass political and ideological conditions (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 76) and may affect the story, which might result in shifts in the adapted version, depending on the view of the adapter(s). Like in Plot structure and Characterization, **modulation** in Setting has two types: **amplification** (i.e., highlighting temporal and/or spatial aspects in the adapted version) and **simplification** (backgrounding temporal and/or spatial aspects in the adapted version) (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 81). **Modification** results in the **alteration** (i.e., radical changes) of time and place (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 81). Finally, **mutation** refers to the **addition/excision** of

time periods and/or location (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 81). Setting shifts may occur in a work of art due to “social reasons” that “pertain to the interplay between a given sociocultural and sociotemporal context” (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 84). Therefore, Setting shifts occur as adapters try to tackle social issues in their works, which makes such shifts key for the recontextualized version of the source text.

### **3.2. Interpretive Categories:**

Perdikaki (2016) holds that both profit-making and creativity are aspects that characterize the film-making process (p. 83). In the case of adaptation, the adapter’s creativity is present in the adapted version of an original work of art, and such creativity, in addition to being affected by economic reasons (e.g., attracting the audience, the selection of the cast, etc.), is also affected by the sociocultural context in which the adapted work is situated. Hence, in addition to the types of adaptation shifts, Perdikaki (2016) proposes a number of interpretive categories, that is, reasons for triggering such shifts (pp. 83-84). These triggers are of three types.

#### **3.2.1. Economic Reasons:**

Many adaptation shifts can be explained in terms of economic reasons such as the choice of the cast and the lures that are meant to appeal to the audience. Such shifts are motivated by the purpose of profit-making (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 83).

#### **3.2.2. Creative Reasons:**

Creative reasons account for the reinterpretation of the events of the source in the adapted version broadcast on the screen. They are indicative of the adapter’s creativity, which is closely related to the culture in which the original work is to be recontextualized, and they may also be used for economic reasons (e.g., luring the audience into watching the adapted work) (Perdikaki, 2016, pp. 83-84).

#### **3.2.3. Social Reasons:**

How certain social issues and concerns are tackled in an adaptation may trigger shifts in the adapted version. In addition, the sociocultural and the spatio-temporal context in which the

adaptation is presented plays a key role in triggering adaptation shifts (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 84).

#### 4. Data:

The text analyzed in this paper is *Wannous*, an Egyptian drama television series that was first broadcast in 2016. The series tackles the Faust theme which, the scriptwriter maintains, is a key theme in various works of art as well as in various religions.

The figure of Faust is a key figure in Western literature. Plays like Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and Goethe's *Faust*, like other Faustian works of art, are based on a German legend which is based on the story of the real Faust. According to İnceoğlu (2008), various documents state that a necromancer named Faust lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Germany (p. 20). Georg or Johann Faust was reported to be born in Germany in the 1480s and to have practiced medical alchemy and soothsaying (İnceoğlu, 2008, pp. 19-20). He was a student of natural sciences and necromancy who, in his quest for knowledge, turned from God and allied with the Devil in magic and necromancy, turning into a legend during his lifetime (Price, 1976, pp. 8-9). He was banished from the city of Ingolstadt on June 17, 1528, and on May 10, 1532, his residence was denied by the city of Nuremberg as it was announced that he was a necromancer, and he was officially demonized (İnceoğlu, 2008, p. 21).

Price (1976) states that the earliest Faust work was *Historia von Doctor Johann Fausten* which was an anonymous work issued by Johann Spies in 1587 (pp. 7-8). A few years later, Christopher Marlowe used an English translation of this work to write *The Tragical History of the Horrible Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*. Later on, the Faust theme was adapted in various art forms, including literature, comics, the ballet and the opera (İnceoğlu, 2008, p. 1).

İnceoğlu, (2008) argues that the Faust myth has been so inspiring that one writer after another has attempted to reshape it (p. 2), and Abdel-Rahim Kamal's *Wannous* is a case in point. In various interviews, Kamal maintains that the theme of compacting

with the Devil is tackled by “*Faust* and works other than *Faust*”, in reference to the fact that such theme has been adapted from different Western works of art. The concept of the Devil, Kamal argues, is present in works of art as well as in religion, and his idea of the Devil is that it is an evil force that lies deep inside each and every human being. However, in his adaptation of and attempt to recontextualize the Faust theme, Kamal tries to create his “Egyptian Devil” in a story that is presented to the Egyptian audience in an Egyptian context. This is reflected in almost every aspect of Kamal’s story which was broadcast on the Egyptian television (e.g., the setting, the characters, etc.). This is because what is being adapted is not the story of *Faust* or *Doctor Faustus* but rather the “spirit” of the Faust theme. As Butler (2016) argues, *Faust* is a complex work which poses challenges for translators and adapters, especially when they try to translate/adapt it into other languages as it is based on a popular myth (p. 91). Therefore, they must choose translation/adaptation strategies that help them rework the story before presenting it to the target audience. In other words, adapters may use the original work as a source of “inspiration” but create their own stories that carry the “spirit” of the original work (Wechsler, 1998, p. 81). Accordingly, there are many works of art which tackle the Faust theme “selectively”, and such works include Faustian elements which may be similar even though the authors and the ages in which such works are produced may differ (Singer, 1989, p. 88). This is because each of these authors adapts the Faust theme in a way which makes it appropriate for respective audiences.

Abdel-Rahim Kamal is another author who adapts the Faust theme to his Egyptian audience. *Wannous* revolves around Yakout (who represents Adam or human beings) who sells his soul to the Devil, Wannous, for eternal damnation in return for worldly pleasures. In the first episode, Yakout appears in his shabby and worn-out clothes and is terribly sick. In a following scene, Wannous visits Yakout’s family, which consists of the wife (Inshirah), Yakout’s four children (Farouk, Aziz, Nermine and Nabil), Farouk’s wife and two daughters, Nermine’s son, and

*Wannous* as an Adaptation of the Faust Theme: An Investigation of Adaptation  
Shifts and Interpretive Categories  
Dr. Rania Mohammed Abdel Meguid Abdel Kader

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

Inishrah's niece (Donia). He tells them that he has found their father who has disappeared for twenty years and asks them to persuade him to sign a contract that would grant them a fortune. It is later revealed that the signature Wannous needs is a signature on the contract in which Yakout sells his soul to him after Wannous has served Yacout for more than twenty years. In subsequent episodes, when Yakout refuses to sign such contract, Wannous decides to take his revenge by ruining the lives of Yakout's family members through exploiting their weaknesses (e.g., Aziz's greed, Farouk's pride, Nabil's aspirations for success and Nermine's desperate need for her little son's recovery). He pulls their legs to traps which he carefully sets for each of them and threatens Yakout to destroy their lives if he refuses to sign the contract. The conflict between Yakout (Adam) and Wannous (the Devil) goes on until the decisive moment in which Yakout gives in out of fear for his family and decides to sign the contract but suddenly dies, and his death comes as a sign of redemption, which infuriates Wannous who gives a long speech in which he addresses God and threatens to lead billions of Yakouts (i.e., human beings) astray as revenge.

In his adaptation, Kamal domesticates the Faust theme through creating a story that suits his Egyptian audience. The Egyptian culture, in which *Wannous* was broadcast, is a predominantly Muslim one for Islam is the official religion of the Egyptian state and Egypt has a majority of Muslim population. Kamal's version of Faust, hence, seems to echo many aspects of the Egyptian Muslim culture. Using the model proposed by Perdikaki (2016), this paper aims to investigate the adaptation shifts used by the scriptwriter to recontextualize the Faust theme in the Egyptian culture in addition to the triggers of such shifts. The adaptation shifts adopted in *Wannous* would be examined with particular reference to the Faust theme as presented in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and Goethe's *Faust*. One reason for conducting the analysis with reference to these two particular works is that both are considered key examples of the Western works of art which tackle the theme of striking a bargain with the Devil. Marlowe was



one of the earliest playwrights to deal with the Faust theme in his play as he wrote it shortly after an English translation of *Historia von Doctor Johann Fausten* was available in London. As for Goethe's *Faust*, it "brought about a revolutionary development from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, influencing many writers in the modern period" (Price, 1976, p. 5). Hence, both works maintain a prestigious status within the genre of Faustian literature. Second, even though the genre includes various works of art written at different times by different authors, these two works are among the closest to the Faust theme in the "classical" fashion as presented in *Wannous* (signing a contract in which a human sells his soul to the Devil in exchange for worldly pleasures). Against this backdrop, the following section presents a thorough analysis of the adaptation shifts adopted in the process of Egyptianizing the Faust theme in *Wannous* as well as an investigation of the triggers of such shifts.

## 5. Data Analysis:

Hutcheon (2006) argues that themes are the easiest element to adapt across media and even genres (p. 10). However, recontextualization is an inseparable part of the adaptation process as an adaptation is mainly oriented towards the target audience. Chan (2004) argues that traces of the source culture might even be erased in an adaptation (p. 465) since an adaptation mainly aims to keep the spirit rather than the form, hence aspiring to a higher form of fidelity (p. 469). Against this backdrop, and using the adaptation shifts and interpretive categories proposed by Perdikaki (2016), this section presents an analysis of *Wannous*, an Egyptian drama television series, in an attempt to investigate how the scriptwriter employs a number of shifts in his adaptation and recontextualization of the Faust theme in order to create proximity between the adapted text and the audience.

### 5.1. Setting Shifts:

Greenall and Løfaldli (2019) argue that "[t]he most obvious form of cultural recontextualization would involve a change in



***Wannous* as an Adaptation of the Faust Theme: An Investigation of Adaptation  
Shifts and Interpretive Categories  
Dr. Rania Mohammed Abdel Meguid Abdel Kader**

---

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

setting from one culture to another” (p. 17). This is one way of bringing the text closer to the target audience. The category of Setting shifts which features the most in *Wannous*, as an adaptation of the Faust theme, is the category of modification for there is a radical alteration of setting in terms of both the temporal and spatial aspects. Both *Doctor Faustus* and *Faust* take place in Germany (i.e., a Western country). In Marlowe’s work, the readers get to know this at the beginning of the play:

“Now is he born, of parents base of stock,  
In Germany, within a town call’d Rhode.”

In *Faust*, the play starts with a theatre manager, a clown and a poet who discuss what constitutes a good play as the manager would like to produce a play to be performed “upon our German stage”. Later, Faust and Mephistopheles join a group of men who are drinking in a tavern in the German city of Leipzig. *Wannous*, on the other hand, takes place in a setting which is very familiar to the Egyptian audience targeted by the series. Early in episode 1, the audience see an ordinary Egyptian family at the dinner table, having dinner, watching a classic Egyptian movie and chatting in Egyptian Colloquial Arabic. As Hutcheon (2006) argues, adaptations involve a change of language “almost always” due to space and time shifts (p. 145). In addition, while the family are having dinner, Wannous visits them for the first time to deliver the news of finding the father, who has been absent for twenty years, living under Imbaba bridge, which is a major railway bridge located in the Egyptian capital Cairo. Later, throughout the series, the audience get to see familiar places in Cairo in addition to the familiar Cairo taxi cars. As for the time dimension, both *Doctor Faustus* and *Faust* were contemporary of their times (the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries). On the other hand, the events of *Wannous* take place probably at the same time period in which the series was broadcast (i.e., the 21<sup>st</sup> century). This is evident in the familiar streets, the character clothing and the temporal dialect used by the characters. Creative and social reasons seem to be behind such shifts; in his creation of a totally new story in which social (and

religious) issues are to be tackled, the scriptwriter presents a domesticated setting in an attempt to draw the text closer to the audience so that they can identify with (and enjoy) the story and themes of the adapted version. Instead of presenting a story whose events take place in 16<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century Christian Europe, the scriptwriter of *Wannous* “update[s] the time of the story in an attempt to find contemporary resonance for [his] audience” (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 142). In so doing, the scriptwriter ensures “the efficacy of the text for a specific group of [viewers]” (Vandal-Sirois and Bastin, 2012, p. 25).

## 5.2. Plot Structure Shifts:

### 5.2.1. Plot Structure Modification:

Plot structure modification (alteration being its only subcategory), triggered by the scriptwriter’s creativity and reinterpretation of the Faust theme, features significantly in *Wannous*; the series mainly adapts the spirit of the Western works tackling the theme of compacting with the Devil. The scriptwriter, hence, uses his talent to create a new domesticated story tackling the same theme with a completely different plot structure in his attempt to create proximity between the audience and his Egyptianized version of the story and lure the audience into watching the series (an economic trigger of Plot structure alteration) In other words, the story in the adapted version is completely altered and is, hence, different from the original stories which emerged in the West.

Whereas Doctor Faustus and Faust are scholars who compact with the Devil in exchange for more knowledge in addition to worldly pleasures, Yacout in the Egyptian series compacts with the devil in exchange for worldly pleasures (money, women, etc.) solely. In addition, both Doctor Faustus and Faust are the ones who conjure Mephistopheles to grant them their wishes. By contrast, Wannous is the one who catches Yacout in a moment of despair (as revealed by Yacout in episode 10 when he tells his story to Al-Qassaby, a religious man who takes care of and serves a group of poor dervishes and, later, Yacout after the latter seeks shelter at the dervishes’ house in his attempt to escape Wannous).

Unlike in the Western versions, the devil in *Wannous* is the one who initiates the deal with Yacout in exchange for the latter's soul after death. Yacout was already on the verge of despair as a result of hunger, need and poverty (problems which many Egyptians can relate to), and the Devil exploited his condition to lure him into committing all sorts of sins, promising him to be his obedient servant and to grant him all his heart's desires. Yacout confesses that "For twenty years, I was the king of evil. There was no sin that I didn't commit" (translation mine) as a result of Wannous' temptations. Al-Qassaby reassures Yacout that God is all-forgiving and that He accepts those who repent. Al-Qassaby seems to be the adapter's mouthpiece as he utters the words around which the ideology of the scriptwriter revolves. Repentance no matter how many sins one has committed is a key concept in Islam, and presenting such an idea makes the audience (who are predominantly Muslims) identify with the domesticated version of the story.

Another key difference between *Wannous* and the Western versions tackling the Faust theme in terms of Plot structure is that both *Doctor Faust* and *Faust* present the story of compacting with the Devil and the twenty years or so in which Mephistopheles serves Doctor Faust and Faust. By contrast, *Wannous* starts when the twenty years of the pact are already over and when Wannous vows revenge on Yacout and his family because Yacout refuses to sign the pact after Wannous has served him and granted him the worldly desires he wished for. This difference is a result of another key difference between the Egyptian and the Western versions: in *Wannous*, the signing is postponed till Wannous' service to Yacout is complete unlike in the Western version where the pact is signed before the service is granted. This difference is closely related to the concept of repentance which is a key concept in Islam. The Quran, which Muslims believe is revealed by God, states in several verses that God is all-Forgiving of his servants who commit sins if they repent. In *Wannous*, the adapter makes use of this concept as he does not make the signing take place at the beginning of the

story or Yacout shall be subject to eternal damnation. Instead, he allows Yacout some space to repent even though he becomes “a killer, a fornicator, a thief, a gambler and a drunk” in Wannous’ terms because, according to the adapter’s Islamic faith, God is all-Forgiving no matter how grave one’s sins might be, and there is always a way back to Him.

Alteration reaches its peak in the final encounter between Wannous and Yacout when the latter decides to sign the pact out of fear after Wannous has already set traps for his family members which would lead them to their doom. To start with, Mephistopheles commands Faustus to sign the pact with his own blood:

“But now thou must bequeath it solemnly  
And write a deed of gift with thine own blood”

In *Faust*, too, Mephistopheles insists that “[a] tiny drop of blood will do to sign your name”. In *Wannous*, on the other hand, Wannous offers Yacout an ordinary pen to sign the pact. Signing the pact with blood may not suit a work presented in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as it did in the 16<sup>th</sup> or the 19<sup>th</sup> century; it may even sound quite disturbing. Using his creative license, the scriptwriter introduces this shift which seems more suitable for the 21<sup>st</sup> century audience, hence also taking economic considerations into account (i.e., luring the audience into watching and enjoying the series). Moreover, even though Goethe chooses a happy ending for his play as the angels come to take Faust’s soul to heaven (for he has experienced feelings of guilt and remorse throughout his journey), Doctor Faustus loses his soul for eternal damnation for not repenting in life. In the final encounter between Yacout and Wannous, Yacout is about to sign the pact to save his family, but is suddenly dead before he does (hence before losing his soul to the Devil). There seem to be two main factors which lead to Yacout’s salvation: the first is his honest desire to repent and his persistent attempts to attain salvation throughout the series, and the second is the prayers of the dervishes who pray for him and keep repeating, “يا لطيف” (“O Gracious God”). This scene represents the epitome of the adapter’s ideology; it focuses on two key concepts in the

Islamic religion: repentance as the door of salvation and the power of *Dua* (i.e., praying to God and asking Him for something). The scene stresses that God's door is always open for those who would like to repent no matter how grave the sins they have committed are; they can still be saved by the power of *Dua* and sincerely asking God for forgiveness. Hence, the scriptwriter's Islamic ideology is very evident in this scene.

### 5.2.2. Plot Structure Modulation:

Although the scriptwriter of *Wannous* creates a totally new story, in his attempt to adapt the theme using his creative license, certain aspects are transferred from the source text to the adapted version to serve the story line. Such aspects, however, may be amplified (i.e., highlighted) or simplified (i.e., downplayed) in the adapted version.

One key aspect which is amplified in *Wannous* is the concept of repentance. In scene 6 of *Doctor Faustus*, Faustus tries to repent and even calls on Christ to save his soul. At this moment, Lucifer himself appears and reprimands him for trying to break his vow, and Faustus forgets about his wish to repent which appears only in this scene. On the other hand, Yacout's persistent attempts to repent are visible throughout the series. From episode 1, he appears with his shabby clothes and poor health living on the street after he has given up all the worldly pleasures *Wannous* has granted him for twenty years. He even tries to throw away a bag full of millions of pounds (a reward that he gets for a crime he once committed) because he does not want to have unlawful money in his possession anymore. He is also seen performing ablution and getting ready to perform his prayers. On different occasions, he tries to reach his children, whom he abandoned when they were little and who are now grownups, to warn them against being ensnared by the Devil. The difference between the two attempts to repent, one temporary and the other very serious and persistent, can be seen as the cause of having two different endings of both works. Whereas Doctor Faustus loses his soul to the Devil and is subject to eternal damnation, Yacout dies before he signs the pact, which is

a sign of his redemption, despite his grave sins, due to his unflinching attempts to repent. Hence, the amplification of the concept of repentance in *Wannous* can be seen as being in line with the adapter's Islamic ideology which suits the audience in the host culture.

On the other hand, certain aspects in the Western versions are simplified in the adapted version. For example, throughout *Doctor Faustus* and *Faust*, there is a detailed description of the pleasures that Mephistopheles grants both characters like money, women and travelling the cities of the world. In *Wannous*, this aspect is simplified (i.e., downplayed) since the story begins after the passage of the twenty years during which Wannous has served Yacout. How Wannous has served Yacout and granted him such pleasures is known from scattered dialogues throughout the series. For example, in episode 5, Wannous reprimands Yacout severely for not keeping his promise of singing the pact, reminding him that "for long years, I've served you and granted you all your desires. I would bring you women and give you money. How much I've doted on you!" (translation mine). The simplification of this aspect seems to serve the new version of the story where the focus is not on the Devil's service of Yacout but rather on how he tries to repent.

### 5.2.3. Plot Structure Mutation:

The two subcategories of Plot structure mutation (i.e., addition and excision) feature in the Egyptian adaptation of the Faust theme. Several events that do not exist in the Western versions are added in the adaptation while others are removed.

Due to the change in Plot structure, events are added in the adaptation to serve a completely new story that the Egyptian audience can identify with. The only characters transferred to the adapted version are those of Mephistopheles (Wannous) and Faustus/Faust (Yacout). The pact with the devil is kept in the Egyptian version as this is the core of the Faust theme, but the scriptwriter uses his creative license to change the story completely, and new characters are even added to serve the change of Plot structure. In the Western versions, there is no mention of

Faustus'/Faust's family. By contrast, what happens to Yacout's family serves the new plot: the Devil's revenge on man for not signing the pact. In the new story, Wannous sets traps for every member of Yacout's family to ruin their lives. He persuades Nermine to practice black magic, convincing her that this will help her protect herself and her son from her sister-in-law's evil eye and avenge herself on her ex-husband's wife. He teaches Aziz gambling, leading him to win several times before he almost loses all his money in one round. He exploits the latter's greed and convinces him to reset the taximeter installed in his taxi so that it would register higher fares under the pretext that prices have already soared. Moreover, he instills doubt in Aziz's heart by convincing him that his younger brother Nabil is in love with his cousin and fiancée Donia, ruining the relationship between the two brothers to the point where Aziz holds a knife and tries to kill Nabil. Wannous also convinces Nabil to sing in a nightclub (a place which has a very bad reputation in Egypt and whose visitors are widely believed to be doomed for not complying with religion). Nabil's life is gradually ruined as he falls in love with a belly dancer and is later accused of murdering her mother (the nightclub owner) and arrested before he is eventually proved innocent. Even Inshirah, the mother, is not spared. Wannous convinces her that he would like to marry her and compensate her for the years of loneliness. As a result, she starts taking excessive care of her looks and neglecting her children until they leave the house one after the other, abandoning her. The adapter's creativity may account for the events added to the adapted version of the story, which serves the new plot: Wannous' revenge on Yacout by ruining the lives of his wife and children to push him to sign the pact.

On the other hand, many events are removed from the adapted version. Chief among these are the spirits and apparitions that Faustus and Faust encounter like witches and spirits. Economic reasons (e.g., luring the audience to watch the series) may account for such excision; the twenty-first century audience would not probably identify with a story whose characters are



ghosts and spirits, especially if the plot takes place in their contemporary time. Also, Yacout does not travel the world or play tricks on the emperor like Faustus and Faust do. Unlike Faustus or Faust, Yakout is an ordinary Egyptian man who is poor and who is simply after money and sexual pleasures. Hence, all these parts are removed from the Egyptian adaptation as they are not of much relevance to the Egyptian audience.

### **5.3. Narrative Technique Shifts:**

#### **5.3.1. Narrative Technique Modulation:**

Narrative Technique modulation is mostly evident in the subcategory of temporal sequence, where modulation has to do with the duration of the communication of the story events. Such duration may be prolonged or abridged (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 77). *Wannous* comprises 30 episodes, each of which lasts for around 30 minutes. Hence, the whole story is communicated in almost 15 hours, which is probably much longer than reading *Doctor Faustus* or *Faust* would take. Economic reasons may account for the long duration of *Wannous* and for opting for a television series adaptation in the first place. First, television adaptations of literature are instrumental in bringing literature to a large audience, “cutting away the class differences inherent in access to literacy and literature” (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 120). Second, the series was first broadcast during the month of Ramadan which is an annual season in which series makers (scriptwriters, directors, actors, etc.) compete on the television screen for the viewers’ attention and admiration. Most Egyptian series broadcast during the month of Ramadan try to cover the thirty days of the month, which may account for the long duration of *Wannous*.

#### **5.3.2. Narrative Technique Modification:**

According to Perdikaki (2016, p. 78), modification in terms of Narrative Technique shifts has to do with the order in which the events of the story are communicated in the adapted version, resulting in either analepses (flashbacks) or prolepses (flashforwards). Narrative Technique shifts include only one subcategory which is order. In *Wannous*, such shift of order is evident in the pact-signing scene. Whereas Doctor Faustus and



*Wannous* as an Adaptation of the Faust Theme: An Investigation of Adaptation Shifts and Interpretive Categories

Dr. Rania Mohammed Abdel Meguid Abdel Kader

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

Faust sign the pact with Mephistopheles before the latter starts serving them, the pact-signing in *Wannous* is postponed till the end of the story after Wannous serves Yacout for almost twenty years. Such a shift of order suits the adapter's ideology and the Islamic culture in which the story is presented; the idea of repentance and seeking God's forgiveness, no matter how grave the sins a human being has committed are, is key to the Islamic faith. In the last scene, Yacout dies before he signs the pact, which is a sign of God's forgiveness and acceptance of Yacout's repentance despite a lifetime of sins. The fact that Yacout dies before signing the pact comes as a happy ending to the story, which is in line with the adapter's Islamic ideology and serves the economic reasons of appealing to the audience.

In terms of the subcategory of presentation, one key scene in which modulation features is the final scene in which Wannous captures Yacout and pressurizes him to sign the pact. In *Doctor Faustus* and *Faust*, the readers get to know about the pact through the dialogue between Faustus/Faust with Mephistopheles. In *Wannous*, however, the audience are not "told" about the pact-signing through dialogues; a whole scene is dedicated to the ceremony of signing the pact. Narrative Structure modification involves, by default, a shift from narration to monstration (i.e., visual narration) which is "inherent in the cinematic mode" (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 78). In addition, the background music, which is part of monstration, plays a key role in highlighting the shifts in the Egyptian adaptation of the Faust theme. Bouhafa, an award-winning musician, states that the soundtracks he composed for the series were meant to convey the sense of conflict between the Devil and man (Mahdi and Al-Gemaiy, 2016). The use of visual narration and music, which are available for the series makers, constitute a shift from the original works and help the audience get involved in the story, hence contributing to the meaning-making, and also profit-making, process in the adapted version.

### 5.3.3. Narrative Technique Mutation:

Temporal sequence mutation is affected by Plot structure mutation as it depends on the addition/excision of events (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 78). *Wannous*, as an adaptation of the Faust theme, involves the creation of a totally new story in which signing the pact with the Devil is postponed till the end of the twenty years during which Wannous serves Yacout. This results in a temporal sequence shift as the pact-signing scene comes at the end of the last episode instead of at the beginning of the story like in *Doctor Faustus* and *Faust*.

As with temporal sequence, presentation mutation depends on Plot structure mutation and the addition/excision of events (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 79). As a result of the new plot, the relationship between Yacout and Wannous turns into one of conflict as Wannous chases Yacout in an attempt to force him into signing the pact so that Yacout's soul would accompany him in Hell after the latter's death. Accordingly, scenes in which Wannous quarrels with Yacout, shouts at him or even beats him severely to force him to sign the pact are added. In addition, there are various scenes in which Wannous sets traps for the members of Yacout's family as a kind of revenge and as a means of forcing Yacout to sign. On the other hand, the scenes in which Faustus and Faust visit the emperor or meet witches and spirits are omitted from the Egyptian adaptation.

### 5.4. Character Shifts:

As a result of plot structure shifts in adaptation, especially adaptation across cultures, character shifts become inevitable. New characters may be created and others excised in order to suit the new version of the story. Certain characters may be amplified, and others simplified. Some characters may be transferred to the new setting, but they may undergo certain changes that suit the new story. The characters of *Wannous* are a case in point.

#### 5.4.1. Character Modulation:

According to Perdikaki's (2016) model, character modulation can be divided into two types: character amplification and character simplification. In *Wannous*, the characters of the

Devil and the human being compacting with him seem to have a different status from that in *Doctor Faustus* and *Faust*. The character of Mephistopheles (Wannous in the Egyptian version) seems to be amplified in *Wannous* while the character of Doctor Faustus/Faust (Yacout in the Egyptian version) seems to be backgrounded. This appears throughout the series, starting from the very title itself which carries the name “Wannous” rather than “Yacout” unlike the Western versions which carry the names of Doctor Faustus and Faust. In an interview, Kamal, who believes that the names of characters carry their spirits in a way and are hence telling, explains that the very name “Wannous” is significant for it is derived from the Arabic words “وسوسة” (whispering) and “ونس” (companionship) at the same time and, hence, implies deception. The very name “Wannous” seems to be onomatopoeic, with the /s/ sound echoing hissing and whispering in the hearts of the Children of Adam. The name also brings to mind Surah *An-Nas* in the Quran, in which God commands human beings to take refuge with the Lord and ask Him to protect them from the Devil who is described in the Surah as “الوسواس الخناس الذي يوسوس في صدور الناس” (“the sneaking whisperer who whispereth in the hearts of mankind”, Pickthall’s translation). The name “Wannous” sounds very similar to the words “الوسواس” and “الخناس”, hence bringing to mind the Quranic verses and reminding the predominantly Muslim audience of the Devil’s goals. Drawing a link between the portrayal of the Devil and the religious beliefs of the audience involves a high degree of domestication of the Western Faust theme. The character of Yacout, on the other hand, is not as prominent as its counterparts in *Doctor Faustus* and *Faust*. This could be the result of the narrative technique shifts. At the beginning of the Egyptian adaptation, unlike in the Western works, Yacout and Wannous both appear after the deal has ended, when Wannous is expecting Yacout to sign the pact after he has served the latter for more than twenty years. In his attempt to force Yacout to sign, Wannous is setting traps for Yacout’s family members, and Yacout helplessly tries to save them from such traps. Hence,

Wannous appears in more scenes than Yacout does as he appears to almost all the other characters, mainly Yacout's family, in his attempts to set traps for them. Accordingly, the character of Wannous is brought to the spotlight, starting from the title until the very end of the last episode, overshadowing Yacout (unlike in the Western versions). Using his creative license, the scriptwriter attempts to show the audience, in the different scenes, how the Devil plays tricks on and sets traps for human beings, hence stressing the Quranic meaning of the "sneaking whisperer". The character of the Devil in the Egyptian adaptation of the Faust theme seems to be amplified for the purpose.

#### 5.4.2. Character Modification:

The category of character modification which features significantly in *Wannous* is dramatization which is evident, for example, in "emotional outbursts, rapid changes in mood and impulsive behaviour" (Perdikaki, 2016, p. 134). Wannous' behaviour, compared to Mephistopheles', seems to be dramatized. This is evident in Wannous' occasional outbursts at Yacout when the latter repeatedly refuses to sign the pact. For example, when Wannous sees Yacout performing ablution, getting ready for praying, he is driven mad (episode 5). He accuses Yacout of deceiving him, grinding his teeth as if he were about to break them into shards. A few minutes later, he starts laughing madly when Yacout desperately tries to attack him. Yacout's insistence on not signing the pact almost drives him insane, and he starts screaming, "Do you really think that He [God] will ever forgive you?!" (translation mine). He then smiles, with his eyes gleaming insanely, as Yacout, horrified, recognizes his son's singing voice coming from a nearby nightclub. Wannous' emotional outbursts and mood swings in one single scene which lasts for only 5:13 minutes, and his madly beating Yacout almost to death (episode 20), indicate that the original Devil's character is dramatized in the adapted version. This dramatization seems to be in line with the adapter's ideology and purpose; it shows how seeking refuge in God angers the Devil as he finds himself helpless for he has no control over those who seek refuge in God. Yacout in this scene

keeps repeating, “I’m free”, which provokes Wannous and drives him mad. This brings to mind the Quranic verse in Surah *an-Nahl*: “He has no power over those who believe and put trust in their Lord” (Pickthall’s translation).

However, Wannous’ behaviour reaches the peak of dramatization in the last scene of the series when Yacout dies. He flies into a rage and gives a long speech in which he blames God for taking Yacout’s soul before the latter signs the pact, which is a sign of Yacout’s redemption. Wannous’ anger stems from the fact that Yacout’s soul would not accompany him in Hell as he repented and died before signing the pact. In his final speech, Wannous screams at the top of his lungs,

Why did he die?! Why?! After all he’s done! You forgive him! Why? Why did he die?! There are billions of Yacout out there, and I shall not spare them! I shall lead them astray! Each and every one of them! Each and every one of them! After all I’ve done! And for whom! A creature made of clay?! Why are you doting upon him?! Why not me?! I made only one mistake! And he! He is the sinner who never learns! I’m the knowledgeable one! I’m the intelligent one! I’m the splendid one! I’m the one made of fire! I’m better than him! I worshipped you before he did! I’m the first! I’m angry!” (translation mine).

It is true that Mephistopheles too becomes furious after the angels take Faust’s soul to heaven. The following are a few lines in which his anger shows:

But what has happened, where can they have gone?  
You stole a march on me, you puppies! –  
They’re flying off toward heaven with my pray –  
so that is why they dallied at the graveside!  
They’ve robbed me of a great, unequalled treasure;  
the noble soul that pledged itself to me –  
they’ve tricked me out of it and smuggled it away.  
From whom can I know seek redress?!  
Who will procure me what I’ve duly earned?

Mephistopheles, however, does not seem to be as wrathful as Wannous. It is true that a visual adaptation of a text has more sources at hand to show emotions (e.g., screaming out loud), but Wannous' final speech seems to be pretty long (1:52 minutes) compared to the lines showing Mephistopheles' anger, and his fury even shows in repeating the words "أنا متغاض" ("I'm angry") several times in both an angry and broken, almost tearful, voice. Lengthening the already long vowel in "أنا متغاض" is a further indication of both anger and despair. In addition, Wannous' fury is manifested in his vow to avenge himself on the rest of the human race (e.g., "وراهم واحد واحد، وواحدة واحدة"، meaning "I shall lead them astray, each and every one of them!"). Moreover, Mephistopheles, in both *Doctor Faustus* and *Faust*, does not seem to have the mood swings or emotional outbursts that Wannous has. The scriptwriter uses his creative license to dramatize the character of the defeated Devil in the Egyptian adaptation, which seems to be in line with his ideology: if you seek refuge in God, He shall redeem you, and the devil shall be defeated.

#### 5.4.3. Character Mutation:

In his attempt to create a cultural setting that is appropriate for the Egyptian adaptation of the Faust theme, the scriptwriter of *Wannous* only borrows the characters of Mephistopheles and Faust (Wannous and Yacout respectively), and all the other characters are excised. Instead, using his creative license, the scriptwriter adds characters that suit the new story which is presented to a predominantly Muslim audience (as opposed to the predominantly Christian culture of Europe in which the Faust theme originated). As a result, religion (i.e., Islam) plays a key role in the creation of the Egyptian story. Religion, particularly, is an aspect that needs to be treated with care in the process of adaptation. Wong (2012, p. 100) argues that the socio-cultural conditions of the target culture affect the religious content in the process of adaptation, with the resulting product being "a version where religious material [is] filtered out layer after layer to suit the taste of the local audiences and the ideology of the adapters" (Wong, 2012, p.108). In Wong's analysis of a Chinese adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of*

*Wannous* as an Adaptation of the Faust Theme: An Investigation of Adaptation  
Shifts and Interpretive Categories  
Dr. Rania Mohammed Abdel Meguid Abdel Kader

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

*Venice*, she states that one of the adapter's concerns was how to approach religious issues in the adaptation. She finally decided to adopt a Chinese translation which domesticates Shakespeare's play, particularly in rendering religious material. Since the conflicts between Jews and Christians is historically and socially relevant to the original audience but irrelevant to the Chinese audience, parts tackling this theme were mostly omitted or downplayed in the Chinese translation. In addition, Christian concepts were backgrounded and replaced with expressions of gentleness derived from Confucian principles which are more relevant to the Chinese audience. Similarly, in *Wannous*, Yacout is a Muslim who is seen on the screen performing ablution and getting ready to pray the way Muslims do. With regard to Yacout's family, Farouk is a sheikh and an imam with a short beard who leads prayers at the mosque, and Nermine wears the hijab, which is characteristic of many Muslim Egyptian women and girls. Social reasons may account for the addition of characters like Farouk and Nermine, especially with their appearance, as these are Egyptian characters that the audience can easily identify with. Another character which adds a bit of religious mysticity to the story is Al-Qassaby who keeps using religious expressions all the time (e.g., "سبحان الله الشافي", meaning "Glory be to God the Healer"). When Yacout tells Al-Qassaby about his story with the Devil (episode 10), Al-Qassaby reassures him that God is all-Forgiving and that he still has the chance to repent, repentance being a key concept in the Islamic religion. Hence, the characters added by the scriptwriter, with their appearance (including clothing), religious expressions, religious discussions, and even the dances performed by the dervishes, give an Islamic flavour to the story. As a result, the Faust theme is almost completely domesticated (specifically Egyptianized), which brings the story closer to the target audience, hence serving the adapter's goals and Islamic ideology.



## 6. Conclusion:

Adaptation of literary works on the screen has become a major part of the film and television drama industry. Cross-cultural adaptation involves the recontextualization of the original text for the new story becomes relocated in a different setting, and *Wannous*, as an adaptation of the Western Faust theme, is a case in point. Using the adaptation shifts and interpretive categories, proposed by Perdikaki (2016), the analysis of the television series shows that the scriptwriter (i.e., the adapter), motivated by economic, creative and social reasons, employs a number of adaptation shifts in his creation of a totally new story that takes place in a new spatio-temporal setting and that comprises new characters. As a result, the new version of the story is one that brings the original story closer to the target (i.e., Egyptian) audience and, hence, is one that the audience can identify with. Therefore, adaptation shifts, in terms of Setting, Plot structure, Narrative technique and Characterization, prove to be instrumental, particularly in cross-cultural adaptation.

## 7. Works Cited:

### A) Primary Sources:

- Kamal, A. (Writer). (2016). ونوس [TV series]. Beelink Broadcasting & Media Production.
- Goethe, J. W. (2005). *Faust* (B. Taylor, Trans.). (Original work published 1808).
- Marlowe, C. (1998). *The tragical history of Doctor Faustus*. The Pennsylvania State University. (Original work published 1604).

### B) Secondary Sources:

- Andrew, D. (1984). *Concepts in film theory*. Oxford University Press.
- Beeden, A., & de Bruin, J. (2010). *The Office*: Articulations of national identity in television format adaptations. *Television & New Media*, 11(1), 3-19.  
[https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1527476409338197?casa\\_token=IU3chbKjklUAAAAA:bhW0SV\\_3OaXYxfDym](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1527476409338197?casa_token=IU3chbKjklUAAAAA:bhW0SV_3OaXYxfDym)



**Wannous as an Adaptation of the Faust Theme: An Investigation of Adaptation Shifts and Interpretive Categories**  
**Dr. Rania Mohammed Abdel Meguid Abdel Kader**

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

[0aHXi428QwmETIcYUhpDmoaxpcIBavVGDo\\_oIUf5xktMLTkWjb5RITxsZ4Q](https://www.ajph.org/doi/10.1177/0aHXi428QwmETIcYUhpDmoaxpcIBavVGDo_oIUf5xktMLTkWjb5RITxsZ4Q)

- Boltuc, M. (2021). Cultural adaptation: Manipulation and creativity in translation. *Acta Neophilologica*, 23(1), 229-238. [http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-bce70953-98b2-4abe-8426-8bd2042d2197/c/16\\_Boltuc-M.pdf](http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-bce70953-98b2-4abe-8426-8bd2042d2197/c/16_Boltuc-M.pdf)
- Bruhn, J. (2013). Dialogizing adaptation studies: From one-way transport to a dialogic two-way process. In J. Bruhn et al., (Eds.), *Adaptation studies: New challenges, new directions* (pp. 69-88). Bloomsbury.
- Bryant, J. (2013). Textual identity and adaptive revision: Editing adaptation as a fluid text. In J. Bruhn et al., (Eds.), *Adaptation studies: New challenges, new directions* (pp. 47-67). Bloomsbury.
- Butler, S. (2016). *Convergences with, and divergences from, the Goethean paradigm in Gérard de Nerval's translations and adaptations of Faust* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. <https://www.proquest.com/pagepdf/2133526997/Record/A6CB68A68B254A64PQ/1?accountid=178282>
- Carroll, R. (2009). Introduction: Textual infidelities. In R. Carroll (Ed.), *Adaptation in contemporary culture: Textual infidelities* (pp. 1-7). Continuum.
- Cattrysse, P. (1992). Film (adaptation) as translation: Some methodological proposals. *Target*, 4(1), 53-70. [https://www.academia.edu/279966/1992\\_Film\\_Adaptation\\_As\\_Translation\\_Some\\_Methodological\\_Proposals](https://www.academia.edu/279966/1992_Film_Adaptation_As_Translation_Some_Methodological_Proposals)
- Chan, L. T. (2004). The poetics of recontextualization: Intertextuality in Chinese adaptation translation of "The Picture of Dorian Gray". *Comparative literature studies*, 41(4), 464-481. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40247444>
- Chatman, S. (1978). *Story and discourse: Narrative structure in fiction and film*. Cornell University Press.

- Er, I. (2016). A funnier *Monk*: A multimodal approach to transnational TV series adaptations. *Series*, 2(1), 5-19. <https://series.unibo.it/article/view/6160/5927>
- Greenall, A. K., & Løfaldli, E. (2019). Translation and adaptation as recontextualization: The case of *The Snowman*. *Adaptation*, 12(3), 240-256. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345503747\\_Translation\\_and\\_Adaptation\\_as\\_Recontextualization\\_The\\_Case\\_of\\_The\\_Snowman](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345503747_Translation_and_Adaptation_as_Recontextualization_The_Case_of_The_Snowman)
- Hale, T., & Upton, C. (2014). Introduction. In C. Upton (Ed.), *Moving target: Theatre translation and cultural relocation* (pp. 1-13). Routledge.
- Hickey, L. (1998). Perlocutionary equivalence: Marking, exegesis and recontextualisation. In L. Hickey (Ed.), *The pragmatics of translation* (pp. 217-232). Multilingual Matters.
- Hutcheon, L. (2006). *A theory of adaptation*. Routledge.
- İnceoğlu, Ş. (2008). *The Faustus myth in the English novel* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <http://nek.istanbul.edu.tr:4444/ekos/TEZ/43560.pdf>
- Jakobson, R. (1959). On linguistic aspects of translation. In R. Brower (Ed.), *On translation* (pp. 232-239). Harvard University Press.
- Landa, J. A. G (2005). Adaptation, appropriation, retroaction: Symbolic interaction with *Henry V*. In M. Aragay (Ed.), *Books in Motion: Adaptation, intertextuality, authorship* (pp. 181-199). Rodopi.
- Linell, P. (1998). *Approaching dialogue: Talk, interaction and contexts in dialogue perspectives*. John Benjamins.
- Ma'kom Mona Al-Shazli. (2020, Dec. 23). شيطان مصري دمه خفيف اسمه [video]. YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RL\\_3PDBEEbA&ab\\_channel=%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%83%D9%85%D9%85%D9%86%D9%89%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B0%D9%84%D9%8A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RL_3PDBEEbA&ab_channel=%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%83%D9%85%D9%85%D9%86%D9%89%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B0%D9%84%D9%8A)
- Mahdi, M., & Al-Gemaiy, R. (2016, July 2). أمين بوحافة: أتنفس الموسيقى.. وهذه *Masrawy*. كواليس "ونوس والميزان وجراند أوتيل" (حوار) <https://www.masrawy.com/arts/ramadan2016-katayef/details/2016/7/2/877710/%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A8%D9%88%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%A9->

**Wannous as an Adaptation of the Faust Theme: An Investigation of Adaptation Shifts and Interpretive Categories**  
**Dr. Rania Mohammed Abdel Meguid Abdel Kader**

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/1896109241/799FA8A21B2402DPQ/4?accountid=178282>

- McFarlane, B. (1996). *Novel to film: An introduction to the theory of adaptation*. Clarendon Press.
- Minier, M. (2014). Definitions, dyads, triads and other points of connection in translation and adaptation discourse. In K. Krebs (Ed.), *Translation and adaptation in theatre and film* (pp. 13-35). Routledge.
- Perdikaki, K. (2016). *Adaptation as translation: Examining film adaptation as a recontextualised act of communication* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/1896109241/799FA8A21B2402DPQ/4?accountid=178282>
- Perdikaki, K. (2017). Film adaptation as an act of communication: Adopting a translation-oriented approach to the analysis of adaptation shifts. *Meta*, 62(1), 2-18. <https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/meta/2017-v62-n1-meta03122/1040464ar.pdf>
- Pickthall, M. (1953). *The meaning of the Glorious Koran*. Signet.
- Price, C. B. (1976). *A typological study of Faust: An analysis of the thematic structure in selected twentieth-century Faust drama; German, English, French, American, and Russian versions* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/302844031/23A22B5A0EA444DBPQ/1?accountid=178282>
- Sada al-Balad. (2021, Mar. 21). عبد الرحيم كمال: واجهت صعوبة لتجسيد شيطان مصري دمه خفيف في ونوس.. وهذا أول أجر تقاضيته [video]. YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjQ1vpcI8k&ab\\_channel=%D8%B5%D8%AF%D9%89%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%AF](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjQ1vpcI8k&ab_channel=%D8%B5%D8%AF%D9%89%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%AF)

- Saglia, D. (2002). Translation and cultural appropriation: Dante, Paolo and Francesca in British Romanticism. *Quaderns. Revista de traducció*, 7, 95-119. <https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/quaderns/11385790n7/11385790n7p95.pdf>
- Sanders, J. (2006). *Adaptation and appropriation*. Routledge.
- Singer, R. L. (1989). *The Faust film adaptation: A study of the interrelationship between literature and film* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/303785612?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true>
- Ulrych, M. (2000). Domestication and foreignisation in film translation. In C. Taylor (Ed.), *Tradurre Il Cinema* (pp. 127-144). Università degli studi di Trieste.
- Vallittu, M. (2018). Context in film adaptations. In A. Hax & L. Olavarria (Eds.), *Reading today* (pp. 159-172). UCL Press.
- Vandal-Sirois, H., & Bastin, G. (2012). Adaptation and appropriation: Is there a limit? In L. Raw (Ed.), *Translation, adaptation and transformation* (pp. 21-41). Bloomsbury.
- Wechsler, R. (1998). *Performing without a stage: The art of literary translation*. Catbird Press.
- Weissbrod, R. (2006). Inter-semiotic translation: Shakespeare on screen. *Journal of specialised translation*, 5, 42-56. [https://jostrans.org/issue05/art\\_weissbrod.pdf](https://jostrans.org/issue05/art_weissbrod.pdf)
- Wong, J. (2012). The transadaptation of Shakespeare's Christian dimension in China's theatre – To translate or NOT to translate? In L. Raw (Ed.), *Translation, adaptation and transformation* (pp. 99-111). Bloomsbury.
- Yau, W. (2014). Translation and film. Dubbin, subtitling, adaptation, and remaking In S. Bermann & C. Porter (Eds.), *A companion to translation studies* (pp. 492-503). Wiley Blackwell.