

Representing the Other in the Translation of Culture-Specific Elements in Literary Texts: Wolves of the Crescent Moon as a Case Study

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Abstract

This paper tackles the issue of representing the target language's culture in translation. It is argued that English translations of Arabic literary works are influenced by stereotypical representations of Arabs. These representations were also supported by the selection of works to be translated and the strategies used in translation. The translation of the culture-specific elements of فـخـاخ الرانحة (Wolves of the Crescent Moon), an Arabic novel written by the Saudi author Yousef Al-Mohaimed and translated by Anthony Calderbank, is assessed to determine if such a claim is valid in an era of easy access and increased communication with other cultures. The conclusion of this paper shows that stereotypical images, manipulation and domestication strategies are not necessarily presented in the translation of this work and that foreignization strategies are dominant.

Keywords: translation strategies, stereotyping, literary translation, manipulation, Saudi novels

1. Introduction

Translation is an old practice and a means for communication between people. Throughout history, translation has been a crucial tool to transfer knowledge. Over time, this practice has expanded to cover different genres and types of texts. Literature, for example, is one of the most popular genres and has had a long history in the translation practice. Translating literary works plays a role in shaping an understanding of other cultures. A novel, for instance, is considered a self-representation code for others as it opens a window to other cultures. Translation of Arabic literary works is a recent phenomena, many works are increasingly translated and published into different languages. People around the world are keen to learn more about Arabs and read fiction written by Arabs; this trend gathered pace following colonialism as Orientalists considered such works social documents rather than literary achievements (Gibb 1963 p.161, as cited in Altoma, 2005 p. 54). It is crucial to understand that from the 18th century, a set of representations of the orient was introduced which created a set of stereotypes about the Arab world. Thus, learning about Arabs is often associated with a set of stereotypes. It can be seen in the media how the western force these general stereotypical images about Arabs. The translator, however, can have the power to support these stereotypical images in the strategies used in his/her translation or discourage them.

Even today, as Faiq (2007, p. 4) writes, "the Arabs and Islamic cultures which despite serious radical changes in their politics and socio-economic realities are still seen through the eyes of a fixed system of representations". It is assumed that Arabic literary works are selected to represent the 'mysterious' Arabic culture and the application of manipulation and domestication strategies are used by translators to conform to the common stereotypical image. "Arab culture and Islam, distanced by time, space and language(s), are usually carried over-made to cross over-into a Western tradition as an ordinary moment and image within a master narrative of western discourse full of ready-made stereotypes and clichés" (cf. Layoun, 1995; Said, 1997 cited in Faiq, 2004, p.8). According to Faiq (2007), Said's argument is still valid today: The selection of Arab literary works to be translated into English and other Western languages is still made based on the degree of their conformity to the stereotypical image of Arabs. Therefore, it is assumed that through the translation process, manipulation strategies may accrue to ensure consistency with that image. This paper aims to asses if such an arguments still valid in an era of communication and easy access to other cultures by advances in technology. It assesses the English translation of Arabic novel written by a Saudi author entitled "Wolves of The Crescent Moon".

It tackles the reasons for translating such a novel and the strategies that the translator used in transferring culture-specific elements of the Saudi Arabian culture. By focusing on these strategies, it will be seen the extent to which the stereotypical images of Arabs is promoted since the translator has the power to either support or discourage these stereotypical images by deciding on the strategies to be used in his/her translation. Due to limitations in time and space, only 22 items are analysed. The paper concludes that the translation of this work, such deliberate manipulation is not always present. This is because westerners have become keener to learn about Arabs and look beyond the negative image and manipulating the original text nowadays could undermine the reputation of the translator.

2. Literature Review: Translation and Translation Studies

At the outset, translation studies were mainly concerned about linguistic aspects such as the issues of meaning and equivalence. The concept of equivalence is a central issue and has taken a lot of attention and criticism. There are a few pioneer theorists who discussed this concepts such as Jakobson (1959) followed by Nida and Taber (1969) and Newmark (1981) in the 1970s and 1980s, the focus shifted from linguistic issues of translation to functional and communicative approaches. Reiss (1971) is one of the leading theorists in the new focus as well as the famous Skopos theory was proposed by Reiss and Vermeer (1984) (Munday, 2012, p.112-113).

2.1 Cultural and Ideological Turn

In the 1990s, translation studies started to focus on how the translator's ideology or culture can impact the translation. Bassnett and Lefevere (1990) contributed to the shift in translation studies to what is termed 'cultural turn'. They believe that "neither the word, nor the text, but the culture becomes the operational 'unit' of translation" (Lefevere and Bassnett 1990, p. 8). Since it is believed that culture is inherent in language, theorists started to focus on the cultural elements of the text. Their argument is that translation is not merely about linguistic issues but rather it is involved in a broader sense of established systems of beliefs and cultures. According to Dacier (1699, cited in Lefevere, 1992 p.10): "Translation needs to be studied in connection with power and patronage, ideology and poetics, with emphasis on the various attempts to shore up or undermine an existing ideology or an existing poetics" Lefevere questions issues beyond the linguistic ones, such as, why do we translate? How can the reader know that the translation is an adequate representation of the original? To whom we translate? These questions resulted in raising the issue of power and authority in translation meaning that the grasped difference in status between two cultures can affect translation strategy used. Chandran (no date) states that "translators in the West have given respect to the Greek and Latin authors when they translated them because they thought that Greece and Rome had a far superior culture. But there was a certain flippancy when it came to translation of works from the Orient, which indicated the condescension in the attitude to the East and the colonies" Further, in *Translating Literature Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context*, Lefevere (1992, p.116) points out that linguistic constraints of a text are less important than ideological and poetic ones in determining the translation strategy. Lefevere believes that ideological parameters had an influence on the selection of texts for translating as well as the translation strategy. This could be noticed in regards to literary translation as Leeuwen (2004, p.14) believed that this type of translation and cultural exchange were linked to authority and relation between hegemonic and dominated cultures. Moreover, according to Hatim (200, p.83, cited in Faiq 2007, p.2), under what it may be termed "the ideology of translation", theorists focused on aspects such as the following:

1. The choice of texts
2. The power that controls the translation
3. Accessibility to translation
4. What is changed, deleted in seeking controlling the translation

2.2 The Translation of Literature

Literature is considered one of the most challenging genres to translate because literary texts are rich with rhetorical devices, puns, and idiomatic expressions for instance which the translator has to keep in mind in order to maintain the aesthetic value of the genre. Beside the linguistic challenges, literary texts usually represent the source culture and therefore contain high numbers of deep culture-specific references and expressions. To translate cultural items, the translator needs to fully understand the source culture in order to make the translated work successful. Therefore, translating between languages that are from different family groups, such as Arabic and English, can be challenging both linguistically and culturally.

2.2.1 Translating Literature from Arabic into English

The exchange between Arabic and other European languages has been as old as the practice of translation itself. For example, the golden age of Al-Andalus (1000s-1100s) witnessed a major cultural and informational interchange between Arabic and other European languages. After the fall of Al-Andalus and the subsequent widespread suppression of Arabic culture in Europe, there was a marked decline in European translations from Arabic. It was only from the early eighteenth century that, very gradually, this began to change, partly driven by European colonial involvement in the region (Büchler and Guthrie 2011, p.16). In relation to literary translation specifically works of fiction, Altoma (2005, p.54) divides the journey that Arabic fictions went through into three phases: 1. 1947-1976: Western readers showed little interest in Arabic works. This was because Orientalists believe that these works should remain under the scope of the Arabic culture and their literary value is neglected as they consider such works as social document. For this reason, publishing translated Arabic works was discouraged. 2. 1968-1988: This was considered a phase of expansion out of academic interest. It was a period of an active effort to translation Arabic works of fiction. 3. 1988-2003: Najib Mahfuz's Nobel Prize of Fiction award marked a striking increasing interest of Arabic fiction. Major publishing and university presses got involved in producing translations. Presently, there is a strong interest in Arabic culture and writings. Büchler and Guthrie (2011, p.7) state: "in the first years of the 1990s the average number of published translations was between two and eight per year, in the 2000s the average rose to between ten and sixteen, with twenty six translations from Arabic published in 2009". This interest is not only in regards to literature but in Arabic language in general as well. There are many reasons that can explain this, one of which is related to politics. According to Guthrie, there was a sharp rise in applications for Arabic degrees in British universities after the US terrorist attacks of 2001 (cited in Holland, 2011). Also, many UK universities offer Arabic-English translation or Arabic degrees which can be understood as a desire to learn more about the politics, writings and cultures of Arab countries. Furthermore, Pulitzer Prize finalist Eggers states: "there's a kind of renaissance taking place among young Arab writers" and that "we need their voices more than ever before". (cited in Holland, 2011) For this reason, new initiatives and projects have been established to meet such interest. The British magazine Banipal, for instance, has published fiction from the Arab world in English translation since 1998.

2.2.2 Stereotyping in Translation

With this interest in learning about Arabs and their culture, a set of stereotypical images are often associated. In his book "*Orientalism*", Said (1978) discusses how the west created general perceptions and characters about the orient after colonization. Europeans were divided the world into two parts: the East and the West. Europeans believed that they are superior to the East who they regarded as uncivilized; therefore, it was their duty to civilize and educate them. They think that they had power on them and this approach justified colonization. Today, the West still has power over the East in all forms as these images and stereotypes of superiority remain dominant today. For example, Islam is seen as religion of terrorism, Arabs are uncivilized and Arabs from Gulf countries are rich. Looking at simple examples, for instance the word fatwa, according to the "The Corpus of Contemporary American English" has different connotations and linked to political matters, unlike what it means in Arabic which is the answer of questions from an Islamic point of view. One method of stereotyping the Orient and generalize their characters can be through literary works and the media. When it comes to translation, especially literary translation, such stereotypical images can be maintained by the translator or expected by the reader. Carbonell (2004, p.30), writes: When literature from so-called exotic cultures is translated, a similar stereotyping process is under way. English or Spanish readers usually classify in advance what they may encounter in a work translated from Arabic, Farsi, Chinese or Malay. That is, they formulate a number of expectations as to the description of the foreign and exotic settings and their categories. Similarly, Faiq (2007, p. 9-10) argues, "as with native texts, the reception process of translated texts is determined more by the shared knowledge of the translating community and its language, than by what the translated texts themselves contain". The translator, therefore, can reproduce stereotypical images by being unfaithful to the source author or by focusing on such images in translation. For instance, The Victorian Orientalist Sir Richard Burton who translated "*One Thousand and One Nights*", which is commonly called The Arabian Nights, described what he knew about Arabs: Our Arab at his worst is a mere barbarian who has not forgotten the savage. He is a model mixture of childishness and astuteness, of simplicity and cunning, concealing levity of mind under solemnity of aspect.

His stolid instinctive conservatism grovels before the tyrant rule of routine, despite the turbulent and licentious independence which ever suggests revolt against the ruler; his mental torpidity, founded upon physical indolence, renders immediate action and all manner of exertion distasteful; his conscious weakness shows itself in an overweening arrogance and intolerance. His crass and self-satisfied ignorance makes him glorify the most ignoble superstitions, while acts of revolting savagery are the natural results of a malignant fanaticism and a furious hatred of every creed beyond the pale of Al-Islam (cited in Faiq, 2004, p.6) In relation to Arabic, such images are assumed to be reproduced for commercial reasons. Baerg (1982), Director of Program Practices for CBS-TV, interviewed by Jack Shaheen (1984) provides an example when he states, "I think the Arab stereotype is attractive to a number of people. It is an easy thing to do. It is the thing that is going to be most readily accepted by a large number of the audience". (cited in Ridouani, 2011). Tresilian (2008, p.24) agrees to this point that "readers of translated works of foreign literature tend to respond best to works that fit in with their pre-existing tastes and interests."

The west's stereotypical image of Arabs also focuses on women's issues. Aburwien (2013) in her research entitled the "*Negative Image of The Arab Women in the Western Literature*", believes that "women in the Arab world as a result of western misinformation and lack of awareness, are unfortunately victims of the stereotyping process". However, she argues that most of what is said about women is generalization or the personal experiences of orientalists. She believes that this relates to Said's Orientalism which can be defined as a school of thought based on ontological distinction made between the Occident (west) and the Orient. The phenomenon of orientalism has played an important role in reproducing the stereotype that 'justifies 'the west's domination, restructuring and maintaining power and authority over the orient. In this context, this study focuses on stereotyping in relation to translating Arabic contemporary literary works into English. The problem with these images in translation is that it is not only being unfaithful to the author but sends the wrong images to TL readers.

2.2.3 Selection of Source Texts: What to be translated?

Realizing such a focus on stereotypical images and how influential they are, leads to the question: why are some literary works translated and others not? To answer this, Faiq (2004: 3) states that in post-colonial contexts, translation assumes added significance which can affect the choice of texts for translation, the circulation of translations, etc.. As seen from the discussion above it can be assumed that books for translation are chosen according to a specific set of representations. The fact that the Arab world has done very little to promote its own writing internationally and done even less to support its translation might lead to the conclusion that the selection of books is made mostly by western publishers. However, this is not always the case as on occasions writers want to share their books with the wider world. In the Arab world, it is believed that the selection of literary books for translation is linked to their success in the original language. However, from an English-speaking view, the selection of fiction to be translated into English can be linked to different reasons, although one reason would be their popularity in Arabic as best-selling novels. There are many Arabic books with high sales that have not been translated. An example of such is Saad Al Makkawi's novel "*The Sleepwalkers*" which is described as "a masterpiece of modern Arabic prose" (Farghali, 2012) and is popular in the Arab community. Hatim (2001, p.71) believes that ideological reasons can stand behind the selection of what to be translated. For example, if a work does not agree to the ideology of the translator or the publisher, it might be rejected. Nevertheless, in relation to the Arabic language, the works of translation and the cultural content are connected. The more cultural references there are in a novel, the greater request for translation, especially when the writing originates from an apparently controversial and mysterious society for westerners such as Saudi Arabia. It is assumed that novels rich with content of the Arabic culture area target for publishers, especially the case of Saudi Arabia. For example, the novel "*Girls of Riyadh*" was one of the most popular translated contemporary novels into different languages due to its content of Saudi females' lives which is considered mysterious to westerners. According to Faiq (2007:17), "Arabic literary texts are rarely chosen for translation for their innovative approaches or for their socio-political perspectives, rather texts chosen are recognizable as conforming to the master discourse of writing about and representing Arabs, Arab culture and Islam". He adds that: The choice of what to translate from Arabic, even with a Nobel Prize in Literature, is still prisoner of the old/new ideology of ethnocentric domestication of a familiar yet foreign culture. Recall Peter Clark's experience! Arabic texts chosen for translation, and those written by Arabs mainly in English or French, are normally well received in the West because they are full of nights with and images of the dead and ghosts; precisely what main-stream oriental's discourse maintains in its depiction of the Arabs and Islam (2004, p.11)

Fargali (2012) in his blog rationalizes the process of selecting books to translate. He states that: “The process is based on a political consideration: i.e. the attempt to get to know a culture that exports the problems of its own backwardness to the West. Implicating literature in this process may benefit it in some ways but in the end it is likely to do it more harm than good.” However, the selection of texts chosen for translation can also be out of interest by the translator. The Arabic novel “*Beirut 75*” for instance was chosen to be translated into English simply because the translator loved it! Nevertheless, in general, Leeuwen (2004, p.15) argues, “European translators, it was said, were inclined to select titles that would appeal to public bias and to forget about a faithful representation of the Egyptian and by extension Arab ‘soul’”. The translator Catherine Cobham states that “Readers as well as publishers tend to go for content above literary/poetic quality in the case of Arabic literature, and look for and comment on how the society and especially religion and gender relations are portrayed in the literature”(cited in Büchler and Guthire, 2011, p. 28)

2.2.4 Manipulation of Translation

When it comes to selection, commercial value is the most important element. TT readers are the market’s target and their expectations and interests must be fulfilled. For this reason, it is expected that translators may distort the text in one way or another to meet the reader’s needs. Manipulation in translation can take different forms. For example, unintentional manipulation might stem from the translator’s incompetence and ideological manipulation may stem from bias or deliberate reasons. In fact, the ideological manipulation in translation could refer to “any interference with the text, be it cultural, religious, political or otherwise, imposing modifications that are not textual constraints, for the purpose of indoctrination” (Nitsa 2000, p.43 cited in Lili 2005). Many theorists argue that the act of translation can even include disruption and violence. Venuti (1995, p.267) claims that the purpose of translation involves violence. He believes that in recent years the Anglo-American translation tradition, for instance, has tried to naturalize and normalize the translated text which results in authors removing words and replacing them with something else. Venuti refers to this as ‘domestication’ in which the TT is altered to be natural to target readers. The opposite is called ‘foreignization’ in which elements of the TL are preserved making it foreign to target readers. In regards to manipulation, Venuti (1996, p.196) states: The violence of translation resides in its very purpose and activity; the reconstruction of the foreign text in accordance with values, beliefs and representations that pre-exist in the target language, always configured in hierarchies of dominance and marginality, always determining the production, circulation and reception of texts... whatever difference the translation conveys is now imprinted by the target-language culture, assimilated to its positions of intelligibility, its canons and taboos, its codes and ideologies. The aim of translation is to bring back a cultural other as the same, the recognizable, even the familiar; and the aim always risks a wholesale domestication of the foreign text, often in highly self-conscious projects, where translation serves an imperialist appropriation of foreign cultures for domestic agendas, cultural, economic, political.

On the other hand, Faiq (2007, p.ix) believes that texts are domesticated to fit with the established system of representation of Arabs and their culture: “exotic, manipulating, subverting and appropriating translation strategies still govern intercultural encounters through translation from Arabic and associated representations of its speakers”. Therefore, he argues that to domesticate a text results in its reduction, change and being unfaithful to the ST. This, then, is a form of manipulation for the author as well as the target readers. This concept of manipulation resembles what Said argues about in *Orientalism* as westerners have shaped specific images and fixed representations of the Orient. Not only the characters of Arabs but also the level of their literary style. Fitzgerald who translated Rubayait by Persian author Omar Khayyam (1048-111), for instance, found that the Persian version is inferior and he thought of improving the original to make it conform to the expected literary conventions at that time. (Davis 2000, p.1020, cited in Munday 2012, p.193). According Bassnet and Lefervere (1995, p.vi), translation is rewriting and they believe that all rewritings are manipulations of the original. They state in *The Translator’s Invisibility* that: Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society. Rewritings can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices, and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another. But rewriting can also repress innovation, distort and contain, and in an age of ever increasing manipulation of all kinds, the study of the manipulative processes of literature as exemplified by translation can help us toward a greater awareness of the world in which we live.

This could be taken to mean that all translations may carry a sort of manipulation in one form or another as the original language and culture are not exactly the same as the target. Hermnas (1985, p.11) believes that regarding literature, all translations have some sort of manipulation of the source text.

This might be purposeful or due to the cultural, linguistic and literary aspects (Hatim, 2001, p. 72). The question remains: what about manipulation in this globalized era? This is particularly important following the emergence of the internet, the rapid evolution of social networks and the rise of mass travel between different countries. These changes make it easier for people to learn about other people's culture and traditions. In relation to translation, technological advances include the development of machine translation and easy dictionary applications. In this globalised era, Bustani (2014, p.25) believes that manipulation is now less applicable than previously because any manipulation will undermine the reputation of the translator as people can relatively easily access both works: the original and the translation. This can be explained from the point that people through online communities can discuss the translator's strategies in dealing with specific elements and discuss the story. Furthermore, especially following the expansion of translation studies and translator training programmes and courses, many more translators now can provide their services, let alone amateur bilinguals which mean that there are other options for clients. All of these reasons can divert the translator from deliberately manipulating the translation. Taking this into consideration, then it is expected that in "*Wolves of the Crescent Moon*" which is the case study for this paper, the translator uses foreignization strategies more than domestication.

3. Analysis of English Translation Strategies of *Wolves of the Crescent Moon*

This section assesses the validity of the argument that Arabic novels are selected for translation according to their conformity to the stereotypical images that are established in the west. It also determines if the argument can be still correct during an era in which globalization and technology are dominant. This chapter examines a relatively recent Saudi novel entitled "*Wolves of the Crescent Moon*" *فخاخ الرائحة*, by the author Yousef Al-Mohaimed and the translator Anthony Calderbank. The translation strategies of cultural references and some relative expressions that the translator has followed are studied in relation to the major theoretical studies highlighted in Chapters two and three.

3.1 Background

The Novel

The novel *فخاخ الرائحة* by Yousef Al-Mohaimed was first published in 2003 with the latest edition published in 2012. The novel tells the story of three people (Turad, Tawfiq and Nasser). Turad tried to steal from one of the tribes and that lead him to have his ear cut. The second character is Amm Tawfiq who was captured by slave traders in Sudan and then gained his freedom. The third character is Nasser who was abandoned by his parents. They left him in a box in the streets after his mother gave birth to him. These three stories are entwined to create a story full of resentment towards their country. Therefore, the novel has earned a controversial reputation in Saudi society. As a result, it was originally banned in Saudi Arabia when it was first published but the ban has subsequently been lifted.

The Author

Yousef Al-Mohaimed is an award-winning Saudi writer and journalist. He has a BA in business administration from King Saud University in Riyadh. He studied English and photography in England at some point during his life. He first started to write short stories and children stories. "*Wolves of the Crescent Moon*" is his first novel translated into many languages. The Italian translation of this novel won the Italian Alziator Prize in 2011. He also has another recent novel translated into English which is "*Munira's Bottle*"

The Translator

Anthony Calderbank is a British translator. He received his BA in Arabic Literature from the University of Manchester. He had teaching jobs in the UK and Egypt and currently works as an Assistant Director in Saudi Arabia. He has translated works by Miral el-Tahawy (*The Tent and Blue Aubergine*), and Youssef al-Mohaimed (*Wolves of the Crescent Moon* and *Munira's Bottle*). Also, he translated works by Sonallah Ibrahim (*Zaat*) and Naguib Mahfouz's early novel *Rhadopis of Nubia*, plus a collection of Nubian short stories, *Vintage Nights of Musk* by Haggag Hassan Addoul, as well as a number of Palestinian short stories (Banipal.co.uk).

3.2 Why *Wolves of the Crescent Moon*?

When it comes to “*Wolves of the Crescent Moon*”, there are many factors that can make the novel a good choice for translation from the western publisher’s perspective. As mentioned earlier, westerners are keen to learn about Arabs. This can be seen in Zuzana Kratka’s review on the Banipal website.

She states that: “It always feels very refreshing to discover new writing on the Arab literary scene and especially coming from a country with a long tradition of censorship and social taboos” (www.banipal.co.uk). Another factor could be that this novel was banned when it was first published in Saudi Arabia. Amazon.com, which is considered one of the best online websites from which people buy books posts the following description of the book: Banned in Saudi Arabia, this provocative, fast-paced debut novel confirms what The Washington Post reported about its award-winning author: “Yousef Al- Mohaimeed is taking on some of the most divisive subjects in the Arab world . . . in a lush style that evokes Gabriel García Márquez (Amazon.com). It can be noticed that the word “Banned” is the first word in the description which Amazon uses as a marketing tool. For this reason, the novel could be selected for translation since being banned makes it more appealing to the readers as it conforms to the stereotype about Saudi society where banning takes place in many forms. Another reason could be the controversial nature of the novel, a reason that is similar to the translation of the “*Yoqubian building*” and “*Girls of Riyadh*” as they are both controversial.

3.2.1 Reception of the Translated Novel

Browsing Goodreads.com, which is a social network website where people can rate books, review and comment on them, highlights that the book is much read by English language speakers. For example, Zuzana Kratka has posted the following commentary: You will be pleasantly surprised to discover that *Wolves of the Crescent Moon* focuses on profound problems that touch the whole of Saudi society, and is written in a language and style that makes such problems comprehensible to a non-Arab reader. Not only does Al-Mohaimed manage to raise awareness and open discussion on, until recently, untouchable subjects, but by his outspokenness he also reaches a large number of readers, Saudi or other, on a personal and human level by depicting the harsh reality of peoples living on the fringes of the Saudi society (Goodreads.com). This review was chosen to highlight an example of the public’s perception of the novel. This confirms the idea that contemporary Arabic literature is still looked at as a record of the social conditions in the Arab world especially in the Gulf countries and its literary value is still not fully appreciated. The focus is on the meanings and the stories not the beauty or the style of this language.

3.4 The Title

In any novel, the title is the first thing that the reader sees. Lodge (1992, p.193) believes that “The title of a novel is part of the text - the first part of it, in fact, that we encounter - and therefore has considerable power to attract and condition the reader's attention.” Comparing the title of “*Wolves of the Crescent Moon*” in English to the one in Arabic *الرائحة الفخاخ* back translated as ‘the traps of the scent’ indicates that there is a reason behind this change. It is well-understood that any title should be chosen carefully as it has a commercial power. In the western world, ‘the traps of the scent’ is unlikely to make any sense to the western readers as it is not related to any type of matter in the Arabic culture. For this purpose, it seems that the translator had to choose a title that could be seen as linked to Saudi culture to meet the western audience expectations as the image of wolves could indicate the Arabian deserts and that the crescent moon is always associated with Islam. However, Al-Wasil (2007) in an article published in Al-Riyadh newspaper believes that this could be related to precedents in English literature of the image of the wolf and the moon. The wolves indicate an image of the conflict to attitude towards stealing and attacking as what happened to Turad and his friend in the novel. As for the moon, Al-Wasil believes that it reflects sex and birth. This shows that the translator made this change for the readers whether for commercial purposes or for bringing the image of Arabs into the title.

3. 5 Translating Culture-Specific Elements

This section examines how the translator handled cultural references in the novel and the strategies he used.

Example 1

ST: *كأنما داخلاً في حدائقها وأسواقها* (p.11)

TT: Wandering into gardens and souks (p.3)

The translator explains the word souks in the glossary of the novel as ‘a market’ but he did not write market in the translation. He transliterated the word instead of adding its actual translation which would fulfil its meaning. Transliteration is a strategy of expressing words of a language by writing the alphabets of the other language. In

Arab countries, the word souk indicates old markets, traditional outdoor ones or very old ones. However, it still can be used by Arabs to refer to big shopping malls. It seems that the translator wanted to transliterate to give the meaning of old traditional markets to western readers.

Example 2

ST: يرقعون البيوت والملابس (p.49)

TT: They would patch our **tents** and clothes (p.55)

Example 3

ST: وتصفق بيوتنا وركض الريح وهي تسف الرمل أمامها: (p.42)

TT: The running wind as it blew up the sand and beat against our **tent**(p.46)

In the two examples above, the translator used the word tents instead of the literal meaning of بيوت which is “houses” according to the context. Actually the author in the examples above meant tents and it seems that the translator wanted to make the text clear to the TL readers as it does not make sense to patch concrete houses or for such houses to be blown by winds. Example 3

ST: جاء من أحد الرواشن صوت امرأة ممطوط يشبه الموسيقى (p 69)

TT: The words like music, came from one of the **roashans** (p.83)

In this example, the translator has transliterated the plural of روشن to roashans which can be simply rendered as balconies. In such an example, the translator seems to prefer foreignization by introducing new terms to the target readers instead of finding an equivalent in the target language. He added the term in the glossary and defined it as: a wooden balcony that is completely enclosed but allows the person standing on it to look down unseen onto the street below. They are a distinctive feature of the traditional architecture in Jeddah.

Example 4

ST: ويصرخ بأعلى صوته: الحنشل! (p. 78)

TT: yelled at the top of his voice, “**Al-hanshal**, thieves!” (p.96)

The translator here transliterated the word الحنشل and added it to the glossary as: a local Najdi word meaning “thieves”. This strategy points out that the translator wanted to introduce the readers with local terms used in Saudi as he could have simply translated the word into thieves because it is enough to deliver the meaning. In this example, the translator did not only add the transliterated word but also wrote thieves after it. This might confuse the readers as they might think Al-hanshal has another meaning.

Example 5

ST: يشدون ثوبي (p.12)

TT: Tugging my **thobe** (p.4)

Example 6

ST: بطرف شماغي التي أخفيها (p.12)

TT: hide under the edge of my **shmagh**(p.10)

Example 7

ST: مثل عباوات النساء السوداء (p.37)

TT: Like women’s black **abbayas**(p.41)

Thobe and shmagh are types of Saudi clothes that men usually wear, while abbayas is the plural of abbaya which is a cultural type of clothes that all Saudi women wear when they leave their homes. These clothes are now known to non-Arabs as well especially abbaya. In these examples, the translator transliterated those terms and added detailed definitions for them in the glossary since it is the perfect translation strategy towards names of clothes.

Example 8

ST: عرفت فيما بعد أنها كانت رائحة الديرمان (p.17)

TT: I later learned was the smell of **dayrman tooth sticks** (p.86)

Here, the translator has changed the meaning of “dayrman” as he wrote tooth stick but it is actually a lipstick which older women in Saudi use instead of modern lipsticks. It gives a dark red colour to the lips and has a special scent. A closer rendering to the cultural content would be dayrman lipstick. This mistranslation might have happened due to the translator being unfamiliar with the source culture.

Example 9

ST: لقد كشف لي العم توفيق، هكذا كانوا يدعونه، سر المهنة وأصولها (p. 27)

TT: **Amm Tawfiq**, as they called him, taught me the secrets of the trade. (p.24)

The translator opts for foreignization here by using the transliteration of “Amm”. The translator wanted to remind the TL readers that this character belongs to the other culture and using the literal translation which is “uncle” would have distorted the identity of the character as it might have kinship indications. The translator explains the meaning of Amm in the glossary of the book as: literally, “paternal uncle”; often used as a term of respect or affection before the names of older males. The feminine equivalent is Amma.” The translator could have written Mr. instead of Amm but his approach justifies his intent to remind the readers of the otherness of the source culture.

Example 10

ST: تصور ياتوفيق هذا الذي يمتلك الأراضي والعقارات كان مجرد حلواني (p.91)

TT: Imagine, YaTawfiq, this man who owns land and property and buildings used to be a humble pastry-seller (p.116)

This is one of the many examples of the novel where the translator used the transliterated form of the particle “ya” which is a feature of Arabic. He defined it in the glossary as “vocative particle, used before people’s name when addressing them”. He could have simply avoided this Arabic structure but again in this example it shows that the translator wanted to introduce even specific Arabic grammatical features to the readers.

Example 11

ST: ما شاء الله. ما شاء الله. على الصبيان (p.70)

TT: **Masha’allah**, what lovely young men they are (p.85)

The expression “Masha’allah” is a common expression among Muslims which means “what God wills”. Usually Arab people use this expression excessively in their conversations. This phrase has started to become familiar outside the Muslim world especially in countries where there are a number of Arabs residents or tourists and people actually started to use it. The translator has transliterated the phrase and added its meaning to the glossary since it is a crucial expression.

Example 12

ST: يا الله، ماذا قال هذا الولد؟ (p.12)

TT: **Good grief!** Turad thought to himself. What did the boy say? (p.4)

Contrary to the previous example, here the translator did a good job rendering the expression يا الله to good grief. This is because this is an expression of wonder and surprise mentioning the name of Muslim’s God “Allah”, if the translator rendered it literally it would lose its effect to the readers. Therefore, he brought the equivalent in the target language and this domestication is the best option to convey the meaning.

Example 13

ST: قال ايه قال كنز (p.91)

TT: **And you know what! He told everyone** it was treasure he found. (p.116)

قال ايه قال is an expression used by Saudis ironically to refer to what the other person said. The translator in this case did not deliver this as an ironical expression. This might be justified as this expression is known between Saudis and hard to grasp for others, so the translator might be unfamiliar with it. A suggested translation is: so ironically he said what! Said that it was treasure!

Example 14

ST: (p.13) كاملاً دلة القهوة النحاسية اللامعة

TT: **Carried in my right hand** the shiny brass **coffeepot** (p.5)

Unlike the examples explained above, it seems that the translator substituted the word دلة with coffeepot instead of transliterating it into English. The word دلة can be transliterated as Dallah since it a cultural item and it does not look like a regular coffeepot as it has a long spout and a particular shape. He also added “in my right hand” which is a wrong addition as it is one of the most important cultural tradition for the host to carry the Dallah in the left hand and the cups in the right hand, so that the guest receives the coffee cup from the right hand of the host.

Example 15

ST: (p.13) وببيدي اليمنى ثلاثة فناجيل صينية مزركشة

TT: And three very small ornately patterned china **coffee cups**(p.5)

Following Example 15, it seems impossible to carry a coffeepot and three coffee cups on the same right hand, as it is tradition to carry the cups in the right hand and the coffeepot in the left. Moreover, in this example, the translator did not transliterate the word فنجانيل as Fanajeel but rather introduced its equivalent which is “coffee cups”. Fanajeel actually do not look regular coffee cups as they do not have handles, they look like mini bowls. Traditionally, Arabic coffee is served in such these coffee cups, not in regular ones with handles.

Example 16

ST: تتزوج ممن لا أصل ولافصل لها (p.61)

TT: Can you marry a woman with **no origin or breeding?** (p.73)

This is a common expression "لا أصل ولافصل له" which means he/she does not belong to a tribe nor an accurate language or dialect to establish where he/she comes from. This expression is widely used among Saudi people in particular to refer to those who are not Saudis in origin and whose descendants and origin are unknown. The translator in this example has mistranslated the word فصل which should mean ‘clear dialect’. It would be more accurate if the translator has rendered it to no origin or dialect.

Example 17

ST: الصلب الجوالين كانت من بنات (p. 49)

TT: She was a daughter of the **gypsies** (p.55)

The word الصلب in Saudi culture refers to people who do not belong to a certain tribe. People in Saudi use this word in a negative way as it indicates an inferior meaning. However, the translator in this novel used the word gypsies which could make the readers misunderstand the actual meaning of الصلب and its connotation. Here the translator used a cultural equivalent. The translator could have transliterated it and explained the actual connotation and meaning of such a word because the word “gypsies” might be misleading to non-Saudis as they might think that actual gypsies live in Saudi Arabia.

Example 18

ST: بكشافة المشعل أن يقترب الخواجة (p.34)

TT: As the **white man** approached with his shining torches (p.35)

The translator has rendered the word خواجة to white man although the actual meaning of it is foreign man. This word is used in Saudi culture to refer to anyone who is from Europe or the United States for example and who do not speak Arabic. However, the translator should have transliterated the term and explained briefly that خواجة means someone foreign to the Saudi culture but not necessarily white-skinned, so that readers do not misunderstand the word.

Example 19

ST: هذا الحجام سيحلق لك رأسك (p.71)

TT The **barber** is going to shave your head (p.87)

In this example, the translator used a literal translation of the word الحجام. The choice of the translation here is wrong because the word الحجام is actually the name of the person who performs Hijama which is a type of Arab traditional medicine. It is a healing method by applying a partial vacuum looks like cups to the body by heat. In this context, the Hajjam was mistranslated as barber. It is suggested that the translator should have used transliteration and explained the word Hajjam in the glossary. This is considered a mistranslation and a reason might be that the translator’s unfamiliarity with some aspects of the Saudi culture.

Example 20

ST: اللعينة زهيرة ومؤمرات أم كلثوم بعد أن تجاوزت مأساة (p. 117)

TT: After I’d gotten over the tragedy of those **bitches**, Zuhayra and Umm Kalthum (p.153)

Here, the translator did not translate the word اللعينة literally which means ‘the cursed’ but used “bitches” instead which gives a more inferior meaning to the women concerned. The register of the word is even different as the translator has used bitches which is a very informal word and which could indicate another meaning. The translator could have simply used the adjective ‘the cursed’, the literal meaning of the word اللعينة.

Example 21

ST: كنت أقول لك أيها الحبيب اللقيط ناصر (p.41)

TT: What I am saying to you, young Nasir (p.46)

Example 22

ST: الفرق بيننا يا ناصر اللقيط الملقوط (p.42)

TT: The difference between us, Nasir (p.46)

In the two examples above, the translator omitted the word “اللقيط” which means a person who was abandoned by his parents because he was born in an illegal way or in a secret relationship outside the wedlock which is considered prohibited in Islamic societies and a shame for the person. The strategy the translator has chosen is omission but he deleted an important word in the novel because the whole story was focusing on this adjective as people consider “Nasir” a shameful person. However, it would be more faithful if the translator rendered it as “bastard” because it will bring the exact purpose of the author’s usage of the word which is used as a way to tease him by such an adjective.

3.6 Discussion

In most examples discussed above, it appears that the translator generally opts to translate literally or use transliteration strategy as translating literally was preferred to Vinay and Drablent (1958). Most elements of Arab or Saudi culture were presented as they are with no major modifications. Most examples show that the translator prefers foreignization over domestication strategy. It is also noticed that the translator chose and prefer to foreignize in most cases even where there is an equivalent in the TL, although he deleted certain words in a number of examples or brought in equivalents. Foreignization can maintain the identity of the original and introduce new concepts and expressions to the TT readers. This will make readers learn more about SL culture and distinguish the writings of foreign literature. Thus, it is assumed that the translator wants to make the readers understand the Saudi Arabian culture. The translator did not use footnotes but instead provided a glossary to explain the new terms and the culture-specific elements for the target readers in many cases. This way of writing can distort the readers’ attention as they have to look to the glossary for meanings. This is the best choice to expose the other culture to target readers. The translator actually used what some post-colonial translator would do in that the translation should “represent the author’s world to the coloniser in the metropolitan language, and at the same time to signal and emphasise a difference from it” (Ashcroft et al., 2000:137, cited in Faiq, 2004, p.34). However, the translator used deletion and domestication strategies in some instances which were justified according to the context or might be the result of the translator being unfamiliar to the source culture.

4. Conclusion

This paper sheds light on the culture-specific elements in translated Arabic works of fiction and answers the question of if there is still manipulation in representing the stereotypical images of Arabs. It does so by assessing Yousef Al-Mohaimed’s novel “*Wolves of the Crescent Moon*” to understand the reasons behind translating it. It also has examined the strategies that the translator used in translating the culture-specific elements presented in the novel. In terms of selection, it seems that Westerners look for literary works that contain forms of Arab culture and that would conform to the stereotypical images previously created. When it comes to the novel فخاخ الراحنة, it was translated and published because it already had a controversial reputation in Arabic. Furthermore, it contains great deal of culture-specific elements of Saudi Arabian society which is also meets the demand of westerners to learn about. Therefore, “*Wolves of the Crescent Moon*” was not selected for translation because it complies with the established system of representations of Arabs rather because it was controversial and rich in Saudi cultural concepts. In terms of strategies, the examples discussed reveal that the translator considered transliterations and literal translation which gives a foreignizing effect and that the translator showed respect in preserving elements of the Arab culture. The translator used other strategies that could give a domesticating effect in cases when it would be inappropriate to use literal translation due to differences between the two languages and cultures. There are also cases where the translator misinterpreted a certain word or phrase which is due being unfamiliar with the source culture and the author has also used certain words and expression that are only known to Saudis and are even hard to grasp for other Arabs. Overall, the translator did not deliberately manipulate and try to distort the true image of Arabs in order to appeal to stereotypes held by Westerners. However, it is a fact that every translation can be considered manipulation since it is impossible not to change anything in the original and manipulate the original in one way or another. The argument that is based on the hypothesis that translated literature preserves and reproduces the established system of stereotypical representation does not always apply, as in the case of the translation of فخاخ الراحنة.

However, there is limited research done in this area and it is, therefore, suggested to further investigate in this topic due to the increased of translations of literary works from Arabic as well as the increased interest in the Arabic language, history and culture. This is particularly because translation is considered a powerful tool in reproducing stereotypical representations.

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