

## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

Unlike other texts, theatrical texts have not enjoyed great interest in translation studies. The translation of dramatic texts can be considered an area of research neglected by most researchers due to the matters involved in the translation of this genre, such as the sign systems, performability and speakability, body language, stage directions, pitches, and dialect among other things.

Most of the difficulties that lie in the rendition of play texts revolve around the issues raised above as well as religious or cultural aspects in the text that might need further explaining when the dialogue does not allow so. It is crucial to know that not everything is as acceptable in a target text as it was in the source text. Similarly, not every sign in the source text or even in the performance equals the same sign in the target one. One of the major challenges that erupts is the translation of rhythms, for instance, because finding an equivalence while keeping the rhyming aspect is almost impossible. A competent translator, as a result, should apply decision making and change a sign into an acceptable and comprehensible one in the target text with regard to cultural boundaries. Because of that, coming up with proper equivalences and deciding on a specific methodology of translating these texts can be a problematic issue. The translator hesitates between either deleting some of the cultural or religious references or terms in the source text or severely modifying those terms to avoid any unintended offensive equivalence in the target culture. Thus, a heavy load is put on the translators' shoulders to render the message intended in the original language to a foreign audience, leaving the same impact yet with faithfulness to the target language. Translators have to approach literary texts tactfully as their mission is complex and bears risks. Language is the greatest representative of the nation's culture. Therefore, the issue of culture must be taken into consideration and approached carefully by the translators.

As a student of literature and a translator, the dramatic field has always been an area of interest of mine, and so I have decided to combine translation with literature in this research, to further investigate the methodologies of translating theater and other forms of literary arts. The motivation of this thesis, therefore, is to

focus on approaches in translations of plays especially with cultural or political references. The thesis also seeks to identify the obstacles that translators most likely encounter when rendering dramatic texts from one language to another. It also aims at representing attempted theories to translate such texts in order to overcome those obstacles and to see whether the translation would turn out literal or free with respect to gender, linguistic factors, and the period in which the play was produced.

The texts chosen for the purpose of this study are two plays written by His Highness Dr. Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi: *Holaku's Return* and (النمرود) *Nimrod*. I have chosen *Holaku's Return* because the source was available and translated into Arabic. However, the name of the translator is not mentioned. *Nimrod* is chosen because it is not officially translated. It is chosen for the purpose of making recommendations as to how it is translated. Both plays are written in Classical Arabic and take place in a historical period of time. In the study, I will compare between each play and its translation from Arabic into English putting in mind the points previously mentioned and whether or not they would be suitable for foreign audiences.

## **1.1 Significance of the Research**

The thesis highlights the translation of the genre of theater and texts that are meant to be acted on stage. The research focuses on the methodologies used in translating theater and the problems that translators face when rendering a play text. Some methods in translating this type of text are further examined and discussed.

The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter One presents an introduction of the main points of the study and gives an overall description of the content of each chapter. It also outlines the structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two provides selective reviews of the translation studies background. It reviews Nida's theory of formal and dynamic equivalence, Newmark's semantic and

communicative theory, Catford's shifts, Reiss's theory of text type, Lefevere's notion of translating as rewriting, Jakobson's meaning equivalence and translatability, Vinay and Darbelnet's systematic translation theory, and Vermeer's *skopos* theory.

Chapter Three endeavors to define theater and introduces the genres of drama in expansion. It sheds light on the factors of speakability and performability and the features involved in a work that is dramatized to be acted on stage. The many procedures that follow the dramatization of a work like sign systems, stage directions and the semiotic level of the text are presented. The chapter then moves to discuss the translation of theater and whether it is a possible or a complex procedure. Problems that translators encounter when attempting to translate a theatrical text are discussed along with the methodologies presented to solve these problems.

Chapter Four gives an overview of the history of theater in the Gulf in general and in the United Arab Emirates in particular. The chapter also reviews the beginning of theater specifically in the UAE and Sharjah.

Chapter Five offers a brief biography of His Highness Dr. Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi as he writes about his childhood and life experiences in his own autobiography "*Sard Al That*." His role and many contributions in the rise of theater and education in the Sharjah Emirate are reviewed. The chapter also lists the Honorary Degrees and many positions he gained. His achievements and works are also mentioned.

Chapter Six presents the theater of His Highness Dr. Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi. Samples from two plays written by His Highness Dr. Al Qasimi are assessed. The first play *Holaku's Return* is discussed in detail with regard to stage directions and semantic level. Extracts from the second play, *Nimrod* are presented with their suggested translations and assessment as well as a short preview of each play.

Finally, Chapter Seven concludes the thesis, stating that translated Arabic texts have their own culture, and the translation should succeed to preserve the cultural or religious aspects of the source text. The chapter also revisits the research hypothesis and discussions, summarizing the main findings and suggested recommendations.

Because the thesis mainly discusses play texts, the focus is on rendering the text with regard to everything that is stage-related. The thesis also shows that

translation of such texts is not primarily practiced. The thesis, therefore, considers possible renditions and strategies that are preferred in order to tackle theatrical texts and motivates further translational studies in this field.

## Chapter Two

### LITERATURE RIVIEW

This chapter gives an overview of the translation studies adopted by theorists as it presents strategies and approaches towards translation. The chapter then moves to theorists who contributed in the enrichment of translation studies such as Nida, Newmark, Catford, Reiss, Lefevere, Vinay and Darbelnet, Vermeer and Jakobson.

#### **2.1 Nida and His Theory of Formal and Dynamic Equivalence**

Eugene Nida's practical work in the translation of the Bible since the 1940s was what paved the way for his outstanding theories in translation studies (Munday, 2008, p. 38). According to Nida, meaning can be divided into three sections:

- Linguistic meaning (borrowing elements of Chomsky's model).
- Referential meaning, which is the denotative dictionary meaning, and
- Emotive meaning or connotative meaning. (Munday, 2008, p. 39).

Nida breaks equivalences (or correspondences) down to two major ones:

- Formal equivalence: only focuses on the message itself. This focus is that of the form and content.
- Dynamic equivalence: in which the message of the target language should have the same effect in that of the original (Munday, 2008, p. 42).

For Nida (2004, p. 154), there are three basic factors that create the difference in translation:

- 1- The nature of the message
- 2- The purpose(s) of the author and the translator, and
- 3- The type of audience.

Nida strongly believes that there is an interrelation between form and content (or meaning and manner). Yet the meaning must always be the priority over the style.

His focus is on the dynamic equivalence believing that it is the most accurate method in translating from one language to another since the meaning is preserved and the message is the same in that intended in the source text, unlike formal equivalence which is basically literal translation.

In Nida's opinion, the translator has the absolute freedom to make minor adjustments in the target text (TT) to insure that the implications or messages have reached the receptor. Thus, the translation should convey both the spirit and manner of the source text (ST).

Nida also stresses that translators translate for variable types of audiences, ranging from children to adults, specialists to even average people. Because of that, the “decoding” of the text should differ accordingly. Translators have to know their audience in order to decipher the text into a suitable content.

In terms of cultural renditions, Nida (2004, pp. 157-159) argues that it is easier to translate the linguistic differences than the cultural ones, for the differences between cultures cause more complications for translators. The literal translation of a cultural aspect in the ST will inevitably be misunderstood by a target audience of another culture. Yet the tone and meaning must be both preserved.

The nature of the text surely determines the way in which this text is approached. For example, the most complicated of them all is poetry. Translation of poetry causes many problems than the other text types. The translator has to regard poetic factors like rhythm, assonance, meter etc. Despite the text type, the translator has to put the receptor's response in mind.

Although Nida admits that it is not easy to produce a complete natural translation yet, he stresses that the translator should seek to produce something somewhat equivalent in the receiver's language.

As a proponent of dynamic equivalence, Nida (2004, pp. 161-166) makes comparisons between this approach and the formal one. He stresses that there has been a great tendency during the past fifty years to apply the dynamic equivalence in translations. In his defense of the dynamic equivalence, he sees that it is an approach where the receptor or bilingual person would say, “This is just the way we would say it.” Hence it is basically “the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message.” And by “natural” he means that the TT must correspond to the receiver's language and culture, the context of the message, and the audience of the target language. This natural translation must involve two principles: grammar and lexicon.

In this approach, the translator can freely adjust the grammar or the word order, i.e., verbs in place of nouns or nouns for pronouns. On the contrary, the formal equivalence means that a translator should be adherent and faithful to the ST. This would result in a flat or absurd, meaningless TT that completely murders the beauty of the original. Formal equivalence is source-oriented; it preserves most of the form and content of the ST. For that, Nida says:

A consistent formal equivalence translation will obviously contain much that is not readily intelligible to the average reader. One must therefore usually supplement such translations with marginal notes, not only to explain some of the formal features which could not be adequately represented, but also to make intelligible some of the formal equivalents employed, for such expressions may have significance only in terms of the source language or culture (2004, p. 162).

## **2.2 Newmark: Semantic and Communicative Translation**

Peter Newmark has developed a theory which somewhat resembles that of Nida. He suggests a correlative approach to translation in which two methods are used.

- 1- Semantic translation: this theory aims at the rendition of the exact meaning of the ST where the content and language are both acceptable and intelligible by the receiver. In this type of translation, the TT is faithful to the original and is written to parallel the author's linguistic level. It is most frequently used in expressive texts. This approach, however, tends to over-translate and produces neologisms.
- 2- Communicative translation: in this translation, the TT is written in the receiver's linguistic level. It is mostly used in informative texts. It aims at producing the same message; it is simple and concise.

Newmark, however, comments that these two methods of translation should correlate and be applied together depending on the text in hand (Li Fang, 2010, pp. 28-31).

The only criticism of Newmark's strategy is that his language of evaluation still has 'pre-linguistic era' translation studies, i.e., translations are 'smooth' or 'awkward' while translation itself is an 'art' (if semantic) or a 'craft' (if communicative) (Munday, 2008, p. 46).

### **2.3 Catford and Translation Shifts**

Catford distinguishes between formal correspondent and textual equivalent. He defines a formal correspondent as any target language category, like unit, class, element of structure, etc. As for the textual equivalent, it is any target language text which is observed on a particular occasion to be the equivalent of a given source language text.

He identifies two types of shifts:

- a) A level shift: this is expressed by grammar in one language and lexis in another.
- b) Category shifts, these are divided into:
  - 1- Structural shifts: these are the most common shifts. This is formulated by the subject pronoun + verb + direct object structures.
  - 2- Class shifts: these shift from one part of speech to another.
  - 3- Unit shifts or rank shifts: this type of shift is when a translation equivalent in the target language is at a different rank to the source language. The term 'rank' means the linguistic units of sentence, clause, group, and word.
  - 4- Intra-system shifts: shifts that occur when the source language and target language have corresponding systems.

The pitfall of this approach is that all his examples are idealized and decontextualized. Further, he does not consider the whole text or above the level of the sentence (Munday, 2008, pp. 60-61).



## 2.4 Katharina Reiss and the Text Type Theory

The focus of Katharina Reiss is directed to equivalence, but in her case, the equivalence of the text itself and not of the word (Munday, 2008, p. 72).

She believes that translation is always subjected to international changes and stresses the necessity of figuring out a translation typology (2004, pp. 169-171).

Reiss sees that authors themselves determine the type of text they are going to produce before actual production begins. She proposes four types of texts:

- 1- The communication of content: informative text, which includes reference work, reports, lectures, speeches, etc.
- 2- The communication of artistically organized content: expressive type, like a play, a poem, or a biography.
- 3- The communication of content with a persuasive character: operative type such as advertisements or sermons.
- 4- Multi-medial text type; which is an additional type that includes: pictures, music, facial expressions, slides, and onstage scenery.

Reiss also affirms that written texts present a one-way communication; i.e., that non-linguistic elements are verbalized, like gestures, speed of speech, intonation, facial expressions, etc. Therein lies the difficulty in text analysis due to the lack of equivalent verbalizations, and the absence of feedback or communication between the addresser and addressee which results in the misinterpretation of a text. She also adds, “language is a temporal phenomenon and thus subject to the conditions of time.” (2004, p. 170).

Reiss gives three methods when approaching a text analysis:

- 1- The establishment of ‘text-type’ which we mentioned earlier to decide on the translation that matches.
- 2- The establishment of ‘text variety’ which aims at the classification of each text according to certain structured sociocultural patterns of communication. This concept, however, is still controversial on the linguistic level. It is not confined to one language or culture.
- 3- Analysis of style. It revolves around the selection of linguistic signs and the possibility of combination supplied by the language system.

Finally, Reiss stresses the importance of translation according to sense and meaning to maintain the unchangeable features of a content (2004, p. 175). This means that any implications in the ST should be made explicit in the TT.

## **2.5 Lefevre: Translation as Rewriting**

André Lefevre (and Bassnett) go beyond language to study the interaction between culture and translation. His focus is on the effect culture holds on translation and the way it governs the rendition. He also sheds light on ideologies used in the process of translation and the cultural move involved. Therefore, he takes into consideration factors like manipulation, power, ideology, and institution. To him, power positions are ‘rewriting’ literature. This very concept of rewriting is what is considered ideological (Munday, 2008, pp. 125-126).

Lefevre (2004, pp. 241-254) explains that ‘refractions’ are essential because they involve a rendition of a literary work from one culture to another while preserving the same effect of the original. The intention here is influencing the target audience the same way it influences the original audience. These refractions are to be found in criticism, commentaries, historiography, anthologies, plays, and teaching. By all means they are influential but unfortunately not given that much attention or study, probably due to their unfaithfulness to the original.

He also reveals that the literary system has what is known as poetics (code behavior). Poetics mainly consist of two components: a functional component (how literature functions in society) and an inventory component (symbols, genre, characters, and prototypical situations). He considers literature a system in the culture of society. However, a system approach never influences the evolution of a literary system. And the goal of a system approach to literary studies is making literary texts accessible to the reader.

Lefevre describes the literary system as being controlled by:

- 1- Professionals within the literary system, such as critics, reviewers, teachers, and translators.
- 2- Patronage outside the literary system, manifested in the powers that control literature along with its reading, writing and rewriting.

These patrons are:

- individuals who are powerful and influential, such as Elizabeth I in Shakespearean England.
- a group like publishers, political parties or the media.
- institutions responsible for distributions of: academic journals, educational establishments, etc.

Lefevere mentions the three elements of patronage:

- Ideological component: in this element, Lefevere insists that ideology is not constricted to the political.
- Economic component: this involves the payments of the writers and rewriters.
- Status component: this results from the economic component where the beneficiary should meet the patron's expectations.

Lefevere then divides patronage into differentiated, i.e., an author might achieve the economic component but fail to receive the status component that he seeks. In opposition to that is an undifferentiated patron when the three components are present.

Dominant poetics, thus, are composed of two components according to Lefevere:

- a) Literary devices: which contain a range of genres, prototypical characters and situations, and symbols.
- b) The concept of the role of literature: the relation of literature to the social system.

Finally, Lefevere insists that the ideology of the translator is the most crucial concept to be regarded in literature and translation (Munday, 2008, pp. 126-127).

## **2.6 Jakobson: Meaning, Equivalence, and Translatability**

Roman Jakobson introduces three kinds of translation:

- 1- Intralingual translation (rewording): interpretation of verbal signs by other signs of the same language.

- 2- Interlingual translation (translation proper): interpretation of verbal signs by other languages.
- 3- Intersemiotic translation (transmutation): interpretation of verbal signs by nonverbal sign systems (2004, pp. 137-138).

Jakobson claims that we can comprehend what is meant by a certain word or entity without actually seeing this entity in our reality. To explain this thought, he gives an example of the words 'ambrosia' and 'nectar.' We understand both of these words and in which context they are applied but we did not see them in real life. He argues that synonymy can be an alternative; however, he does not consider it an equivalence. For example, the closest equivalent of the word 'bachelor' is an 'unmarried man,' but if we put it into context, we find that, "every celibate is a bachelor, but not every bachelor is a celibate." However, "every bachelor is an unmarried man, and every unmarried man is a bachelor." Hence, there is no full equivalence between code-units.

Regarding some languages, Jakobson (2004, pp. 140-142) points out that there might be an absence found in grammatical categories. In Old Russian, for instance, it is practically impossible to remain faithful to the ST because dual (or plural) forms are translated by using numerals: 'two brothers.' So the result would be 'She has two brothers' or 'She has more than two brothers.'

Similarly, a sentence like 'I hired a worker' might cause confusion and supplementary information should be added to clarify if the worker was a male or a female, and if the action was complete. Also, in Russian the masculine cannot designate a female and vice versa. In Slavic and some other languages, 'day' is masculine while 'night' is feminine. In a situation like this, especially in poetry, the whole meaning and symbolism would differ and lose their flavor if not translated according to what suits the target language. Most sufficient alternatives can be loan-words, semantic shifts or neologisms.

Jakobson (Munday, 2008, p. 37) believes that there is a strong relation between the signifier and the signified (the spoken/written signal and the concept) and that together they form the linguistic sign. He describes interlingual translation as, "substituting messages in one language not for separate code-units but for entire messages in some other language."

## 2.7 Vinay and Darbelnet: Systematic Translation

Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet (Munday, 2008, p. 56) use comparative stylistic analysis between English and French for their model. Gradually, this model became applicable on most languages, not only English-French translations.

Together, they represented two fundamental strategies for translation: direct and oblique translation, where the latter is considered to be the last resort in a translating process. They also claim that translators might experience gaps in a target language. These gaps must be filled with corresponding elements to ensure that the final outcome matches that of the original. If, however, these methodologies are found to be insufficient, then the translator should resort to the more complex method; oblique translation.

Vinay and Darbelnet subdivided the direct translation into:

- 1- Borrowing: this is the simplest method of them all. It basically states that translators may use foreign terms in order to preserve the charm and sparkle of the ST. They even claim that well-chosen old borrowing is still being used and considered part of the target language. For example, French words like, *rendez-vous* and *déjà vu* are considered to be English.
- 2- Calque (loan-words): it is a kind of borrowing where a language borrows expression forms of another language. Just as borrowing, some semantic changes might occur in this type of procedure.
- 3- Literal translation: it is the word-for-word translation, and it is the direct rendition with regard of idiomatic expressions and grammar. It is the most appropriate and unique solution that is complete in itself. Yet this type of translation is commonly used when the languages of the ST and TT somewhat share the same family and culture.

If, however, these three procedures are applied and the result is an unacceptable translation, then the translator should opt for oblique translation.

Unacceptable translations mean that the TT:

- Gives another meaning
- Has no meaning
- Is structurally impossible

- Does not have corresponding expressions in the target language, or
- Has a corresponding expression but not within the same register.

Therefore, oblique translation presents four procedures:

- 1- Transposition: replacing one word class with another without interfering in the meaning of the message. There are two types of transposition: obligatory and optional.
- 2- Modulation: is a variation in the form of the message obtained by a change in the point of view. This change can be justified when a word in the TT turns out to be unsuitable or awkward. Similar to transposition, there are free and optional modulations.
- 3- Equivalence: where the same situation is translated by using different stylistic and structural methods. Most of the equivalences are fixed and repetitions of idioms, clichés, and proverbs.
- 4- Adaptation: is applied in texts where the situations in the ST are unknown in the target culture; therefore this type of “situational equivalence” is used (2004, pp. 128-135).

According to Vinay and Darbelnet, these seven translation procedures operate on three levels: the lexicon, syntactic structure, and the message (Munday, 2008, p. 58).

## **2.8 Vermeer and His *Skopos* Theory**

The skopos theory is part of translational action, since translation is regarded as collective translational actions based on a ST. This translational action, regardless of the form it takes, is conceived as an action. The action, hence, is a technical term that has an ‘aim’ and a ‘purpose’ and that is what the word *skopos* stands for. In addition, the action leads to a result, a new event, object, or situation. Translational action, therefore, leads to a target text or a *translatum*, which is the resulting translated text.

Vermeer further notes that specification of aim and mode is of great importance to the translator. He stresses the necessity of the definition of the skopos

and mode of realization if the translator of the text seeks to successfully fulfill his task. The translator, in Vermeer's point of view, is the expert in a translational action, and the final *translatum* is his responsibility. Because the translator is the expert in his field, his choices are to be respected, and he has to obtain much more knowledge in the field than others.

Usually, an author of a certain source text would not have knowledge of the target text or culture. It is not his responsibility to put the opposing culture in mind; rather, it is the job of the translator to put it in the frame of the target culture as well as the language. The ST is bound to a source culture and the TT is oriented toward the target culture. Still, it is possible that the *translatum* has the same function or *skopos* as its ST.

It is worth mentioning, however, that the process of translational action has an opposing theory, which is the trans-coding. It is purely oriented toward the ST. Regardless, there has to be an intertextual coherence between the ST and TT. Sometimes, a *skopos* could imitate a ST syntax or structure in a literary translation, this action, in Vermeer's view, is an excusable notion on the condition that the translator has to know the consequences of this action and the effect it might leave on the target culture and its audience.

Yet, some counterclaims of the *skopos* theory have arisen. Some say that not all actions have aims and that most of literary texts are aimless. Some even said that there are translations that have no goal (not goal-oriented).

In his defense, Vermeer answers that if an action is aimless, it should not be regarded as an action in the first place. And that if a given act of behavior does not have a goal, a manner, a result, or an intention, then technically it is not an action. He then argues that the creation of literature has to have a purposeful action behind it, claiming that a translation without a *skopos* should not be considered a translation whatsoever. Even pragmatic texts along with their translations must be goal-oriented, even if it was merely a news item; it just has to match the original, and that in itself is a goal.

The *skopos* theory has multiple applications: it refers to

- The translation process and its goal,
- The translation result and the function of the *translatum*,
- The translation mode and its intention (2004, pp. 227-232).

The skopos theory gives the advantage of the same text to be translated in various ways. This theory has two main rules:

- The coherence rule, which suggests that the translated TT and its receivers must correlate.
- The fidelity rule, which states that coherence must occur between the TT and the ST (Munday, 2008, p. 80).

Vermeer (2004, p. 238), then, gives an example of an epic which is a very long narrative form of poetry that revolves around heroic deeds. This example is of the epic of Homer's *Odyssey* which was translated into a novel as it changed its genre from an epic to a novel owing to a specific skopos.

The chapter has presented a selective review of the methodologies used by celebrated theorists in the field of translation studies. In Chapter Three, the focus will be on the definition of theater and its genres. It will also consider the possible methodologies in translating theatrical texts, exposing the challenges that translators deal with in translating dramatic texts. Moreover, the chapter will shed light on both explicit and implicit intended message employed in the original text and whether or not the translation succeeded in transforming these messages to the foreign audience.



## Chapter Three

### PERFORMING ARTS AND TRANSLATION OF THEATRICAL TEXTS

This chapter provides a definition of theater, drama, tragedy, and comedy. It also gives an overview of semiotic and sign systems. The chapter specifically considers the possible methodologies in translating theatrical texts and exposes the difficulties that translators encounter in translating such texts and the way translation should be perceived by the audience with relation to the religious, historical, or political connotations of the original text.

#### **3.1 Theater**

Ashoor (1983) stresses the importance of theater as a social art. He believes that theater is an art in itself that differs drastically from other genres of literature and stands on its own. It is a piece of writing that cannot serve the main purpose for which it was made unless it is acted on a stage and breaks free from the pages in which it was once imprisoned. Other than that, it is merely another written piece that might not seize the privilege of being shared with a live audience. This art would lose its so-called existence if it were kept between these pages. This audience, in Ashoor's opinion, is the key to success for theater where two-sided interaction is necessary. A novel or a poem is an activity that can be accomplished individually, but a play needs an audience to perceive it, not just an individual. If that element is absent, there is not a play to begin with. Additionally, it deals with human activity in reality and could be considered a minimized community; therefore, it complements part of human society. It mimics society and offers entertainment at the same time, as well as provides a place to reflect society's negatives in an effort to work out a solution or ridicule the situation. Because of all that and more, theater has stood out among other literary genres, and its value has increased since it was first known at the time of the Greeks and helped in the development of the nation's thought, civilization, and culture.

Ashoor, then, considers history in order to uncover the beginnings of theater in the Arab world. He points out that some historic relics of what seem to have been theaters in places like Lebanon, Tunisia, Syria, and Alexandria have shown that

theater *did* exist in Arab nations. But Ashoor asserts that these ruins were made by colonizers who built theaters as a mark of their own civilization while the people of these areas never participated in the facilities. He even refuses to attribute today's theaters in the Arab world for what is called *khayal al-dhil* (shadow plays) or *aragoz* (clowns) not because he disdains these earlier attempts but because the Arab countries' recent major development in this field cannot be based on such humble attempts. The real beginning of bringing theater to Arab culture was when people engrossed in art, such as Maroon Al-Naggash, and traveled abroad bringing back some of their experiences from European and Italian theater.

On the other hand, Bassnett states that Jífi Veltrusky believes that not all plays were written to be performed, and that many plays were written in the Medieval period just to be read. He also differentiates between theater and drama by regarding the latter as the whole while a text is a part of the whole (1998, p. 98).

Abdulwahab (2007, p. 9) reminds people that the original concept of theater began in ancient Greece, where the meaning of theater was 'to see' or 'to view.' Since then, many changes have occurred in theater, whether it is the construction design or material used to accommodate the development of its encompassing culture while the basics remained the same. Thus it does not limit itself to the mere construction as some might claim; rather, it bears a grander meaning that includes all forms of art and has a world of its own.

### **3.2 Drama**

The word 'drama' is defined in the *American Heritage Dictionary* (p.423) as 'a prose or verse composition performance by actors, play.' From this definition, the words 'performance' and 'play' are used as equivalences of 'drama,' meaning that they both revolve around theater or acting, and that also shows that the first seeds of plays were merely dramatic texts rather than the later branches like comedy or children's theater. The two terms might seem synonymous, but this thesis will demonstrate that 'drama' is specific to a certain genre of literature, while 'theater' bears a wider range of performable acts.

To begin with, the first element of a play is the text, and not just any text; it should be written specifically for the stage and to be performed. Of course, a

playwright has the full responsibility of creating the perfect text to be acted, putting in mind all the factors of performing on stage. Some scripts could be derived from a novel or a well-known story; even in this case, the text has to be altered skillfully in a dialogue suitable for the theater. Not everyone has the capacity to write a script because sometimes an author of a novel cannot develop a proper screenplay. Thus, a stage is a medium of communication and a vast space for the writer to express his point of view and send out his intended message whether it is explicit or implicit. Moreover, the dramatic structure of a play, typically, has all the elements needed in a literary work, like a beginning, middle, end, conflict, dialogue, characters, moral of a story, plot, climax, and sometimes even a narrator. Acts in plays take the place of chapters in a novel, yet the presentation differs, and contrary to a written work of literature, it succeeds in capturing the full attention of the recipient with the live motion of events.

Abdulwahab (2007, p. 2) explains a ‘performance text’ as a dramatic text meant to be acted on stage along with its instructions about the gestures and dialogue, etc. The director has the absolute freedom to interfere in the performance or even with the text according to his vision. The director is then known as the ‘author director’ because he directs his own play or vice versa. (My translation)

Bassnett (1998, pp. 94-98) explains that the term ‘translation’ is used to refer to the process of rendering a written text into a performable act. This term might cause confusion when using the actual meaning of translation. To avoid this, the term ‘performability’ has been suggested; however, Bassnett strongly opposes its use, saying:

One aspect of that confusion has been the continued emphasis on the notion of ‘performability’ or ‘speakability’ which is often perceived as a prerequisite for a theater translation. I have great problems with ‘performability.’ It seems to me a term that has no credibility, because it is resistant to any form of definition (Bassnett, 1998, p. 95).

In a relevant matter, performability is avoided by translators who insist on being ‘faithful’ to the original text, because this performability gives them absolute freedom to translate however they see fit.

### 3.3 Tragedy

The ancient Greeks exposed people to the two poles of theater: tragedy and comedy. Tragedy is imitation – or mimesis – of an action that takes place in real life. It is believed to have been a religious ritual that evolved into other mediums of entertainment through time. Imitation brings people to ‘catharsis,’ a term that, according to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, means the purification of the emotions by vicarious experience. Drama consisted of three unities as Aristotle elaborates in his *Poetics* (1953, p. 70): first, there is the unity of action – the incidents and events that make the literary work. Hence these events are presented through performing or *acting* on stage; and this action – like the story of the play itself – should have a beginning, middle, and an end. Second, there is the unity of time, where he stresses making the action of the play take one period, and it should not exceed this limit unless for a very short period of time. Critics have dwelt on the meaning of this theory, and some of them believe that what he considered to be the play should not exceed 24 hours whether from sunrise to the second sunrise or from sunset to the following sunset. Others analyzed it as special divisions of time units within the play. However, it goes without saying that Aristotle's theories became the standardization that the Romans applied in their theater.

Today's theater has elements that have replaced some of those used by Aristotle. They include elements like text, signs, plot, gesture, conflict, sound, time, visual effects, characters, symbols, and the message that the playwright wants to convey.

In reference to that, the interlingual and intersemiotic script occupies the widest range of the play itself. It plays the role of a mediator, since it is the only interaction between characters – or actors – and the audience. There is what Poyatos (2008, pp. 153-165) referred to as the ten interrelationships in the theatrical experience: relationships with spectator-play, spectator-character, spectator-performer, spectator-spectator, spectator-environment, as well as those related to the performers on stage: performer-play, performer-character, performer-spectator, performer-performer, and performer-environment. They are all entwined. The very dialogue previously mentioned is the center of the play with the gestures complementing and extending it; therefore, it has to be as far away as possible from

being oratorical but rather realistic and smooth with appropriate tone of voice as a normal dialogue that would be seen in real life yet with modulation and a message involved. A dialogue in a play, although very imitative of real life, still has to have its unique theatrical measure. It has numerous functions that serve to keep the audience's focus on the play. The text chosen by the playwright expresses the characters' dimensions. It uncovers their emotions, psychology, material state, and ethics. The spoken script of each character has to match its background and environment. Complex texts with varnished wording usually fail to keep the audience interested in the flow of the events. It is all up to the actors if they were professional and quick-witted to resort to improvisation at times when they see it is needed.

There are also characters talking with each other, talking *to* each other, characters whispering something that the other party needs not listen to, and this has to be believable to the perceiver with noting that the whispering is audible. Another interesting type of dialogue, called the soliloquy, is the one that Shakespeare was known for in most of his plays. A soliloquy is when a character simply thinks aloud so that he gets the audience involved.

### **3.4 Comedy**

According to Abdulwahab (2007), comedy is the other genre of staged plays; in this one, laughter is its core. From the earliest days of theater, comedic acts were made through deprecation of the opposite character on stage by concentrating only on the negative side and highlighting the physical or overall deficiency. Unfortunately, it cannot be denied that this concept in comedy has not changed much since then. In some cases, comedy is created by unfortunate events, unexpected coincidences, repetition of a word or a line, or speech problems like a stutter among other things. However it never reaches the high level of elegance that tragedy does. And in the Shakespearean period, the only major difference between a comedy and a tragedy is the ending. A happy ending is usually a comedy while the sad ending is the sign of a tragedy that usually ends with the hero or heroine's death.

There are different types of comedy such as romantic comedy, comedy of manners, comedy of ideas, and social comedy, just to name a few. There is also the farce, which is pretty much the lowest step on the comedic ladder; its storyline is

meaningless as it focuses on the laughter itself without giving any importance to the essence – thereby making slapstick.

### **3.5 Semiotics and Sign Systems**

Apart from the written text that needs to be memorized, spoken, and executed perfectly according to the director's instructions, there is also a number of nonspoken sign systems that should be presented throughout the play and deciphered by actors, and this category in a play could be listed under the visual effect column since most of the pro-nonspoken language perceive it as a visual art that needs to be noticed and appreciated, because a single pause might carry many possible implications more important than spoken words. For instance, a gesture might be applauded in one culture while offensive in another, such as pointing a finger to someone as if telling him to “come here” whereas in Arab cultures it is a disrespectful gesture. The translator has to know the targeted audience and culture, and by that, he makes the right decision making the necessary censorship, biases, cultural and religious aspects, semiotics, and pragmatics, etc.

Expression on stage has been broken down into five categories by Kowzan (as cited in Bassnett 1998, p. 99): ‘the spoken text is but one of these, there are bodily expressions, actor's external appearance, the surrounding place and finally nonspoken sounds.’ This simple categorization is the basic standard that is considered to be the guidelines for all performances.

Saussure (as cited in Abdulwahab 2007, p. 101) explains that a sign has two unbreakable units: the signified and the signifier. Both are interrelated processes that leave an impact on the observer – or listener – after looking at something that might revive a certain memory or past experience.

However, there are other signs to be acknowledged, such as the environment of the stage. The surrounding decorations on the stage should be convincing and serve the story by bringing it out to meet with the expectations of the receiver. Not only does this artificial milieu make the audience absorb the content with the semiotics provided by these decorations but it also aids the actors in adjusting to the atmosphere that is supposed to be portrayed in the play and helps them live the part.

Sounds, in general, and music, in particular, play a very important part within the flow of a play. Typically, a play is opened with music which is used to declare the beginning of the play to draw the attention of the audience. In the same vein, background music could either be joyful to uplift the spirit of the receiver showing him that it is a comedy, or gloomy and dark to emphasize the seriousness of the play if it is a tragedy or an epic. Echo is also used to signify a certain melodramatic situation. Nonmusical sounds, like the sound of thunder, raindrops, or howling wind all have iconic symbolism in them and were mostly used in Shakespeare's plays whenever a disastrous, negative event is happening. There are other sounds, such as a horse's snicker, steps, a heartbeat, a clock's ticking; all of which have similar implications. Additionally, the actors' wardrobe presents a great imagery to the observer, for clothes help to reflect the character, his class, or the period in which he lived. Also, lighting is used to focus on a character by the usage of spotlights or to give the scene a sense of gloominess by dimming the lights or by using different colors in lighting like red to signify danger, anger or evil.

To conclude the explanation of semiotics and symbols, the least common of them all is a sign that contradicts its basic category of the spoken text: this opposite category is silence. Silence in theater is used to show a case of miscommunication or loss of words. It is a case when words should not be used at all and silence is the only option or resolution. All these factors function as mediating bridges between both the play with all its cast and the spectator.

Yet the dilemma lies in translating these signs and semiotic utterances which were originally a 'gestic text' as Bassnett calls it. Not everything is as acceptable in a target language as it was in the original. And not every sign in the source text – or in this case a performance – matches the same sign in the target one. So a perceptive translator have to be resolute to completely change a sign into what is comprehensible in the target language bearing in mind the cultural acceptance and familiarity of a sign.

When translating a play, Poyatos (2008, p.112) argues that original texts have their own precise functions in which certain signs are inserted:

By providing a live multisensory translation – recreation of the original playwright's text, including both dialogues and stage directions, which, if mediated by a linguistic translation, offers us in fact a double translation through which some verbal and explicit or implicit nonverbal speech elements,

as conceived in the playwright's mind (and even displayed by the original cast) are unavoidably lost because of the different cultures at each end of the process.

### **3.6 Translating for Theater**

Is translation possible? Is there a source text that is impossible to translate? Such questions have been asked over the years of practiced translation. It has also been said that no matter what, language loss is inevitable, and it would never parallel the original. To answer this, it can be said that methodologies vary while theories have and still are pouring in. If a word or even a whole part of a script is somewhat difficult to translate to the target language, other replacing solutions can (and are) offered; among them are transposition, manipulation, and allusion depending on the tactful translator who is involved in the process. Perhaps the biggest obstacle in translating a play, however, is the accompanying gestures, paralinguistic sounds, signs, and all of the subcategories mentioned earlier. Eventually a solution can be adopted and a decision has to be made with regard to the cultures at both ends.

Vermeer (2004, pp. 233-234) explains that a text-producer, and resultantly, the translator is not thinking of a particular addressee when he is in the writing process. The addressees, however, vary in terms of intelligence and education, and this has to be regarded by the translator, an action that might be performed unconsciously by the translator. He also notes that it is not an obligation of the translator to adapt to the customs and usage of the target culture.

Schleiermacher (2004, pp. 48-55) proposes two ways for the translator to bring together the two most important poles of the text he is translating: his writer and his reader. These two methods are: either the translator leaves the author in peace and moves the reader towards him, or vice versa. But the process of combining the two results in unreliable consequences. In the first method, the translator is trying to make up for the reader's inability to understand the ST. This could be achieved by using "imitation". As a result, he is working hard to give the same effect that is felt in the original text to the reader in the TT, preserving the same impact. Yet the second method requires projecting the author not as himself.

Schleiermacher, then, discusses the difficulties that translators encounter in the rendition process. Mostly, the genres of texts that exhibit problematic issues are



literary ones, as in poetry and artistic prose since they hold features like rhythm, tone and alteration. These features are expressive and obtain most of the meaning a writer or a poet wants to give his readers. The heavy weight of rendering these terms along with their tone and stylistic features lies on the translators' shoulders while abiding by the rules of fidelity, dialect, and grammar. He suggests that translation will appear more natural and also give the intended pleasure it was originally written for if the translator succeeds in fully comprehending the original text and have the basic knowledge to render it, and specific flexibility is granted to our native tongue.

Even-Zohar (2004, pp. 199-200) argues that there are two ways in which translated texts correlate: the way their STs are selected by the target literature, and the way they adopt certain policies, norms and behaviors. He also notes that translated literature, as its original copy, could possess a repertoire of its own. Moreover, the leading writers can, in fact, produce the most appreciated translations. However, there is no actual clear-cut distinction between the original and translated writing. The difference between the two, if found, is but a thin line that is not at all disagreeable.

In his book, *Translating Literature: Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context*, Lefevere (1992) gives a historical overview of the main reason behind using translation in language teaching in the European educational system. He explains that the dominance of this practice has aided in defining thinking in Europe and the Americas. Back then, translation was either marked as 'right' or 'faithful' because institutions like the church and the educational system insisted that the translated books were 'rightfully' translated with respect to the original. Because of that, most theories and possible ways of translation were neglected.

Later, translation thinking shifted toward linguistics instead of literary texts. Hence, the main concept that governed the linguistic-based translation was equivalence which focused on the word as a unit of translation. Yet the problematic issue of equivalence was that it was considered vague, and translators were not able to agree on a kind or degree of the equivalence in order to create a real one.

Lefevere sees that there are three levels on which problems arise: ideology, poetics, and universe of discourse. He even urges translators to invent strategies to deal with problems regarding these levels. If, for instance, there is a clash between the ST and the TT with the ideology of the target culture, a perfect approach is to either delete the whole obscene or offending passage, or to make severe modifications because it is relatively hard to change a certain genre into another culture or literature.

On the level of the universe of discourse, translators opt to change the features of the target culture's universe of discourse or recreate the author's universe of discourse in a preface, footnotes or both. Also, at this level, translators may come across certain concepts, customs or even rituals that are apprehensible to the ST readers but are not so to the TT readers. For that, translators need to make decisions repeatedly until they fill the gap between the source and target cultures. However, Lefevere considers that translatable texts do not necessarily mean that such texts are worth translating. He adds that readers who are unable to compare between the ST and the TT are at the mercy of the translator who might create severe alterations to a translated text.

Toury (2004, p. 205) introduces the term “translatorship” which basically urges the translation to be able to ‘play a social role’ or to actually fulfill a function by a community. He says that translation activities should be seen as having a cultural significance.

Nida (2001, p. 10) suggests that when it comes to programs of language learning, some experience in translating should be introduced at advanced levels. He also points out that, “Linguists analyze texts, but translators must understand it.” It is the linguist’s task to do the analysis of a text from the outside, whereas the translator should view the text from the inside. The foreign words are, then, broken down into concepts which become the basis for the translation while preserving the meaning into the TT.

However, Nida (2001, p. 78) says that every language is rich with semantic features like rhyme, repetition of words or phrases, purposeful deletion, irony and sarcasm, indirection, euphemism, and more. All of which create possible obstacles for translators who should find the right equivalences in the TT.

All in all, Nida (2001, p. 107) admits to the lack of a fully acceptable translation theory because translation is ‘a very complex phenomenon.’ Many scholars have approached problems of translating from the viewpoints of linguistic differences between ST and TT. During the process of translation, the translator has to regard numerous factors such as, linguistics, sociolinguistics, sociology, psychology, culture, communication theory, literary criticism, aesthetics, and sociosemiotics.

Bassnett (1985) argues that there is a severe negligence of translating this genre of literature, that is, plays. She states that the main difficulties lie in the nature of the text itself: the paradox for the translator who is being asked to treat the written

text (with signs) as a literary one because the two texts (written and spoken) are inseparable. Problems also occur when translating rhythms or songs and that the text is full of a complex amount of sign systems and paralinguistic elements that need to be translated as well. She states that the main hindrance that has distanced theorists from theater studies is the emphasis on the text itself whereby the sign system is excluded. This has led to an imbalance due to giving the priority to the text. An example of this situation is Shakespeare's plays which are treated as literary texts and the concept of fidelity has to prevail in such plays. Her claim is that this fidelity to the playtexts of Shakespeare has restrained directors from making any minor adjustments.

Another problem is that, unlike poetry or prose, a theater text is time-bound because it is composed of dialogue and stage directions. For instance, if a translator is to deal with a naturalist dialogue, he might resort to using naturalistic speech rhythms which belong to a specific period of time. For that, Bassnett encourages the need for a constant updating of theatrical texts because linguistic features are continuously changing. A translator, therefore, has to pay attention to changes that occur in every detail of the language, including: register, tone, syntax, collocations, and style.

Bassnett (1985, pp. 89-90) then presents methodologies and suggestions to provide acceptable translations for theater. Some of these strategies include:

- Treating the text as a literary work with fidelity to the original. And this is the most common procedure used in this type of translation.
- Using the cultural context of the source language as frame text. This strategy urges the use of stereotypical images of the source language culture to create a comic situation or frame, e.g., comic foreigners and their distinguished accents. By doing so, the type of the play might shift from one jargon to another.
- Translating 'performability': this includes producing a fluent speech rhythm in the target language as well as producing a text that actors of the target text can speak.

Requirements of translating, as Bassnett (1985, p. 101) suggests, are the translator's awareness of the codes, literal adherence to a source language text, and focus on the intersemiotic translation.

There are many factors that govern the script and make it almost impossible for the translator to approach. Some of these factors, like signs and semiotics, are involved in the process of script; for others, the performance can change at the last minute and interfere with the rendering of the text into another language (Hermans, 1985).

Bassnett (1998) states that there was not much work done in the area of theatrical translation, and the problems remain the same. She also suggests that a script is literature and should be translated as such. After that she gives an example of what might result from a bad translation or one that is unacceptable to the author of the original work. She starts with Chekhov who regretted his plays being performed outside Russia after their translation, for spectators from other countries were not able to encode the Russian symbolism in his plays. After seeing the performance of his plays, Pirandello also became furious with the translators and the execution of his scripts by the actors. Seeing the issue from the author's perspective, he is not to blame for paying such concern for the translation of his works, because the translator has the ability to make the play either a successful or a disastrous piece of art.

In order for a theater translator to master this intricate translation, he has to immerse himself in theatrical theories; he should also engage in an intensive study of sign systems and develop an understanding of the inner messages then render them into the suitable translation as any person involved in the theater realm would do. Hence his execution of the translation would mark his credibility and qualify him for future translations of this kind. It would even be of greater assistance if the translator consulted the author of the play or the entire cast if he had doubts about some symbols or hidden meanings. A script does not take hypothetical translation where the translator might encode one thing while the author had meant something else. This notion is strongly affirmed by Upton (2000, p. 10) who suggests that the translator should consult with the playwright and get involved with the whole production team. Then she discusses the indifference toward the translator's role in the production process. If, however, a translator does not want to get involved in such deep complexities, wanting to limit his work to the mere process of translating the meaning, then the translated version should be handed over to a professional theatrical editor.

A better solution for the translation quality dilemma would definitely be self-translation where the author is the translator of his own work. Batty gives an example of Samuel Beckett who resorted to this step by being a bilingual writer and therefore translated and directed his own plays (as cited in Upton, 2000, p.63). Yet not all writers are that fortunate.

Of course, the task put on the translator's shoulder is undoubtedly immense, since s/he is faced with translating a form that demands great effort and knowledge. Translation for theater differs drastically from prose or poetry translations. Although they all belong to the same genre, the technique is never the same. The translated script should not sound at all translated. Instead, it should look and sound as if it is the original with respect to the receiving culture. Whether to domesticate or foreignize is entirely up to the translator, because there is a multiplicity of approaches to choose from.

As far as culture is concerned, Faiq (2004, p. 2) sees that theorists and translators suggest dealing with culture as if it is the essence of translation. Each translator has his own concept of culture and thus the resulting translation will vary accordingly. He says, “manipulation through translation not only violates the Arabic original but also leads to the influencing of the target readers and their views of the source culture and its people” (p. 4).

Asad says,

translating Arabic texts, with specific traditions for production, reception and circulation, into fixed texts has meant taking liberties, being invisible, violent, appropriationist, and subverter to shift the texts into mainstream world culture and literature (as cited in Faiq, 2004, p. 5).

Hence Faiq strongly believes in intercultural translations and finds it a means of bringing cultural concepts close, a window through which one culture perceives another.

In the same manner, Delabastita states,

being proficient in the two languages involved, the translator can reformulate the same message in the addressee's different linguistic medium. This fascinating dialectic of “sameness” and “difference” lies at the heart of translation and of the debates that surround it. (as cited in Hoenselaars 2004, p. 32).

As a theater translator himself, Hoenselaars (2004, p. 135) finds that most of the translations of literary works fall short of ‘liveliness’ or ‘sharpness’ of the dramatic speeches. He also defends the aim of translation of theater which is to preserve the theatrical dimension of a play.

In his article “The Master Discourse of Translation,” Faiq introduces to us the term *culguage* (cultural language) where a union between culture and language is established. To him, translation means transporting texts from *culguage A* into *culguage B*, where *culguage* (the blend from culture and language) is intended to capture the relationship between the two.

Faiq also expresses that translators face difficulties on the linguistic level (vocabulary, collocations, grammar, idioms, proverbs, etc.) and the cultural level (values, religions, perceptions, etc.).

Upton (2000, p. 2), again, insists that translation of theater is not a new issue, and that it has been around since the Renaissance. Most of these translations were from both Greek and Latin into English. This helped in the creation of Shakespeare's plays, as they were derived from earlier Greek or Latin works and would not have existed if it were not for the translations of these works.

Finally, this chapter has given the definition of theater, introducing its genres and dealing with them elaborately. It also exhibited the importance of theater as an independent, social art that differs from the other literary genres. It discussed the major elements of a play as well as the factors used in a dramatic piece of writing.

In the next chapter, the beginning of theater in the Gulf region in general, and the UAE in specific will be discussed.

## Chapter Four

### BEGINNING OF THEATER IN GULF REGION AND THE UAE

This chapter presents a general overview of the history of theater as an art performed in the Gulf generally, and in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) specifically, from its beginning, through its gradual evolution, and into what is now a celebrated and distinctive feature that captures the essence and culture of the UAE.

#### 4.1 Beginning of Theater in the Gulf

Al Taboor (1998) says that the Gulf came to know theater in 1925 when the act titled *Al-Qadhy bi Amr Allah* was performed by the School of Al-Hidayah Al-Khalifiyah in Bahrain. This simple act was the beginning of interest in performing arts which opened the gates to other similar acts in the following years. In 1932, the first play ever to be performed, *Wa mu'tasamah*, was produced by Ibrahim Al-Areedh, the founder of the theatrical movement in Bahrain.

In the Gulf in general, and Bahrain in particular, the art of acting developed gradually through small steps, first as a school activity and later as entertainment in clubs and cafés. Acting on school stages was not considered a minor activity; instead, it led to the fusion of readable material, thereby making it easily comprehensible and acceptable. School-based theater helped in the growth of students' mental abilities and in the expansion of their knowledge. It even had a role in resolving matters of handicapped cases, whether mental or physical.

Performing in schools and cafés was the first stage in the growth and development of acting in the Gulf. The second stage started in the Fifties and went on to the Seventies, while the third stage stretched from the Seventies forward during which the theatrical movement reached its peak.

Similarly, theater in Kuwait also began in schools where the first play *Islam Omar* was performed in 1938 by Al-Mubarakiyah School. Gradually, theater took

giant leaps, and in addition to that, the Kuwaiti theater witnessed an evolution that made it one of the most promising and celebrated theaters in the Gulf to this day.

Similar to the way theater developed in Bahrain and Kuwait, Qatar also encouraged acting in the schools where most of the plays presented were of historical and comic themes. Other theatrical events took place as part of scouts associations. However the real beginning of Qatari theater occurred at the Dar Al-Mu'allimeen School which presented two plays: one was in the local dialect, while the second was performed in formal, Classical Arabic. Yet, the official founding of the first theatrical troupe was in the year 1972 when it presented more than 33 acts. This led to the formation of additional troupes over the ensuing years.

As for Saudi Arabia and the rest of Gulf countries, theater sprang from schools and summer camps. In 1932, Husain Siraj introduced a number of poetic scripts, but unfortunately none of them were performed on stage. Ahmad Al-Sebai, a Saudi Arabian author, attempted to establish a theatrical troupe by founding the House of Quraish for Islamic acting, but none of his plays were ever performed. In the Fifties, a very celebrated artist, the famous impersonator Abdulaziz Al-Hazza'a, paved the way for the Saudi theater to be noticed. He used his voice to impersonate numerous characters –including female ones- and come up with situational comedies, most of which were improvised and derived from the traditional and folk culture of Saudi Arabia. Many of his acts were broadcast over the radio or performed on stage as he did some tours around the Gulf areas including Iraq.

Theater in Oman developed a bit later than it did in the other Gulf countries. It started in the mid-Seventies on sports playgrounds. The Theater of Youth was founded in 1980 but did not exhibit serious dedication to acting. The first theatrical troupe, Al-Sahwah, was established in 1987 by a group of amateurs who introduced the play *Al-Sahwah Al-Kubra*, which was followed by many other performances and plays. Theatrical activities slowly moved forward on stage and on television where they were portrayed in a strictly Omani traditional form.

Little by little, theater became a distinguished feature that is paid a great deal of attention whether it contains historical, political, or comic themes for entertainment purposes in the Gulf.



## 4.2 Theater in the UAE and Sharjah

There is no doubt that whenever a nation witnesses an age of enlightenment and maturity, that particular nation pays great regard to whatever serves in upgrading those seeds of cultural awareness; and that is exactly what happened in the United Arab Emirates in terms of theater and art. Theater took giant strides from being an amateur art practiced in schools and national ceremonies to becoming a distinguished feature of the UAE that reflects its own culture and thought.

To begin with, school theaters were limited to comic sketches that were pure entertainment. In Sharjah, for instance, this particular art was performed in Al Qasimiyah School by the late Bayat bin Huraiz. In 1972, school curricula were changed to include theater. Most of the characters were taken from Arab history where the language used was either local or formal Arabic. It was even notable that many female writers, such as Nourah Al-Shamsi, Fatima Lutah and Muhrah Al Qasimi, took part in writing the scripts.

Unfortunately, the Emirati theater was faced with many setbacks that delayed its progress. In contrast to other activities practiced at schools (such as sports, music, art, and scouts), theater was still looked down upon as a marginal activity with no recognition or encouragement whatsoever. Because of that, theater at that time remained severely limited. Another difficulty was the severe lack of financial support that would allow group members to act freely and go forward with their plans. On top of all that, theater lacked recognition as a real subject at schools.

Nevertheless if it were not for school, club, and café venues, the encouragement by the Ministry of Information and Culture for the development of theatrical troupes, along with the efforts made by the government and its rulers, none of this prosperity would have been achieved. Efforts were even exerted prior to the Declaration of the Unification of the United Arab Emirates because of aspects of civilization that helped in the uplifting of art – and consequently theater – into much higher levels. Some of these efforts coincided with the emergence of modern education as well as scholarships that came from neighboring Arab countries, in

addition to encouraging talented amateur youths to begin acting. These influences led to the UAE's current status of theater and other forms of art.

Perhaps the most essential burst of theater in the UAE occurred with the coming of Wathiq Al-Samarra'i, an Iraqi artist who was instrumental in beginning theatrical troupes both in Sharjah and in Dubai in the days when they were known as Trucial Oman or the Trucial States. As confirmed by those who were a part of the theatrical movement that begun in the UAE in the Sixties, the solid breakthrough of that movement started around 1963, which coincided with the arrival of Al-Samarra'i from Iraq.

Wathiq Al-Samarra'i first set foot in Dubai in 1963, then settled in Sharjah. After roaming the area and soaking himself in the Emirati streets and traditions, Al-Samarra'i began his journey to assemble the right number of talented local individuals to officially build the first stage in the UAE. After meeting with a group of promising Emirati youth while spreading his ideas, the stage was finally built. The Ruler of Sharjah at that time, Sheikh Saqr Al Qasimi, the eldest brother of His Highness Sheikh Sultan Al Qasimi, financially sponsored the building of the stage from scratch and literally from mere wood and basic materials.

*Min Ajl Waladi* was the name of the first play performed onstage in Sharjah. Written by Al-Samarra'i himself and attended by Sheikh Sultan Al Qasimi along with an audience from all over the Emirates, the play was a success with its simplicity and carefully studied content. As a result of its success, the play was followed by two more: *Al Adalah* and *Samiheeni*, in the same year and sponsored by Sheikh Rashid Bin Saeed Al-Maktoom. After producing his play *Min Ajl Waladi* in Qatar, Al-Samarra'i moved back to Dubai after being sent for by His Highness Sheikh Maktoom Bin Rashid, the honorary Head of the Youth Sports Club at the time, and worked on producing another play *Khalid Bin Al-Walid* that was funded by Sheikh Saqr Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi and shown in Ras Al-Khaimah theaters.

Later in 1969, Al-Samarra'i's final stop was in Abu Dhabi where he met with a few of the members of Al-Falah Sports Club, among whom was Jum'aa Al-Halawi. This early supporter of theater backed one of the first stages in the UAE located in Abu Dhabi in the Seventies. Together they produced a play named *Tabib fi al qarn al*

*ishrin*, also performed by the Club's members and attended by Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nihayan. (My translation)

The first theatrical troupe in the UAE was located in Sharjah and included youths from two clubs: Al-Orubah and Al-Sha'ab. This troupe was comprised of actors from Sheikh Faisal bin Khaled Al Qasimi, Dr. Abdullah Omran Trem, Abdulmohsen and Ahmad Al-Noman, Tha'en Jom'ah, Omar Al-Midfa'a, Obaid Al-Shamsi, Nasser bin Ahmad, Mohammad Hamdan and Abdullah Al-Motawa'a.

One of the limitations of Emirati theater is the shortage of the female presence. This might be attributed to the traditions of the Gulf in general and its conservative environment. Hence on most occasions where the play lacks a female actress, some of the male performers resort to playing the female role. Another alternative lies in bringing actresses from other nationalities to fill those roles, but that might be a critical flaw if the role requires a genuine Emirati accent which cannot be mastered by someone from outside the culture.

One of the female actresses worth mentioning is Mozah Al-Mazru'ee, a pioneering Emirati actress and the first ever to make a profession of acting. She has worked since the Seventies and has been named "The Mother of Stage." Her accomplishments have been celebrated with honorary rewards on numerous occasions, and she is committed to acting to this day.

When modern theater in Sharjah is considered, the first group that presents itself is the Theater of Arts Association, also known as the Sharjah Association of Folk and Theater, formed in 1974. This group presented many theatrical works with an overall local touch, with some of them being broadcast through television and radio. Some of the works were *Kolohom Abna'ee*, *Al Sheikh wa al tareeq* and *Al Oghniyah al akhirah*, among others.

Sharjah National Theater troupe began within the Sharjah Association of Folk and Theater; later it received recognition from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in 1978 and consisted of 55 members. Owing to the persistent motivation of the artist Abdulrahman Al-Saleh, the troupe moved forward and helped in the rise of the theatrical movement in the UAE through the plays it performed since 1975. These

included *Ayn al thiqah*, *Al Fireej*, *Al Fakh*, *Al Sultan*, and *Al Ghuraba'a la yashraboon Al qahwah*.

Another form of the performing arts is children's theater. Having developed more slowly than the adult form, it did not begin until the 1980s. The initial efforts of individuals were replaced by artists like Suad Jawad and Abdullah Al Ostath. The group was named Laila's Theater in memory of an Emirati girl who died of misery. The name also has many meanings derived from love and sacrifice in Arabic literature. These themes have been integral to the two dozen children's plays produced to date; this in turn has limited Child Theater in the Emirates due to the lack of specialized directors and playwrights.

Theater in the UAE has come a long way and evolved greatly, which can be seen through serious changes in the actors, directors, and writers themselves. Amateurs turned into professionals after they gained the requisite knowledge, experience, and capacity in the field by getting credible diplomas in acting, lighting, set design, and directing. The next step was to turn the discipline into a major.

Many factors aided in the development of the field. First and foremost, the Emirati government and the Center of Culture and Information – with the guidance of Sheikh Sultan Al Qasimi – have stressed the importance of theater and everything that is relevant to it in Sharjah. For that, a special department for theater was established in order to nurture this art and add to its development. Part of this included the establishment of special halls and training centers, coordination with other acts and troupes, theatrical production for all troupes, providing directors, nominating and financing the distinguished plays, development of Child Theater as well as a yearly maintenance for the halls and buildings. The Center of Culture and Information offered scholarships for those students who had potential; this allowed them to pursue their studies whether in universities or theatrical institutes.

Sheikh Sultan Al Qasimi gave theater a significant boost through the establishment of the Sharjah Council for Arts Development. A state decree was issued by His Highness Sheikh Sultan which stated that this council was charged with nurturing and developing the standard of traditional, folk, and fine arts, including theater, while embracing local talents and special cases in society. The assignment of Sheikh Ahmad bin Mohammad Al Qasimi as the chairman of the board was

announced during a meeting attended by all the participants and guests of Days of Sharjah Festival in 1994 by Sheikh Sultan Al Qasimi himself.

Moreover, the government supplied halls equipped with everything that a stage would need. These halls were located in the Emirates of Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, and Dubai. Halls like the African Hall, the Cultural Center, Khaled's Stage, and the Modern Theater were located in Sharjah.

Zaki Tolaimat, Sa'ad Ardash, and the late Saqr Al-Rushood helped in the making of theater. In fact in 1978, Al-Rushood was identified as the stage expert who exerted all his effort, finance, and expertise in the development of theater until death took him in the same year.

Due to the absence of special theatrical institutes, theater experts came up with theatrical courses and strongly stressed the necessity of offering lessons to those in need. The first course took place in 1981 with the insistence of Al-Munsif Al-Suwaisi, one of the experts who was asked for a helping hand in the field. The course focused on what is needed in theater in general: performance, directing, set design, audios, and even puppet theater. The result was increased training for those involved as well as graduation certificates.

In spite of the fact that theater in the United Arab Emirates was relatively fresh, it ventured to participate in Arabian theatrical events and festivals. By doing so, it presented its carefully-chosen, solid scripts to the festivals; the productions were strongly approved by critics and audiences. From 1975 until 1993, many local troupes participated in festivals in Arab cities like Rabat, Tripoli, Damascus, Tunis and Cairo.

The Gulf Theater Festival took place once every two years, in various countries around the Gulf. Such festivals had the following goals: backing up exceptional works, opening the doors for talented acts, gaining and exchanging experience, highlighting the traditions and folklore of each country and discussing certain causes in the society, and many more.

The three emirates that had taken part in these events were Fujairah, Ras Al-Khaimah, and Sharjah with each emirate represented by its own people. The National Theater of Sharjah was represented by actors Mohammad Yousif and Ahmad Al-Jasmi. Yousif Abduljalil and Saif Al-Kandari represented the National Theater of

Fujairah while the National Theater of Ras Al-Khaimah was represented by Ali Al-Barq and Abdullah Kandar.

For local theater festivals, the first to take the initiative was the emirate of Sharjah, with the Days of Sharjah Festival. The idea of the Days of Sharjah Festival came as a wakeup call to all the theater-related parties to promote the theatrical movement. Events like these increased the interest in theater and pushed the competitive urge among everyone interested in the theatrical movement.

With the leadership of Sheikh Ahmad bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, the Head of Information and Culture Center in Sharjah, the festival began in 1984. In the festival, ten plays took place on the African Stage in Sharjah. All in all, the festival reaped great reviews from the jury and people who attended the event. The success that the festival garnered led to the reorganization of this particular event annually. So it continued until the year 1988; then it took a seven-year break. The Center was interested in reviving the festival and met with all the theatrical troupes; the result was that the sixth cycle was reopened in 1994. The following year, the seventh festival occurred and was attended by Sheikh Sultan Al Qasimi along with various ministers and diplomatic figures. This special event has occurred annually since then with notable success. Through this theater, the genuine Emirati civilization and culture have been exhibited, which has inspired artists to preserve them even in the forms of various performing arts.

Abdulqader (1988) saw that with theater established in the Gulf, as well as festivals and educational programs, it was time to look at the plays themselves. He believes that Emirati scripts need of originality and newness. How these two are combined rests on the skill of the playwright or director. Another problematic issue was the lack of motivation for young writers in whom the UAE places its faith to add to the enrichment of the theatrical Emirati ground and avoid any futuristic deterioration in the field.

To accomplish all that, Emirati theater should focus on local causes and matters that deal with its own culture, the suffering of the people, and recent issues without neglecting global issues that concern humanity as a whole. The world is going through nonstop progress, and so should art and theater. Scripts need to project an honorable image of Emirati society and should maintain substance, as well as send

powerful messages while holding on to the Emirati identity and keeping away from imitations. All that and more should be reflected in any local work in order to open doors of discussion and make art the mediator between the case and the receiving audience.

As this short review of the Gulf and Emirati theater has shown, many institutions, artists, pioneers, and important figures, such as Wathiq Al-Samarra'i, contributed to the progress of theater in a time when it was frail. The role of the Emirati rulers and governments must be acknowledged, for without it, this rise would not have been possible. Thus, their very encouragement of the performing arts was what motivated theater to grow and be received hospitably by the nation. Furthermore, the Ministry of Information and Culture pushed theatrical troupes forward, and so did the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, which even declared the recognition of those troupes as important associations. The Emirati Institution also urged that troupes be offered yearly grants and subsidies. With all of these tremendous efforts by the United Arab Emirates, one can only be optimistic of what is yet to come.

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed the history of theater and its rapid rise in the Gulf and in the UAE. It is highly notable that the growth of the theatrical movement in the Gulf region has taken on a tangible dimension in the past few years. The next chapter will highlight the life of the ruler of Sharjah, Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, and his vital contributions to education and culture. The chapter will also exhibit his accomplishments, honorary degrees and positions he was assigned to, as well as his regard for the theater.

## Chapter Five

### HIS HIGHNESS SHEIKH DR. SULTAN BIN MOHAMMAD AL QASIMI

This chapter will highlight the biography of the ruler of Sharjah, Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, and his immense devotion to educational and cultural fields as well as his outstanding contributions in both areas. The various positions to which he was assigned and the awards he received due to his constant efforts to upgrade the standards of education in his country will also be reviewed.

#### **5.1 Childhood and Education**

In his autobiography, *Sard Al That* (2009), His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi uses self-narration to reveal the path he has traveled in knowledge, culture and education. He lets the reader into every personal detail of his life experiences in his own words. Further, *Sard Al That* documents historical events and obstacles in the Emirate of Sharjah even before the unification of the United Arab Emirates. His Highness also discusses his childhood, education and his deep concern for his country, tribal, and family conflicts, as well as his nationalist principles and political drives.

Remarking on what he has written in its pages, he says:

In sharing my autobiography, I hope readers will get to relive my experiences vicariously, and know more about that historical period. The vast legacy of heritage and the people's attachment to special landmarks like Sharjah Fort did not only help them define their personality but has given Sharjah a unique cultural identity.

His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi was born on July 6, 1939. At that time, his uncle Sheikh Sultan Bin Saqr Al Qasimi was the ruler of the Emirate of Sharjah while his father Sheikh Mohammad Al Qasimi was the vice president.



In 1948, when His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi was nine years old, he was enrolled in Al-Islah Al Qassimiyah School in Sharjah. The school, made of palm leaves and sackcloth, was originally the residence of Sheikh Sultan Bin Saqr Al Qasimi before it was converted to a school building. When a new school was needed, Sheikh Sultan Bin Saqr Al Qasimi bought the stone and gypsum house of a merchant named Ismael Al-Breemy, and His Highness's education continued in the more modern structure.

Between 1949 and 1950, Sheikh Sultan Bin Saqr Al Qasimi was recovering from his sickness in Bombay while his brother Sheikh Mohammad Bin Saqr Al Qasimi took his place in Sharjah until his return. Unfortunately, the return never happened because after the further deterioration of his health, Sheikh Sultan Bin Saqr Al Qasimi traveled to London where he died March 23, 1951.

At that time, a week was needed to return the Sheikh's body to Sharjah. During that wait, the family gathered in his palace daily. Most would pass the time playing cards while Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi focused on reading some of the books available at the palace's library. He memorized the titles of most of the books on which his uncle had written "this book is not for reading," such as *Al Shawqiyat* by Ahmad Shawqi and *Al Hayawan* by Al-Jahiz. Among some of the letters his late uncle wrote, he found the name of Al Mu'ayad Library. Along the way he would save up his allowance and send it to the owner of the library to buy the books his uncle had marked as unsuitable for young children to read and learned his uncle was correct. In addition to these books, he bought some novels and literary works. As a result of this contact, he was eager to find the library, which eventually happened while he was on his journey to Hajj.

In the meantime, Sheikh Mohammad Bin Saqr Al Qasimi was supposed to be the ruler of Sharjah after having been the vice president for the two years of his brother's absence and then subsequently ruling Sharjah. However, quarrels between him and his brother made him step away from the throne in favor of Sheikh Saqr Bin Sultan Al Qasimi who became the ruler of Sharjah on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May 1951.

During that year, Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi was in the fourth grade, and the study of English was introduced for the first time. However, due to the lack of students in the fifth grade, the school sought to move some of the fourth graders to fifth. For that, students were orally tested to find the perfect successor;

Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi was the only student taken to the fifth grade and was met with preferential treatment by his strict English teacher.

Owing to the paucity of books brought to the school from India through Egypt, a request was made by the students of Sharjah to the Prince of Kuwait, Sheikh Abdullah Salim Al Sabah who visited Sharjah during the same school year.

It was in March 1952 when an educational Kuwaiti delegation came to visit Al Qassimiyah School in Sharjah to check on the level of education in the school and the number of students. In the reception for that event, Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi was assigned to read the English speech.

After the summer of 1952, Al Qassimiyah School transferred to another building, also a house bought by Sheikh Saqr Bin Sultan Al Qasimi. In the same semester, Ali Abu Rahimah, the eldest student in the school became a teacher of fifth graders, as he wrote a play titled *Al Hattab wa Bint al Sultan* (that is, *The Woodsman and the Sultan's Daughter*) and acted in it. This play was the first to be performed in Al Qassimiyah School.

In “The Genesis of the Scout Movement in Sharjah,” His Highness introduces the reader to the details of the Scout Movement in the UAE and its beginnings. He states that the Qassimiyah School was put under the auspices of the Ministry of Education in Kuwait in the year 1953 – 1954 (2009, p. 7). In November 1954, the first Scout in the United Arab Emirates – specifically in Sharjah – was teamed up with Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi as the Troop Leader. Additionally, the first Cub Scouts was formed in 1955 under the lead of Sheikh Sultan Bin Saqr Al Qasimi. At the end of that year, and for the fourth time, the school was moved into a large building instead of the old house which then became a girls school.

It follows that in June 1955, and because of his sincere interest in reading, His Highness’s chance of visiting Al Mu'ayad Library arrived when the family decided to go to Hajj that year. On their journey to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, they had to stop at Bahrain, and that is where he started looking everywhere for the library until he found it. There, sitting on a chair was an old man who turned out to be the owner after whom the library was named. After introducing himself to Al Mu'ayad, he recognized Sheikh Sultan and greeted him warmly. The librarian then invited His Highness to choose all the books he wanted and take them as a gift. That evening he returned to the library where the old man seated him in a chair and presented him with a number of books.

After arriving at Mecca, Sheikh Sultan inquired as to the whereabouts of Bu Shnaq, a library he had noticed when he was at the Holy Mosque. There, the same scene repeated itself when the owner of the library Bu Shnaq offered the Sheikh a chair and busied himself elsewhere.

In 1956, the Sharjah Scouts had the chance to participate in the 10<sup>th</sup> Scout Camp in Kuwait to represent Al Qassimiyah School under the leadership of Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi who was responsible for the whole trip (2009, p.26).

Some talk about a private school run by an Indian man named D. S. D'silva who had been teaching English came to His Highness's knowledge; consequently, he enrolled in it in the afternoon while continuing to attend Al Qassimiyah School during the day. Besides English, students at that private school learned writing letters to trade companies, reports about some topics D. S. D'silva suggested, as well as learning to type.

The semester of 1957-1958 carried some changes in addition to school activities by Mohammed Al Mousa, a teacher in Al Qassimiyah School who was there to help raise the educational level. Amongst these activities was the Annual Sport Festival which was also attended by a number of Sheikhs of the United Arab Emirates and populations from Dubai, Sharjah and Ajman. In that year, a play was performed for the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Ghunaim titled *Al Muro'ah al moqanna'ah (The Masked Ardency)* in which His Highness played the lead character, Jabir Atharat Al-Kiram. The money raised from the tickets was intended to build additional classes for the school.

In September 1959, the Culture Club in Sharjah was reopened by Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi after it had been closed for four years because of the departure of Sheikh Khaled Bin Sultan Al Qasimi to Saudi Arabia. The club was first established by some Sharjah youngsters in 1952. In the past, the club's activities were restricted to cultural issues, but after its reopening, it became the center of the football team under the British Ministry of Labor in Sharjah. People also gathered there just to play dominos and cards.

Later that year, it was decided that students would continue the rest of high school in Al Shuwaikh High School in Kuwait. Throughout his years in Al Qassimiyah School and in Kuwait, Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi ranked in first place and participated in most student activities. He was the scouts' first

sergeant and the head of the football team. He also took part in sports festivals as he took first place in the 100-meter race, second place in the 400-meter race, second place in high jump, first in broad jump, and first in the obstacle race.

After coming back from Kuwait in 1961, His Highness formed a football team named Al Ettifaq which he then disbanded to form another named Al Sha'ab in 1963. During one of the matches he participated in, he had an injury that affected the bone and prevented him from ever playing football again.

During this time, His Highness was offered a job as a teacher in the Industrial School in Sharjah. He taught English and Mathematics there for two and a half years.

In 1962, His Highness suffered the loss of his father. Sheikh Mohammad Bin Saqr Al Qasimi, who despite receiving treatment in Lebanon, Bahrain, and India, died of complications from two strokes. He was buried without the knowledge of Sheikh Sultan who was in Ras Al-Khaimah at the time.

A year later, at the end of May 1963, Sheikh Sultan traveled to Alexandria to have his bone injury examined and again to Cairo for the removal of his appendix. While there, he met with some old friends who were at Cairo University; they urged him to continue his studies in the Police College, which accepted students with junior high school degrees. On his return to Sharjah, he resigned from his teaching position to register in Dubai High School.

While he was in Cairo, a stage had been built in Dubai High School, and the first two plays were performed, one in August and the other in September 1963. Both were directed by the Iraqi director Wathiq Al-Samarra'i. While he was a student in the same high school and the manager of Nadi Al Sha'ab Al-Riyadhi (The People's Sporting Club) in Sharjah, Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi wrote, directed, and acted the roles of two main characters in his play *Wokala'a Sahyun (Agents of Zionism)*. Unfortunately, the club was later closed due to the protests against the play.

In 1965, Sheikh Khaled Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi was assigned by the British Royalty to be the ruler of Sharjah while Sheikh Saqr Bin Sultan Al Qasimi was displaced and forced to leave Sharjah to stay in Bahrain. Although Sheikh Sultan was not satisfied with the way that the throne was obtained –through the British Royalty – his brother offered him any position he wanted, but he declined since he planned to continue his studies in Cairo. Nonetheless he insisted, and Sheikh Sultan agreed to temporarily be the head of the Municipality while authorizing Sheikh Saud Bin Sultan Al Qasimi to be his vice chairman. Within two months, he traveled to

Cairo after being accepted in the College of Agricultural Engineering from which he gained his bachelor's degree of Science in Agricultural Engineering in early 1971.

When His Highness returned to Sharjah, he met Carl Hegges, a professor in the College of Agricultural Engineering at the University of Arizona. In an amazing twist of fate, Hegges's taxi driver stopped near a supermarket to ask someone, as it turned out, Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, for directions to Sharjah Airport. His Highness entered the taxi and introduced himself to Hegges. After Sheikh Sultan had personally given the professor a ride to the airport and discussed a possible project in Abu Dhabi, Hegges offered him the opportunity to obtain a master's degree from the University of Arizona, to which he agreed.

Sheikh Sultan's next milestone was to be assigned as the Minister of Education for one year. In 1972, he succeeded his late brother as the ruler of Sharjah and a member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates, a decision that was agreed to by all of the members of Al Qasimi family, thereby making him the 15<sup>th</sup> ruler of Sharjah. He then established the University of Sharjah and American University of Sharjah in 1997 as he became their president.

## **5.2 Honorary Degrees and Positions**

According to the *Curriculum Vitae* by the Al Qasimi Publications, His Highness earned his doctorate in Philosophy with Distinction in History from Exeter University in the United Kingdom (UK) in 1985 and another in Ph.D Political Geography from Durham University, UK in 1999. His educational contributions have been met with more than 12 honorary doctorate degrees from 1983 until this very day by many countries, including Pakistan, Sudan, Russia, Armenia, Germany, Canada, Jordan, Egypt and the UK.

The latest of these degrees are as follows:

- Honorary Doctorate Degree in Administration; University of Jordan in recognition of his efforts in the scientific research and academic fields in the UAE and Arab world in 2008.

- An Honorary Doctorate Degree in Arts at the University of Sheffield in appreciation of his efforts in spreading Arab and Islamic culture and civilization in November 2008.
- An Honorary Doctorate Degree in Humane Letters in recognition of his generous contribution to education and culture at the national and international levels; Cairo, Egypt; 11 February 2009, just to name a few.

Among the honorary positions His Highness has filled are the following:

- Honorary President of Union of Writers of Egypt in 2001,
- Honorary President of Islamic International Organization for the History of Science in 2008,
- Honorary President of Arab Theater Institute in 2008, and
- Honorary President of the Union of Arab Universities in 2009 as well as five other positions with which he was honored.

Furthermore, he received seven medals and 17 awards, including:

- The Human Rights Medal from UNESCO in recognition of his support of the education of deprived children in France on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 2003,
- UNESCO's Avicenna Gold Medal in recognition of his contribution to the promotion of culture in 1998,
- The Gold Medal from the Union of Arab Universities in recognition of his support for interaction and collaboration among Arab universities in Jordan in 2009.
- Centennial Shield Award from Cairo University in 2008 for his contributions to the Arab cultural and intellectual movements.

Sheikh Sultan was honored three times with the Distinction Trophy Award. The first was in Cairo in 2005 from the Organization of the Arab Scouts to honor his support of the scouts movement worldwide and specifically in the Arab world. The

second was in 2007 by the Union of the Egyptian Actors for his contributions to Arab culture and the performing arts. Finally the third one was granted by the International Arab Theater Organization in 2008 in Cairo to acknowledge his support of the role of theater in cultural dialogues between people of the world.

His Highness also received the Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Award for 2008 as the Distinguished Personality of the Year to honor his persistent services to upgrade the standards of education and his contributions to the fields of science and cultural education globally. He was also recognized for his leading role in preserving Arab and Islamic Heritage and Culture on April 6, 2009, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). Most recently, the Zayed Book Award in Abu Dhabi honored him with the designation of “Cultural Personality of the year 2010” in recognition of his contributions to promote Arab culture and nurture Arabic Literature in the Arab World.

### **5.3 His Accomplishments**

Since his succession to his late brother's throne, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi has contributed to the foundation of many organizations, institutions, and museums, including Al Islah School Museum, Sharjah Archaeological Museum, Sharjah Calligraphy Museum, Sharjah Heritage Museum, Sharjah Arts Museum and Contemporary Arts, Sharjah Theater Institute, Sharjah Public Library, and Al Thiqah Club for the Handicapped.

Two of the major institutions that bear his name, as mentioned earlier, are the American University of Sharjah and the University of Sharjah. Other institutes that are worth mentioning are Sharjah Police Academy, Sharjah Academy of Scientific Research, Sharjah Institute of Technology and the Dr. Sultan Al Qasimi Center of Gulf Studies.

Moreover, His Highness helped in the establishment of non-governmental organizations to encourage interactions between governments and societies. He also founded the Sharjah Consultative Council and the Municipal Councils within towns and cities of Sharjah. The Sharjah Creative Thinking Foundation, which resulted in

the publication of an Islamic Encyclopedia in Arabia, was established by Sheikh Sultan.

The Sharjah government with the aid of the Department of Culture and Information, which His Highness established in 1981, organized the annual International Book Fair in Sharjah under His Highness's guidance. This event, having begun in 1982, lasts for ten days and showcases books from all around the world and includes countless categories. In 1989, he opened Sharjah Television, and in 1997 it joined the satellite service.

Regarding libraries, part of the plan to encourage knowledge and reading was to provide all the families in Sharjah with home libraries. Sheikh Sultan has also established a modern web of libraries and contributed to the modernization of school libraries.

Adding to that, His Highness has adopted the idea of the Touring Sharjah Cultural Festivals that helps in exhibiting aspects of cultures – specifically the Arab and Islamic ones.

Among the other projects His Highness founded are the Care Center for old people in 1986, the Islamic Art Festival from 1998 to the present, the Annual Arab Children's Convention since 1998 under his sponsorship, and the initiation of the Sharjah Excellence Award for the handicapped.

These are but a few of the many organizations Sheikh Sultan founded. He had numerous achievements in many fields which immensely aided in the development of the Emirate of Sharjah in all of its fields, not only in education but also in culture, society, economy, civic awareness, arts, science, heritage, Arab identity, commerce industry, and agriculture.

#### **5.4 His Books and Plays**

His Highness has written approximately 28 publications all of which have centered on history and politics in novels and plays. Most of these works were translated into languages such as Urdu, English, Russian, Spanish, Persian, German, and French.

Several of Sheikh Sultan's plays were performed. They are as follows:



- 1- *Shamshoun Aj-jabbar (Samson)* in 2008,
- 2- *Al-Namrood (Nimrod)* in 2008,
- 3- *Al-Eskandar al-akbar (Alexander the Great)* in 2006,
- 4- *Al-Waqe', Soura tebq al-asl (The Reality, Identical Copy of the Original)* in 2000,
- 5- *Al-Qadiyah (The Case)* in 2000, and
- 6- *Awdat Holaku (Holaku's Return)* in 1998.

## 5.5 His Regard for Theater

The idea of holding a World Theater Day to celebrate plays and encourage this art form was presented in 1961 in Vienna. When those in attendance approved of the concept, the event was celebrated on March 27, 1962, and has been held ever since.

Under its motto “Thirst for Dialogue,” the Organization of the World Theater Day in 2007 chose His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi to give his speech titled “A Message to the Theater People.” He opened his speech with greetings and sincere gratitude to UNESCO for its encouragement of education, science, and culture worldwide and extended his thanks for the International Theater Agency. He then talked about the debate around modernizing the Arab Theater and raised the issues involving theater in general and its place in the Arab world.

Following that, His Highness spoke about the role of theater in his life and its impact, as well as his devotion to this genre of literature. He remarked, “It was during my early school days that I was fascinated by the theater, that magical world which captivated me ever since.” Finally, he concluded by saying, “We are mere mortals, but the theater is as eternal as life itself.”

In her 2009 study, *Al fan al masrahy wal riwa'ey enda sahib al somo al Sheikh al doctor Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi*, Dr. Zainab Jakly gives an overview of His Highness's life while tackling some of his novels and theatrical works. A rather interesting fact that is worth mentioning is his continuous stress on the value of reading, for he sees that Sharjah is the nation of “Iqra'a.” The result of this commitment is that he has his own personal library that measures 36 meters by 25

meters. It has also been said that he likes waking up at 4:00 in the morning to read (2009, p. 19).

Sheikh Sultan's deep love for theater shows in his initiation of Sharjah Theater Days that began in 1984 as has taken place annually from March 27 until April 6. This event has been supervised by the Ministry of Culture and Information and is attended by many visitors, who are interested in theater, from all around the world. He also initiated the Theatrical Excellence Award for those who have contributed to the rise of theater and to support writing in this area of art. All of these efforts have led to the undeniable stature of the emirate of Sharjah, hence; it has become the meeting place for thinkers and the literary.

With strong historical underpinnings, His Highness's plays lean toward the tragic side; his plots revolve around "tragedy" and exhibit his intense sense of patriotism. As we read his plays, we find two interesting themes. The first is a trace of bitterness for what is happening to the Islamic nation throughout history. And the second is the call to bring back the past glories of the Islamic and Arab nations.

In his plays, Sheikh Sultan reflects reality by squeezing the surrounding society into a textual content that showcases many elements, such as the debates around Arabs, Muslims, and Westerners and presenting a case of sorrow for the loss of Islamic and Arab civilizations and triumphs in an attempt, in my opinion, to retrieve those past glories. Perhaps through this tragedy, the writer performs what we mentioned earlier about the purification of the soul – in this case, the nation, by unveiling these experiences to the public.

History is the method His Highness chooses to discuss such cases because of the strong message history bears and due to his belief that history is literally repeating itself through the centuries. And that is what shows in his plays which will be analyzed in the next chapter.

For example, in his play *Al-Qadiyah (The Case)*, Sheikh Sultan mainly talks about the sorrowful fate of Andalusia, stressing the idea that history is repetitive, presenting realistic characters, events, and places taken from traditional resources. In the play, he sheds light on the principle of victory which can only be accomplished through unity, a notion expressed by the main character of the play: Yousif Bin Tashfin. The playwright warns about the lurking foes of both Islamic and Arab cultures. He uses a dramatic style in which two characters create a linkage between

the past and the present: the first character is named “The Case,” while the second is the witness of history.

The presence of female characters in His Highness's works is also dominant. In his works, the female characters have essential roles. In the play, an influential female character is introduced. She manifests bravery as she carries her weapon to stand in the face of the enemy and cuts her own tongue lest she reveal any secrets to her enemies. Another female character is King Abu Abdullah Al-Ahmary's mother who portrays conscience and positivity when she continuously advises her son in terms of righteous decisions toward the peoples and the nation.

In terms of lamenting on past Islamic glories, *Al-Waqe', Soura tebq al-asl (The Reality, Identical Copy of the Original)*, focuses on the conflict between the West and the East. It reflects some aspects of victory and defeat by projecting a message about the power that the Islamic nation once had despite the mightiness of the enemy with adoption of Saladin as a provoking example.

On the other hand, one of the notable characteristics of His Highness's novels is the absence of dialogue; he explains it by saying that these novels are not fictional plots but merely historical incidents adapted from the surrounding reality, i.e., they tell stories and document truthful events. His novels, as his plays, share the emphasis of Islamic and Arab glory of past eras.

I believe that his novel *Al-Ameer al-tha'er (The Rebel Prince)* symbolizes His Highness's revolt against the colonizer, since the storyline centers on a patriotic prince who refuses to succumb to the subservience of outer forces especially the West. This plot exemplifies a period of time when His Highness resented the Western dictatorship over the Arab world and even took actions to demonstrate this refusal to surrender. The novel goes on to narrate the refusal of this prince to yield to the Persian Empire as well as evicting the Dutch from the Arabian Gulf.

Another novel is *Al-Hiqd A-Dafin (Deep-Seated Malice)* which uncovers the Portuguese spite against Muslims to an extent that they actually committed brutal massacres in the Arabian Peninsula, placed anarchy within the Islamic world, and intended to depredate the body of Prophet Mohammad (Peace Be Upon Him) in an attempt to bargain for the sacred lands in the Arab world.

In *Ash-Sheikh al-abyadh (The White Sheikh)*, the writer uses pathos to tell a story about an American man who was given two options: stay in the Arab world or return to his original country. Without much thought, the man, after living a long time

among Muslims and converting to Islam, chooses to stay with his Arabian wife and children in the Arabian country. The plot focuses on the idea of “living together” within a community where one feels at ease despite one's color or religion. And so, owing to the good treatment this man received, he felt as a foreigner to his own country and favored living among the Muslims who embraced him since he was nine years of age. The novel, therefore, ends with the Arabian tribe honoring this faithful man by making him their Sheikh.

In conclusion, we can say from all that we have reviewed, not only does His Highness possess talent in the field of literature and writing, being motivated mainly by the live incidents around him as well as the historical calamities the Arab and Islamic world have witnessed, but also he has led this nation and specifically the fortunate emirate of Sharjah to its highest ranks in society among its neighboring Arab countries. This outstanding status would not be present if it were not for his consistent efforts and forward-thinking plans to raise this nation to its highest standards.

In Chapter Six, a study of two of His Highness's plays will be presented. The study will analyze *Holaku's Return* and its translation, discussing whether or not the translation has succeeded in grasping the original intended meaning. The second play, *Nimrod*, will be assessed and translated in terms of the methodologies previously presented.

## Chapter Six

### ANALYSIS OF THE PLAYS OF HH SHEIKH SULTAN BIN MOHAMMAD AL QASIMI: HOLAKU'S RETURN AND NIMROD

In this chapter, the two plays *Holaku's Return* and *Nimrod* are analyzed. Both plays are written by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi. The main focus of the study concentrates on *Holaku's Return* as it is originally written in Arabic then translated into English. Some selected extracts from *Nimrod* are studied provided with my own translation. The analysis will be mainly about the terms, structure, sign systems, linguistic factors, syntax, pitch, performance and stage directions used in the translation.

#### **6.1 The Theater of Dr. Sultan Al Qasimi**

If we look deep into most of the works of Dr. Al Qasimi, we would find that they are borrowings from past stories to correlate them to present events. We would also notice his overwhelming regard for history. As we previously mentioned in Chapter Five, he gets his inspiration from the history of nations as he believes that history repeats itself and that man should learn from the past and never look past his background.

Over and over again, he keeps lamenting, so to speak, the past glories that our Arab and Islamic nations had witnessed. History is a vast and rich field from which a writer could derive his characters and plots, taking into consideration the credibility of the historical data involved. It could also be a disguised method to reflect the current events of our world in an attempt to rectify or criticize our present policies.

Al Qasimi's plays, therefore, bear illuminating messages and they offer a pessimistic vision of the bitter reality of this nation. They open our eyes by taking us

back to the political defeats and unfortunate collapses. By admitting to these defeats, the nation could move on to a hierarchical rise.

When looking at the technicalities used in Dr. Al Qasimi's plays, we find that he provokes the perceiver's enthusiasm and sense of patriotism. This occurs by projecting unfortunate incidents throughout the Arab and Islamic history as well as using the element of revolutionary motivation.

In the atmosphere of a theatrical presentation, visual and audible techniques play a very vital role in achieving the message it is supposed to deliver. These techniques include sounds of horns, brightening or dimming of lights, screams of the mob, flames, crashing sounds, swords, horses' hooves, and neighs, etc.

To ensure that his work would not be exposed to random interpretation, Dr. Al Qasimi typically opens with his own prologue to explain his motives behind writing this work and his overall view of a certain case.

Despite all the negativity displayed in his works, a fair amount of regard is given to the positive events the nation has witnessed. Usually, he tends to give us hope to build upon our rise from catastrophes.

There is always the presence of contrast portrayed in good and evil, rise and fall, poor and rich, weak and strong, etc.

The dialogue tends to include questions. Some are not answered, probably to leave the audience in a state of query or to add a linguistic depth to the scenario (Sabri, 2007).

All in all, we can say that his works exhibit tragic historical epics which reflect our present and even depict the futuristic events in order to avoid repetitive prostrations. Add to that, the fact that these particular plots are written by a ruler gives him the power to let us in on the invisible things that happen within the walls of authority with no censorship. Portions of the storyline tackle the corruption of those in power and the inner treason and the misuse of authority.

## 6.2 The Analysis

### 6.2.1 Holaku's Return

Who is Holaku?

From what we read in history, we find that Holaku was the grandson of the notorious Mongol leader Genghis Khan. Following in the footsteps of his grandfather, Holaku became this barbaric, vicious ruler of the Mongol Empire from 1217 – 1265. His reputation is that of a malevolent emperor whose army spread through Persia, Baghdad, and Damascus and enfeebled the Islamic strength (Al Qasimi, 2004, p.46 ).

In the play, the character of Holaku symbolizes numerous things: firstly, his character stands for the recent threats and enemies of the Islamic and Arab nation that continue to attack until this very day. These sad events that happened in the past are recurring in the present and can be seen in the attacks over Iraq and Palestine by other "Holakus."

Secondly, Holaku is tyranny incarnate, so he could actually symbolize intangible things invading our nation such as an attack, danger, tyranny, or occupancy by other non Islamic countries. Thus, Holaku would relate to the Western or Israeli colonizer if we were to see it from certain angles.

Holaku, in this play is the protagonist while the Caliph Al Mustasim is the antagonist. These two characters are rivals and opponents as Al Mustasim is overpowered by the strength of Holaku. Al Mustasim seems to be this indecisive, weakling Caliph in the play trying his best to avoid war and succumbs to Holaku's needs.

The translator of *Holaku's Return* remains anonymous. S/he has decided to work with the formal equivalence in the translation process as s/he seldom resorted to the dynamic depending on the text. The choice of the wordings was simple and far away from complication and comprehensible to all.

When it comes to translating a dramatic playtext from Arabic into English, aside from the techniques that have to be acknowledged such as pragmatics,

semantics or syntax, the translator has to bear in mind that this text will be performed, thus s/he has to pay attention to the performability aspect.

### **6.2.1.1 The Title**

To begin with, a title of any work of art is the gateway to have either a full or partial understanding of the intent of that work.

This play could have been simply entitled *Holaku*, so why add the "return" of Holaku?

The answer would be that a "Holaku" has already been in our lands and his coming back is inevitable because of the long slumber the Arab world is experiencing. This return is that of the actions of Holaku, which include the attacks, aggressions, and invasions directed to the Arab and Islamic world. Accordingly, the linguistic connotation that the word "return" bears is a negative one that could be worse than the one before it. Hence in this context, this is exactly what the writer aimed at implying.

The return of Holaku becomes a recurrent theme as the writer ends his play with the lines spoken by the Baghdadi:

“Kick out Ibn Al Algami from your countries, for Holaku is coming back!”

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 44).

So the danger of Holaku's return evolves into a *déjà vu*. He will never be gone. His return is a decisive fact, and due to that, there will be another Baghdad and another Palestine suffering from the same tragedies over and over again if no force will stand in their way.

### **6.2.1.2 Goals and Aims**

As mentioned previously, the play aims at recollecting lost glories and reminiscing on the past, then projecting them into the present and unfortunately into the future as well. Since history is recurring, the implied message in the play is to



learn from those past losses and not stop at remembering the past without moving forward.

The play harshly criticizes the Arab situation in a bitter tone. It also aims at enlightening the youth in particular since they ought to be the solid pillar of the nation and its definite hope. It is deeply noted that most of the unarmed attacks on any nation are those sent by the media, for the mind is the ultimate receiving medium of the human body. It is the new generation that should be warned about such mental and cultural brainwash. This generation could help in lifting the Arab and Islamic world from its constant fall by acknowledging the mistakes from the past and starting a new era. The writer obviously believes that, if given a chance, the youth can accomplish wonders.

For that, the stress is on them by opening their eyes to the past and what our world used to be then diffusing the sense of motivation, enthusiasm, and patriotism among them.

This actually happened in the play in Act I by involving the enthusiastic youth where a group of young people decide to force themselves into the Caliph's house and speak their mind demanding to see Al Sharabi, the Senior Officer of the Caliph. When Al Sharabi asks them what reason brings them here, one of them replies:

“We are a group of young Muslims, we have come to see the Caliph.”

Then, after hearing women's giggles and music, the youth unanimously continue:

“Nobody caused affliction to this nation other than you as you are the one responsible for selecting this weak Caliph. You are the one, who makes him indulge in pleasure with women, dance and fun so that you can dominate and overpower the machinery of government.” (Al Qasimi, 2004, pp. 14-15).

This dialogue gives a wakeup call to all the youth assuring them that they are obliged to speak their mind and participate in the matters of the nation and warning the one with authority about the dangers lurking around them. The search for an individual identity and sense of belonging is an important goal in the play. Our identity has been under Western influence throughout the years. This influence can leave its mark on the nation's identity and gradually erase the culture. Therefore, an implicit message in the play tackles the issue of identity and the extreme importance of preserving one's own cultural and intellectual identity because it is the façade of each nation. Perhaps this particular message is directed especially to the youth since

they are the ones mostly subjected to crucial changes in their cultural milieu (Aidabi, 2005).

The writer aimed at connecting the past with the present as they mirror each other. Moreover, from connecting those two ends, he plays the role of an admonishing soothsayer, predicting what will happen to our nation's future in light of what has happened in the past.

### **6.2.1.3 The Plot**

In four Acts, Dr. Al Qasimi dramatizes the Arab and Islamic situation. The plot and the dramatic structure succeed in portraying strong interrelated events.

The storyline has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The events take place three years prior to the fall of Baghdad while the element of place vary but mostly occur in royal courts, castles, and councils.

In the First Act, we are introduced to the passive Caliph who is being manipulated by his minister, Ibn Al Algami.

The Second Act goes into the core of the plot where the Islamic castle is besieged by the Mongols, then ends with the fall of Baghdad.

The climax occurs in Act III when the true battle happens between the two main characters: Al Mustasim and Holaku. This climax reaches its peak after the complete fall of Baghdad and the murder of its Caliph.

In this Act, we are introduced to the “Voice” character. This character is virtually the news bearer in the play, who reports all the disastrous events occurring outside the castle.

The Fourth Act comes as a result of the events of the previous Acts as it sheds light on the victory the enemies are feasting on.

Then as mentioned earlier, the last lines cited in the play mirror its title: the return of Holaku.

However, the plot also looks into the matter of treason, corrupt entourage, and the submersion of rulers in pleasures which leads to the negligence of the nation's needs.

#### 6.2.1.4 Aesthetic Techniques

With regard to the language used in the play, we find that it is written entirely in Classical Arabic. Logically, due to the historical era that the play covers, this type of language – owing to its formality – is the most dominant at the time. Yet, the writer suddenly inserts some colloquial Arabic wording such as:

“الله .. الله .. كملتها يا ابن العلقمي ..”

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 32)

“Allah! Allah! You have it all out, Ibn Al Algami.”

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 29)

“طيب .. طيب كما تريد ..”

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 33)

“Fine..fine.. As you like.”

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 29)

“ايش الذي عمله الطرطنكي مالك هذا .. رايح جاي على هولاكو.”

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 33)

“What does this Dartanki do? Only going to Holaku, to and fro?”

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 29)

The previous lines are in the informal Arabic language or, if we may say, are considered a dialect rather than a language. The use of this dialect has its own indications. It comes as a result of fury which leads to losing temper and manners. The English translation of these lines will be discussed later on in this chapter.

Applying such language is deliberate to fuse two different languages in one content. This could reflect the fusion between the past and the present. Above all, the choice of informal language adds to the sense of realism of the work.

Monologue is also employed in the play when the character is thinking aloud for the audience to hear. This can be seen in Al Mustasim's remorseful speech:

“Oh God! If only I had received those Muslim youths, listened to them, and heard their advice! Instead I was amusing myself with women!” (Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 33).

Although the language used is that of Classical Arabic, still, the way in which the wordings are chosen is characterized by their simplicity to appeal to all the classes of recipients.

Adding to that, the text is rich with explicit as well as implicit meanings and direct messages as well as intertextuality.

In his plays, Dr. Al Qasimi chooses to make a statement in the prologue, a feature that allows him to clarify the intentions behind his work, not to be misunderstood. Accordingly, he opens *Holaku's Return* with this prologue:

Throughout my readings in the history of the Arab nations I have found that what had happened to the Abbasid Kingdom before its fall, is quite similar to what is happening now to our Arab countries as if history is repeating itself. Therefore, I wrote this play from a historical perspective for a painful reality.

All the incidents, places and names of characters in this play are authentic and every term mentioned in this text is a real indicator that elucidates what is happening in the Arab nations (Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 5).

The message is loud and clear in this opening, as we can sense the bitter and pessimistic tone of these lines. Adding to that, the word ‘happening’ shows the continuity of the action. And that is the main theme of the play: recurrence. Needless to say, this type of recurrence is a negative one.

In conclusion, Dr. Al Qasimi utilizes history to build his play. Both past and present are connected in a modern, literary mold. He inserts his enlightening messages and reflections on our nation's painful situation by exposing past mistakes that we

should learn from. He also correlates some characters to certain cases, like the characters of Holaku and Al Algami and the many issues they stand for.

It has also been drawn to my attention that the play has a high level of conservatism. For example, in some scenes where women and music are introduced, the playwright has chosen to portray that without their actual exposure.

- “Hear women's giggles and music.” (Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 14).
- “Drink is brought and Mongolian music is heard. All people are looking towards the stage where shadows of dancing girls are seen.” (Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 20).

Therefore, we can hear the sound of women's giggles and laughter, but we cannot actually see them even when dancing is involved, the aspect is cleverly and decently manipulated to preserve the idea without boldly displaying it to the audience. And this is a big indication that a thought *can* be introduced and reach the spectator easily without the need of immorality or indecorum.

## A. Language

### • Sample 1

الدويدار : إنهم يحاصرون ثلاث قلاع من قلاع المسلمين يا مولاي في منطقة "تون" و "تركشيز" .. و "كاملي". ولا أحد من المسلمين يقوم بنجدهم ..  
إنه التخاذل والله.

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 10)

### Translation

Al Dwaidar: My Lord, they are surrounding three Muslim forts in Ton, Truksheez and Kamly and none of the Muslims dares to help them. It is really disappointing.

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 11)

## Commentary

Al Duwaidar, the Army Commander of the Caliph, is reporting to the Caliph the news on Mongols.

The translation opens with “My Lord” as it is a correct format of the English language even though it is acceptable to keep it in the middle of the sentence like the Arabic source text.

We notice that some punctuation marks are missing in the translation, as in the sentence “... in Ton, Truksheez and Kamly...” whereas in the ST the writer has chosen, for some reason, to put an ellipsis which could indicate a short pause or hesitation in this particular sentence: ‘. في منطقة "تون" و "تركشيز" .. و "كاملي".’. In the translation, this element is not preserved.

As the Arabic language tends to be elaborate, the translator opted to mention the “forts,” once unlike the ST where it is repeated twice for more specification. It is also a good choice to translate ‘قلاع’ into “forts” rather than “castles” since the former term carries the sense of defensive military planning which is the exact meaning intended in the ST.

The translation deleted the use of oath in ‘إنه التخاذل والله’ and replaced the oath with the adverb “really” to keep the emphasis, although it is acceptable to keep the oath. Add to that, “disappointment” does not bear the same meaning of ‘تخاذل’. For that I would translate it to: ‘By God, this is absolute languor’.

### • Sample 2

هو لآكو : أأضروآ فتآة مغولآة لركن الدين آورشآه ..  
والآن .. نرآدك أن تتعاون معنا .. ونوقف سفك الدمآ ..

## Translation

Holaku : Come on, bring a Mongol lass for Rukn Al Deen Khorshan. Now we want you to co-operate with us to stop the bloodshed.

Rukn Al Deen : Please.

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 20)

## Commentary

Holaku is joyous where music and fun take place. In the midst of this joyous atmosphere with his followers, he orders for a Mongol girl and conspires with Rukn Al Deen, the chief of the Ishmailites, who answers back in a wretched tone.

The translator chose to add “come on,” to strengthen the order “bring.” This addition is acceptable because it strengthens the order and gives it more power and it is used more often in the English language.

The TT used a word uncommonly heard: “lass” as a translation for ‘فتاة’; the word is mostly of a Middle English origin. The choice of this word was deliberate to reduce the status of the Mongol girl.

The purpose of rendering ‘تفضل’ as “please” is that of aestheticism in the structure, since “please” gives a polite and respectful tone to the addressee instead of “proceed,” “continue,” or “go on.” The language is elevated by the choice of this particular word. The wretched tone of Rukn Al Deen is still evident but can be further shown on the stage.

- Sample 3

الدويدار : ( يقرأ الرسالة )

من هولاکو إلى المستعصم

إننا أرسلنا إليك رسلنا في الوقت الذي ذهبنا فيه لفتح قلاع الملاحة. وطلبنا منك مساعدتنا بإرسال مدد من الجند ، ورغم أنك أظهرت الطاعة إلا أنك لم تبعث الجند المطلوبين ، إذ إن علامة الطاعة وتنفيذ الأوامر والوقوف معنا هو أن ترسل لنا جيشاً عندما سرنا إلى الحرب ضد الطغاة ، ولكنك لم ترسل إلينا الجند ، وقدمت أعذاراً جوفاء ..

ومع هذا فإن أطعت الأوامر ، فإن كل ما سبق سيكون في طي النسيان ، وعليك أن تهدم الحصون ، وأن تردم الخنادق التي حول بغداد وأن تسلم إدارة شؤون البلاد إلى ابنك ، ثم تسارع إلى المثول بنفسك أمامنا.

وإن لم تفعل ، ولم ترد الحضور بنفسك فيجب أن ترسل وزيرك وقائد جيشك لكي يقوموا بإبلاغ رسالتنا لكي تصلك دون زيادة أو نقص.

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 27-28)

## Translation

*Duwaidar starts reading the message.*

Al Duwaidar : From Holaku to Al Mustasim! We have sent you our delegates at a time when we set to conquer the Malahda forts. We asked you to provide us with soldiers. Although you had displayed loyalty, you didn't send the soldiers to support us. The real indication of loyalty and support to carry out our orders and send us your army to back us against those tyrants, but you did not send the army offering hollow and false pretexts.

Nevertheless, if you carry out the orders, everything will be completely forgotten. You have to demolish the forts, fill up with earth all the trenches around Baghdad, pass the country



administration to your son and present yourself before us.  
Failing to do that and unwilling to come, you better send your  
minister and the army commander to inform you with no more  
and no less of our final message.

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 25-26)

## Commentary

The speaker is Al Duwaidar who is reading a message from Holaku aloud to Al Mustasim.

The translator chose to translate 'رسلنا' into "our delegates," because if a word is translated in a certain way, it is inherent that the translator sticks to that translation and not change it in the rest of the text whatsoever. And that is the case with the word "delegate."

The TT becomes very literal in the transliteration of 'الملاحدة' to "Malahda." The word basically means "infidels." It is a group of people who do not believe in God, but it does not represent a particular tribe or a cult. However, the word might not be understood by the English audience, especially with the lack of explanation. For that, it is suggested that a little addition or explanation of the word is inserted. Another suggestion is using the strategy of foreignization by translating the word into "Kuffar" which is the plural of Kafir, a nonbeliever.

The word 'الطاعة' which literally means "obedience" is translated into "loyalty" which is a less powerful word; perhaps it was an attempt by the translator to keep it elevated to maintain the aspect of courtesy and respect toward the addressee.

The use of two correlated words, "hollow" and "false" back-to-back was chosen by the translator to give a synonymic effect although the two words do not offer the same meaning. In the ST, only one word "hollow" was used. Due to the fact that this word is literal, the translator added the word "false" as an explanation of the first, fearing that it might not preserve the meaning.

Since the Arabic expression 'في طي النسيان' cannot be literally rendered into English, the TT translated it simply into "completely forgotten" with the addition of "completely" to strengthen the structure and emphasize it.

The translation of 'تردم' into "fill up with earth" was extended and turned into an explanation. The translation could be a simple "fill" or "bury" because those words are verbs and stand on their own without further explanation. However this does not affect the quality of the TT.

A very good choice of free translation was made in the word "you better" owing to the threatening tone that the message carries. The translator avoided the literal translation of 'يجب' to "must," and by doing so, the original tone of the message was preserved.

#### • Sample 4

المستعصم : ( في حالة غضب ) أنا الخليفة العباسي يأمرني هذا الأحمق!.

اكتب يا ابن العلقمي ..

"هولاكو .. إني أحذرك أنت وجنودك من غضب الله الذي سينزل عليكم إن تعرضتم لبني العباس .. إن المسلمين من المشرق إلى المغرب كلهم تحت طلبي ورهن إشارتي ، سيسبرون تحت قيادتي ضد المغول الغزاة".

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 28)

#### Translation

Al Mustasim *in a state of anger* :

I am the Abbasid Caliph! Do I have to take orders from this stupid ...? Come on, Ibn Al Algami and write down.

Holaku! I warn you and your soldiers of God's humiliations, if you subject and oppose the Abbasid people. All Muslims from east to west

are my back and call. They will be under my command against the invaders, the Mongols.

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 26)

## Commentary

Al Mustasim is extremely furious after listening to a threatening message from Holaku. He then replies to Holaku in another message which he dictates to his minister Ibn Al Algami.

In the ST, the sentence ‘يأمرني هذا الأحمق!.’ has a full stop at the end of it, but the TT chooses to modulate it into a continuous sentence by saying, “Do I have to take orders from this stupid... ?” This translation with the addition of the ellipses indicates that Al Mustasim was about to say something else but restrained himself, because “stupid...” here seems like an adjective for another word that was about to be said. A better substitute of the word “stupid” would be “fool” or “imbecile” because they stand on their own and do not need more elaboration.

The TT chose to render the word ‘الله’ into “God” instead of “Allah.” In this context, the word does not have an Islamic denotation to it. This is fairly proper because of the nature of the sentence.

A serious error was made in the translation of the sentence ‘تحت طلبي ورهن إشارتي’ by translating it as “at my back and call.” Whether it was a misprint or not, the correct translation is “at my beck and call” which is an idiom defined as “a gesture of beckoning or summons” according to *The American Heritage Dictionary* (1991, p. 166). Despite the error, the translation of this idiomatic expression meets with “equivalence,” which is the procedure of oblique translation adopted by Vinay and Darbelnet.

- **Sample 5**

المستعصم : بذل المال في تأسيس الجيوش ..

ابن العلقمي : ( وهو يضحك ) .. ستزهق النفوس .. وتضيع الفلوس ..

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 31)

## Translation

Al Mustasim : Giving money for building up forces.

Ibn Al Algami *laughing* : Human beings would be killed, money would be lost ...

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 28)

## Commentary

The Caliph and his minister are discussing matters of war and avoiding the Mongols' march.

The translator chose to translate the name of “ابن العلقمي” “Ibn Al Algami” with a “g” sound instead of a “q” or a “k.” Therefore the pronunciation of the name might sound informal.

The TT changes the literal meaning of ‘الجيش’ into “forces” which literally translates to ‘قوات’ not “army.” The translator deliberately maintained the plurality as it is a correct attempt to do so because in English, forces may cover three aspects of an army: air, sea and land.

As discussed in Chapter Three, Schleiermacher (2004, pp. 48-55) admits to the difficulties caused by poetry and artistic prose since they hold features like rhythm, tone and alteration. Bassnett (1985) also sees that problems occur when translating rhythms. In the ST, the writer chose the word ‘الفلوس’ although it is somewhat informal to create a stylistic rhyme with the word ‘النفوس’. This aspect was not accomplished in the TT in translating the two words as “human beings” and “lost” perhaps for the lack of any rhyming synonym.

Because of the English structure, the rhyme would be between the words “killed” and “lost.” Nevertheless the meaning was clear and comprehensible, but the rhyme was absent. However the translator maintained the rhythm and flow of the sentence.

- **Sample 6**

الدويدار : الله .. الله .. كملتها يا ابن العلقمي ..

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 32)

### Translation

Al Duwaidar : Allah! Allah! You have it all out, Ibn Al Algami.

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 29)

### Commentary

Al Duwaidar interrupts a conversation between Al Mustasim and Ibn Al Algami in a sarcastic tone, mocking the suggestion that is being made by Ibn Al Algami.

When ‘الله .. الله ..’ is repeated as such in Arabic, it clearly carries mockery and sarcasm. It parallels the English word “Great!” usually used in American slang where it does not mean something good but is a sarcastic sign of frustration and disappointment.

The TT chose to keep the word as it is by putting “Allah! Allah!” with an exclamation mark to show sneer and anger.

Both this repetition and the word 'كملتها' are not formal speech in Arabic. It is modified into a different translation of what it originally means, "You have it all out." The two sentences have different connotations.

In the ST however, we find that whenever someone is provoked or angry, the language transforms from Classical Arabic into an Informal one closer to slang. It is an aesthetic, linguistic style to show that once someone loses his temper and poise, his language changes too.

- **Sample 7**

أبو العباس : ابن العلقمي؟! بعد !!

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 37)

### Translation

Abu Al Abbas : Again Ibn Al Algami!

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 32)

### Commentary

Abu Al Abbas, the son of the Caliph Al Mustasim, becomes agitated once his father mentions Ibn Al Algami's name. As we previously mentioned, with the state of fury emerges the informal Arabic style.

Here, Abu Al Abbas yells 'بعد!!' meaning "again!!" The translation of this word was literal because it is also used in the same way in the English language. Even if it were translated into "Ibn Al Algami?! Again!!" that would have been acceptable as well.

- **Sample 8**

المستعصم : ليتني قابلت الشبان المسلمين .. ليتني استمعت لهم .. وأخذت بنصيحتهم .. وقتها التهيت مع النساء.

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 38)

### Translation

Al Mustasim : Oh God! If I had only received those Muslim youths, listened to them, and heard their advice! Instead I was amusing myself with women!

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 33)

### Commentary

With the continuous losses caused by war and the martyrdom of the Muslim youths who came to the Caliph's house to warn him, Al Mustasim becomes remorseful.

An example of Catford's shifts can be seen in the sentence: "If I had only..." The repetition of the word 'ليتني' was narrowed into a single "If I had only..." which in my opinion would have been stronger if it was "If only I had..."

The translator added "Oh God!" to add to the remorseful tone of the speaker although this was not present in the ST. This attempt is proper and logical.

- **Sample 9**

هولاكو : لأي يوم جمعت هذا المال!؟

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 40)

## Translation

Holaku : For what purpose did you collect this wealth?

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 24)

## Commentary

When Holaku discovers that gold has been buried in the palace courtyard, he asks the Caliph for the purpose behind doing so. Holaku seems victorious as he laughs scornfully the whole time, looking at the jewelry in his possession.

Going back to what Vinay and Darbelnet (2004, p. 131) expressed in Chapter Three, “unacceptable translations mean that the TT: Has a corresponding expression but not within the same register.” For that, the choice of the question's structure is quite successful by rendering ‘لأي يوم’ to “For what purpose” in order to simplify the question and make it logical. A literal translation would be a bit awkward since ‘يوم’ means “day” but the translator free translated it into “purpose” and that is undoubtedly coherent.

- **Sample 10**

هولاكو : أليس هذا ما أردت .. ؟!

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 42)

## Translation

Holaku : Didn't you want this?

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 36)



## Commentary

When Holaku promises Ibn Al Algami to reward him with the ministry of Baghdad, the latter did not seem pleased.

On the basis of Catford's Translation Shifts theory, the structure of the question asked somewhat differs from that of the ST. As an imitation of the ST, I would translate it into "Isn't this what you wanted?" Either way, the tone and idea are preserved.

- **Sample 11**

ابن العلقمي : ( مستغرباً ) هذا !؟

هولاكو : نعم هذا ...

أما أنا ، فإني سأفتح بقية بلدان المسلمين بقوة السلاح ..

( منادياً ) : إلى الشام ..

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 42-43)

## Translation

Ibn Al Algami *amazed* : This one?

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 36)

Holaku : Of course yes, and I will go on to capture by force the rest of the Muslim countries up to Al Sham.

## Commentary

Holaku introduces a Mongol prince to Ibn Al Algami as the governor, telling him that this youth will be his consultant. Ibn Al Algami seems shocked and offended.

The tone of Ibn Al Algami's amazement was preserved although I disagree with the translation of 'هذا؟! ' to "This one?!" as if he was an inanimate entity although that is what it might sound like in the ST. But it would have been more proper if the rendition were "Him?" and Holaku's reply would be, "Yes, him," and it would still give the same meaning.

The rhetoric speech of Holaku when he supposedly yells with orders 'إلى الشام' was merged with the previous sentence as if the tone has not changed and no order was given. I would suggest that –as the ST – the sentence would end at "Muslim countries," then his tone would change as he yells into his soldiers "To Al Sham!" with an exclamation mark to express the loud tone with the order.

## B. Word Play

### • Sample 1

المستعصم : ( مطمئناً الدويدار )

طيب .. طيب كما تريد .. سنبعث الدرتنكي بقليل من الهدايا ..

الدويدار : ايش الذي عمله الطرطنكي مالك هذا.. رايح جاي على هولاكو.

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 33)

## Translation

Al Mustasim *appeasing Duwaidar* : Fine.. fine... As you like we will send Al Dartanky with some gifts as well.

Al Duwaidar :           What does this Dartanky do? Only going to Holaku to and fro?

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 29)

## Commentary

Al Mustasim is reassuring Al Duwaidar, who is agitated, and is calming him down.

Again, informal Arabic is used in this dialogue. The repetition ‘طيب .. طيب’ is that of calming a situation or someone down, and that is achieved in the translation, “Fine.. fine...” And the use of “fine” is a bit informal which mirrors what is intended in the ST.

As previously mentioned, Nida (2001, p. 78) sees that every language is full of obstacles that stand in the way of translators who struggle to find the closest equivalences. These linguistic obstacles are semantic features like rhyme, repetition of words or phrases, purposeful deletion, irony and sarcasm, indirection, and many more. Here, Al Duwaidar's speech becomes all informal Arabic as we sense the frustration and anger in his tone. Furthermore, after Al Mustasim mentions the name of a character, ‘الدرتنكي’, Al Duwaidar uses wordplay to belittle this character by turning the name into ‘الطرطنكي’: a very demeaning way in pronouncing the name which sarcastically means someone of no use and responsibility. This expression is taken from the word “طرطنقي” which is most commonly used in Gulf region and has cultural connotations that someone is “nobody.” The TT failed to render such word into English due to the absence of a similar word or technique. As a result, the original name was kept without any change in spelling or pronunciation. Yet, the use of “this” before the name merely helps in adding the sarcastic tone to it. I would suggest, in light of the ST, to keep the structure of the sentence as it is and translate it into “What does this Dartanky of yours do?” By doing so, we have preserved the meaning and tone intended and remained loyal to the ST.

## C. Metaphor

### • Sample 1

هو لاکو : اسمع يا ابن العلقمي ..

لقد خدمتنا طوال السنين التي مضت .. وكنت عيننا التي ترى ..

وكانت كلماتك للخليفة بها مفعول سحري حتى أطاعك الخليفة في كل الأمور ..

والآن نكافئك بأن تستلم أنت الوزارة ، وتدير أمور بغداد ..

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 41-42)

### Translation

Holaku : Listen Ibn Al Algami, you have been working devotedly for us through the long past years and you have been our loyal spy. Your words and advises to the Caliph proved charming. He agreed and obeyed you in all matters and now we are going to reward you!

You will be responsible for the ministry and for running all affairs in Baghdad.

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 35)

### Commentary

Holaku sits Ibn Al Algami close to him and address him with this speech in a proud and victorious tone.

The TT chooses to elevate the word 'خدمتنا' which translates to "served us" by toning it down into "working devotedly for us" and adding the adverb "devotedly," which does not exist in the ST.

The metaphor 'عيننا التي ترى' which likens Ibn Al Algami to an "eye" is taken away and turned into the meaning of this metaphor "loyal spy." There is no harm in this rendition, but if the metaphor were kept it would have still been understood.

The TT adds “advises” to the sentence which is a false addition anyway since it is misspelled as a verb where it should be the noun, “advice.” Another alternative could be “pieces of advice.”

All in all, the tone was preserved and the meaning delivered.

#### D. Addition and Deletion

- Sample 1

ابن العلقمي : أولاً : هؤلاء الناس يخالفوننا في الرأي والتوجه.  
ثانياً : إنهم خطر على المنطقة .. ألم تسمع بقائمة الضحايا على أيدي أولئك الناس .. ؟!  
ونحن .. لماذا نلوم المغول في حصارهم لتلك القلاع .. ؟!  
ألم يكونوا جيوباً للإرهاب في بلاد المغول وتهديد أمن بلاد المغول والرؤساء المغوليين أنفسهم دون استثناء ؟!

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 12)

#### Translation

Ibn Al Algami : Firstly those people are of different conception and inclination.  
Secondly they represent a great danger to the area. Didn't you hear about the long list of victims who were brutally murdered by those people? Why do we blame the Mongols in their siege of the forts? Don't you remember, those forts were once the pockets of terrorism in the Mongols' lands, threatening both the Mongols' security and the Mongol leaders?

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 12)

## Commentary

The speaker is Ibn Al Algami, the minister of the Caliph. He is addressing Al Duwaidar, lecturing him about the great danger which the Mongols represent.

The translator puts the sentence 'خطر على المنطقة' in a good English-structured frame by adding "represent" and the adjective "danger" in "represent a great danger to the area." Likewise, the adjective is added in "long list of victims".

The translator tends to delete some parts of the ST. This deletion, however, does not lessen the quality of the translation or cause severe changes in the meaning. The word 'ونحن' along with the pause that follows are both deleted and the question is promptly asked. A compensation of 'دون استثناء' is also undertaken.

The addition of "Don't you remember, ..." adds to the emphasis of the sentence and helps in drawing attention of the hearer as well as the exaggeration the adverb "brutally" bears.

The expression "pockets of terrorism," 'جيوباً للإرهاب' is a literal translation since it means that they were funding the forces financially. For that, the choice was literal translation where the TT kept the expression as it is without modulating the expression into any other synonym in English, but most of the stylistic aspects are preserved and there is nothing wrong with translating it this way.

### • Sample 2

ابن العلقمي : وجرى القضاء بعكس ما أملته ..

وجرى القضاء بعكس ما أملته ..

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 50)

## Translation

Ibn Al Algami : Fate occurred in contrast to what I had hoped.

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 42)

## Commentary

After knowing of the losses happening in Iraq and its fall, one city after the next, Ibn Al Algami shakes his head in despair and delivers these lines.

The TT rendered the ST in a good way, but the repetition is avoided due to the length of the sentence after its translation.

### • Sample 3

ابن العلقمي : إنه القرآن ..

الأمير المغولي : لا أريد أن أسمع القرآن .. إنه يسلبني عقلي ..

لا أريد أن أسمعه .. ( بعد صمت .. )

الأمير المغولي : ولا بد من تغيير كثير من الآيات التي لا تناسبنا ، مثل .. كفار .. ملحدين ..

آيات كثير يجب أن تشطب من القرآن ..

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 51)

## Translation

Ibn Al Algami : This is the Holy Quran.

Prince : I do not want to hear this Quran. It spoils my mind. I do not want to hear it! Much of its verses must be changed, because they do not suit. Lots of its verses must be crossed out and cancelled.

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 42)

## Commentary

One of Ibn Al Algami's officials starts to recite some verses from the Holy Quran to ease his pain. Furious, the Mongol prince yells at him wondering what that sound is.

The word “Holy” is promptly added to “Quran” as these two words commonly cohere together.

The TT transfers the same tone of disgust and ignorance in the words of the Mongol prince by adding “this” to the sentence “I do not want to hear this Quran” where this indication is absent in the ST which translates literally to “I do not want to hear the Quran.”

In Chapter Three, Lefevere (1992) insists that when there is an obscene or offending passage, a perfect approach is to either delete it, or to make severe modifications. Here, the translator have chosen to completely take out the examples given by the Mongol prince as he said, “Much of its verses must be changed, because they do not suit, such as: infidels, nonbelievers.” Perhaps the translator found these words offending to the receiving culture and for that he opted to delete them from the TT. However, with or without the examples, the tone copied the ST, and the main idea was introduced thoroughly.

- **Sample 4**

هولاكو : اسلخوا جلد وجهه ميتاً و أتوني بالجلد !

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 41)



## Translation

Holaku : Even if he is dead, peel off his face's skin and bring it to me.

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 35)

## Commentary

After the fall of Baghdad, Holaku, being a barbaric tyrant and as a sign of humiliation, gives orders to his soldiers to take the Caliph and skin his face and bring it to him. Al Mustasim dies in their hands before the peeling is complete.

The speech is free translated and an addition is made at the beginning of the sentence. The TT adds “Even if” to start the sentence although it is not in the ST but it could be a rendition of ‘ميتاً’. However, if it was to be retranslated, it would be something like this, ‘حتى لو مات’.

The act of peeling the skin from someone's face could be simply translated into “skin” as it is a verb that does not need any further elaboration or specific details. But the translator used a very graphic translation of the act ‘اسلخوا جلد وجهه’ into “peel off his face's skin,” and it was repeated three times in the TT.

- **Sample 5**

( يتفكر هولاکو .. ثم يقول للجندی )

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 41)

## Commentary

This descriptive sentence is left out without translation. Without any shadow of a doubt, these kinds of descriptive sentences help to manifest the play successfully on stage and give hints to the actor or director of minor details of how the character is thinking, etc. This particular sentence could have been translated as “Holaku considers, then addresses the soldier.”

- **Sample 6**

هولاکو : لقد بعثت له بعثة تلو بعثة ، ورسولاً بعد رسول ..

لا تقل عن ثماني مناسبات أطلب منه الاستسلام ..

أتوعده بالويل تارة ، وبالخير تارة ، ولكنه يرفض ..

أيها السفراء ، اذهبوا إلى ركن الدين خورشاه وأعطوه باسمي ضماناً لحياته وحياء من معه.

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 18-19)

### Translation

Holaku : I had sent him mission after mission and a delegate after another, in no less than eight occasions, sometimes asking him to submit through promise of wealth and fortune, at others informing him on the grief and destruction, he would face if he chooses not to, but all in vain.

### *Holaku to his envoys*

Holaku : Go to Rukn Al Deen Khorshah and in my name give him a guarantee for his life and also for that of his followers.

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 19)

### Commentary

Holaku, the protagonist of the play, is impatient and irritated because of his inability to break through Maymoon's fort. He is addressing his men in a furious tone.

As explained in a previous sample, the target text has rendered the word 'رسول' as "delegate" instead of a "messenger," although they both serve the same

meaning in that a delegate gives a more politic and formal sense. Moreover, the repetition of the word “delegate” was unnecessary, unlike “mission” since the repetition of both would not sound English-like and might sound like a poor translation.

There are many modulations done in the translation to avoid being literal. The structure of the sentence is completely altered and turned into a long sentence unlike the ST which is divided into small sentences.

The word ‘أتوعده’ was translated into “asking him.” The two words are incoherent since the meaning is “to threaten.” Later, the TT further explains to us that: “... asking him to submit through promise of wealth and fortune, at others informing him on the grief and destruction, he would face ...” this whole passage was put as an elaboration of the ST probably because the sentence would not make much sense if translated literally.

I also suspect that the translator mistranslated the word ‘أتوعده’ to “promise” and not actually into “asking him.” Further, this sentence is overwhelmed with additions; for instance, “wealth and fortune” are two different words that are meant to be the translation of ‘الخير’ which can only mean “welfare.” Similarly, ‘ويل’ is translated into “grief and destruction,” but only means “destruction.”

There is a substitution of ‘ولكنه يرفض’ with either “but all in vain” or “if he chooses not to,” although the “if” is not present in the ST, and the literal translation would be “but he refuses.”

The sentence “Holaku to his envoys” is added, while in the ST the whole dialogue is not cut.

## E. Semiotics, sounds and stage Directions

- Sample 1

( هنا يثور الخليفة قائلاً )

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 13)

## Translation

*Here the Caliph becomes excited.*

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 13)

## Commentary

The Caliph, Al Mustasim is furiously objecting on the idea of belittling himself to the enemy in a message written to Holaku.

The sentence is not a dialogue; it is describing the situation and the state of the character who would be applied on stage.

Here, I may have a problem with the word “excited” which should, in this context, mean “being furious or agitated,” but the word chosen, in my opinion, gives it a rather positive meaning, whereas ‘يثور’ means being emotionally aroused but in a negative way.

### • Sample 2

هولاکو : أيها القائد توتار : أرسلوا ركن الدين خورشاه إلى بلاد المغول ..

( وهو يشير بيده على رقبته بصوت "كلك" ، علامة على القتل )

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 22-23)

## Translation

Holaku : Commander Totar, send Rukn Al Deen Khorsha to the Mongol land.

*Pointing to his neck with a sign that means execution.*

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 22)

## Commentary

Holaku signals that Rukn Al Deen has to be killed by pointing his hand to his neck and making a "click" sound. This sound was not mentioned in the TT as the translator is content with "a sign that means execution."

- **Sample 3**

هولاكو : ( يقهقهه .. وهو يرقص )

ها ها ها .. إذن إلى بغداد لتأديبه هناك ..

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 23)

## Translation

*Holaku laughs scornfully, while he dances.*

Holaku : Hahaha! Then let us set for Baghdad to punish him.

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 22)

## Commentary

The expression of laughter is kept the same to preserve the same effect and meaning. No modulation was necessary, even though the act of laughter was explained in the sentence in parentheses. But the TT remained faithful to the ST and kept the same form of dialogue. The translator used imitation in the rendition of the laughter "Hahaha!" to apply what Schleiermacher (2004, p. 49) suggested, which is working hard to give the same effect that is felt in the original text to the reader in the TT while preserving the same impact.

- **Sample 4**

صوت : ( من الكواليس ) وتمر الأيام

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 34)

### Translation

*A voice comes from the coulisse.*

Voice : And the days pass by.

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 30)

### Commentary

The 'صوت', "voice" in the script plays the role of the narrator in some cases. In the TT, it is translated exactly as it is. But in later parts of the play, we see the voice take another role yet translated also as the "voice."

- **Sample 5**

المستعصم : ها! صحيح!؟

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 35)

### Translation

Al Mustasim : That is right.

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 30)

## Commentary

After Al Duwaidar's attempt to draw Al Mustasim's attention to what might result from the leaders' absence, Al Mustasim hesitates by saying 'ها! صحيح!؟'. According to the question mark in the ST, I believe it might have been translated into a question ,“Really?!” But probably with the context of the dialogue, it really is a statement not a question. The 'ها!' has been omitted entirely although it would have added a sense of averting from a decision.

- **Sample 6**

الهاتف : هدم السور الشرقي ..

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 37)

## Translation

Voice : The eastern wall has been demolished!

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 32)

## Commentary

As we saw in a previous sample, 'صوت' was translated as “voice.” The word was an indefinite noun. But here, the ST offers the word 'الهاتف' which is a definite noun and means “crier” or “exclaimer.” In the play, the crier plays the role of the news. The TT chose to translate this word also into “voice” making no difference between it and the first one.

## F. Mistranslations and Erroneous Word Choice

- **Sample 1**

هولاكو : لا تيأس ..

( وهو يربت على كتفه ويقول ) :

هاتوا الشراب والراقصات ... هيا. هيا.

الحاجب : سيدي .. سيدي.. فتحت القلعة ..

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 19)

### Translation

Holaku : Stay on it! Bring the drink and the dancing girls ... quick!

Porter : My Lord, my Lord! The fort has fallen!

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 20)

### Commentary

Holaku in a supposedly composed and confident tone calms down the leader who informs him of Al Maymoon's defensive forts.

“Do not give up” ‘لا تيأس’ was rendered as “Stay on it!” Here the difference is vast because ‘لا تيأس’ or “Do not give up” carries a tender tone to it specially with the ‘وهو يربت على كتفه’ gesture, which means that Holaku was patting the leader's shoulder while saying this, but in the translation the sentence sounds like a stern order particularly with the addition of the exclamation mark. The translator here has to be careful since the text type is expressive and is meant to be acted, for that translator has



to preserve the detailed gestures and stage directions no matter how minor they may seem.

The repetition of 'هيا. هيا.' is reduced to one "quick!" which can be the equivalent of 'أسرعوا'; however, it projects the intended meaning.

When speaking of the fort, the rendition of 'فتحت' into "fallen" is a rather successful one since a literal meaning of 'فتحت' is "opened," but it is acceptable in the Arabic text. Thus, the TT did not project the same effect of tone and meaning.

### • Sample 2

أحد الوجهاء : يا ابن العلقمي .. نبشت قبور الخلفاء .. ونثرت عظامهم وأحرقت أماكن كثيرة .. وهنكت  
الأعراض .. وأخرجت الكتب من مكتبة بغداد .. وألقيتها في النهر لتعبر عليها خيلهم ..  
لا بد أن تتدخل يا ابن العلقمي ..

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 46)

### Translation

One of the notables : Oh Ibn Al Algami, you must interfere to stop this mockery!  
The Caliph's graves were unearthed, their bones were dispensed  
and a lot of places were burned! Honorables were violated,  
Baghdad's library was robbed and all books were thrown into  
the river to form a bridge for their horses.

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 39)

### Commentary

Ibn Al Algami has become the minister in Baghdad after he committed treason against the Caliph and Baghdad itself. In this scene, he is sitting in the ministry's seat surrounded by notables. The speaker is one of the notables complaining about the

miserable situation of the country in an attempt to motivate Ibn Al Algami to stop the chaos.

Free translation is used. The structure of this rhetoric speech is reversed by placing “you must interfere to stop this mockery!” at the beginning of the speech unlike the ST. Also, the addition of “to stop this mockery!” played a large part in elevating the speech.

The use of “Oh” to translate ‘يا’ is also a good choice. Both tone and meaning are preserved.

I am however not so sure about the structure of the sentence ‘وألقيتها في النهر’ in the ST because it sounds awkward and illogical. My guess is that it is a misprint in the original copy. The rendition of this sentence appears to be more meaningful and comprehensible, “were thrown into the river.”

## G. Islamic Connotations

- **Sample 1**

ركن الدين خورشاه : وعلیکم السلام ورحمة الله وبرکاته .. تعال یا جوینی .. ما الأخبار؟

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 21)

### Translation

Rukn Al Deen : Peace, mercy and blessing of Allah be upon you! Come on, Jowaini, tell me what the news is!

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 21)

### Commentary

Rukn Al Deen Khorshah, still in his wretched state, is sitting in a tent when one of his Muslim followers comes in and greets him in the Islamic greeting.

The TT rendered it as it is, which helped to preserve the meaning and sense of Islam in the translation. Also the word “Allah” kept its originality without modification into “God,” for instance.

It is a good choice of rendition where transliteration is not an option, but the whole greeting is translated word-for-word. It is just as what Vinay and Darbelnet suggested as a borrowing strategy in Chapter Two.

- **Sample 2**

المستعصم : لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله العظيم ..

دبرني يا دويدار.

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 35)

### Translation

Al Mustasim : There is neither might nor power except from All the Most High, the Greatest. Now come on Duwaidar, think up and advise me!

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 31)

### Commentary

When a porter tells Al Mustasim that Holaku's forces are surrounding Baghdad, he instantly utters the Islamic saying, ‘لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله العظيم’ which is literally translated into “There is neither might nor power except from All the Most High, the Greatest..” The TT chose to be content with “All the Most High, the Greatest” along with the capitalization without adding “Allah” because “All the Most High, the Greatest” stands in itself as a Divinity name.

The order 'دبرني' is a call for help meaning "help me" or "think of something." It is successfully rendered into "think up and advise me!" which is close in meaning.

- **Sample 3**

أحد الوجهاء : وتقول له إن الناس في بغداد سعداء !؟

لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله العليّ القدير ..

لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله العليّ القدير ..

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 49)

### Translation

One of the notables : Telling him that the people in Baghdad are happy!

There is neither might nor power except from Allah the Most High, the Great.

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 41)

### Commentary

One of the notables is irritated with Ibn Al Algami who lied to Holaku by telling him that people in Baghdad are happy and looking forward to meeting him. The notable condemns Ibn Al Algami's behavior, and thus he blames him.

The tone is partially preserved by literally translating the Islamic saying, 'لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله العليّ القدير' only this time, the translator decided to insert the word "Allah" unlike the previous rendition. Yet, the repetition of this saying in the ST to indicate submission and powerlessness is not conveyed in the TT. Despite that, the message has reached the perceiver and the meaning is achieved.

- **Sample 4**

ابن العلقمي : مولاي .. هذا أذان ..

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 50)

### Translation

Ibn Al Algami : My Lord! That is the Adhan, the call for prayer!

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 41)

### Commentary

Ibn Al Algami is in his council with some of his assistants as the call for prayer is heard. That is when the Mongol prince gets furious and annoyed with the sound and orders Ibn Al Algami to silence this sound. Ibn Al Algami explains what this sound is.

In Chapter Two, Reiss (2004, p. 175) stresses that any implications in the ST should be made explicit in the TT. And that was successfully done here by rendering “Adhan” by not just transliterating it, but by adding to it an explanation of what it means, “the call for prayer.”

## H. Footnotes

- **Sample 1**

ركن الدين خورشاه : إنه كله من تدبير الطوسي ، الذي كان يسعى وراء مصالحه الشخصية ، إنه هو الذي أقتنعي بالاستسلام والآن هو الذي سيرافقهم إلى بغداد.

(Al Qasimi, 2010, p. 22)

## Translation

Ruk Al Deen : This is the result of Al Tusi's plotting, who has been seeking only for his personal interests. By him I was convinced of the surrender and now he will accompany the Mongols to Baghdad.

(Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 21)

## Commentary

After being informed of possible threats on him, Rukn Al Deen is obviously scared and puts blame on someone else with an irritated tone.

The translator chose to put a footnote of Al Tusi and explain his character because any English spectator or reader would not know who he is:

Nasir Al Din Al Tusi, philosopher and mathematician. He espoused the faith of the Ismailite sect, accepted however immediately after the fall of Baghdad a position with the Mongols as a scientific adviser. The topic of whether Al Tusi accompanied the Mongol capture of Baghdad remains controversial. (Al Qasimi, 2004, p. 21).

This footnote is quite essential for those who would read the name and not know the relationship between the person and the speech, but the problem lies in manifesting this explanation on the stage. The solution would be either deleting the speech or using allusion. The second choice might not be efficient since the intended word is a person with certain importance behind mentioning his name.

Also, the translation “By him I was convinced of the surrender and now he will accompany the Mongols to Baghdad.” seems poorly constructed. The translation would sound better if it was rendered into “He convinced me of the surrender, and now he will accompany the Mongols to Baghdad.” in order to avoid the awkward imitation of the ST.

## 6.2.2 Discussion

The play exemplifies dramatic texts used in a theatrical context. This type of text is called expressive. Expressive texts, as Reiss defines them, are creative compositions such as plays, poems or biographies (Munday, 2008, p. 72). They also contain a message directed to the receiver.

We have to remember that the text is meant to be acted on stage. In other words, the factor of performability is to be preserved as well as the tone and intended meaning of the ST to guarantee that the message that reached the Arab audience will surely reach the foreign one as well.

The translation of *Holaku's Return* was careful not to deviate from the ST and to adhere to the meaning of the original text as much as possible. In order to do that, the translator used formal translation in most of the dialogues.

These are the major features I noticed during the analysis of this play:

- There was an excessive use of the exclamation marks in places where it did not exist in the ST. In some places, it was used in the TT irrelevantly since, in my opinion, this type of punctuation either indicates a high pitched statement or a considerably bewildering context.
- There are some punctuational inaccuracies in the ST which can result in a misinterpretation in the TT as well.
- Footnotes were used in three places: Al Tusi, Khutba, Al Sham. These footnotes are substantial in explaining a term or a character that is unfamiliar to the foreign perceiver. But the main question that should be raised here is how can footnotes be applied in a playtext that should be acted on stage? They will surely not be read out or cited by the actors. In this case, there are only two options: either to delete the whole context in which the word is mentioned or to add the explanation of this particular word within the dialogue. Yet the second option may be inapplicable if the word has a historical background that needs much explaining.

- A rather successful and important step was the clarification of some words and terms that are incomprehensible to the English receiver, such as: adhan, the call for prayer.
- Many essential stage directions and sentences that explain a character's reaction are deleted. These stage directions, despite how minor they may seem, help greatly in the entire play performance. They even transfer the writer's ideas and pave the way for the director or the actors to substantiate these directions onto the stage.
- The overall translating structure varied from one dialogue to another depending on the context and the translator's choice or point of view. Mostly, formal equivalence was used while in some cases the translator opted for the dynamic equivalence or free translation. In both cases, the translation was smooth and consistent. Hence, the main characteristics of the context were preserved as the tone, meaning, and implied messages.

### **6.2.3 Nimrod**

#### **6.2.3.1 The Plot**

Similar to Holaku, Nimrod is an embodiment of injustice and tyranny that strongly bear political connotations. Nimrod also stands for outer forces and enemies that forcibly occupy a country. The play tells the true story of the character of Nimrod who is said to have ruled Babel and formed his own kingdom for 400 years.

The story begins with the people of Babel who are being oppressed by their king, Al Dhahhak (The Laughing King).

The people of Babel decide to revolt against this king, but they are powerless and fearful. In order to get rid of this king, they seek help from Nimrod bin Kana'an who comes and vanquishes the king but assigns himself as their new king.

Again, the theme of resistance and revolution against superior and unjust authorities is stirred by His Highness Dr. Al Qasimi. He always aims at motivating people – especially youth, to stand in the face of injustice and fight for their liberty



and the sake of equity. Man should never be passive about anything that goes against the country's interest or allowing it to be taken by force.

Ironically, Nimrod has appeared to be even more brutal and inhumane than the first king. He defies God and claims divinity. One by one, he summons the people asking them to worship him as their god, and whoever disapproves will be deprived of food.

Later, Nimrod orders his minister to bring an expert in construction to build a tower which he named the Tower of Babel to reach the sky and confront God. After the tower is built, Nimrod ascends it, but a strong wind blows, forcing the tower to tumble down and kill the expert leaving Nimrod alive.

Throughout the play, an angel appears repeatedly before Nimrod. The angel is only visible to Nimrod. He asks him to believe that there is only one God in Heaven. Nimrod refuses, still claiming that he is the god who ought to be worshipped by all. In his final manifestation, the angel tells him to form his army and get ready for war.

The next day, Nimrod's army is gathered and a cloud of gnats attacks the army eating their flesh. One gnat enters Nimrod's nose settling in his brain driving him mad.

### **6.2.3.2 The Ending**

The play ends with the ultimate humiliation of Nimrod and end of his tyranny as he continuously tells his men to pound his head with their shoes to ease him from the pain.

In my view, the closure of this play presents hope and victory over evil. This optimistic ending gives clear indication that oppression is sure to be vanquished.

It is noted that most of His Highness's works take place in Iraq like the two plays in this study as well as *Alexander the Great*. The choice of this location in particular is the fact that it is considered the origin of most cultures and due to the numerous events that occurred on that land (Aidabi, 2009, pp. 175-182).

### 6.2.3.3 The Analysis

#### A. Repetition

##### ○ Sample 1

الشخص : بيوراسب الملك الضَّحَّاك أت .. الملك الضَّحَّاك!! اهربوا.. اهربوا!!

(Al Qasimi, 2008, p. 10)

#### Translation

Person : Buraceb, the Laughing King is coming!

The Laughing King is coming!

Run for your lives!!

#### Commentary

This speech is the opening of the play. It is spoken by a someone who warns people of the arrival of their evil king.

I have chosen to translate the title of the king 'الضَّحَّاك' as "The Laughing King." At first, I was irresolute between translating it into "The Laughter" and "The Laughing King." But the second choice seemed more formal and a title fit for a king. Of course, because the title is characteristic of the king and is known by it more than his own name, the letters are to be capitalized. Another option was to transliterate the name as "Al Dhahhak," but for the same reasons I listed previously, the choice was set on The Laughing King.

As for the original name of the king, I have found difficulty in settling on a certain spelling, yet I came up with “Buraceb” hoping that it is the closest in the rendition.

In the final sentence of the warning person, I chose a dynamic equivalent to slightly change it into “Run for your lives!!” whereas it literally translates as “Run!” I also opted for a single line instead of two but added double exclamation marks to make up for the repetition.

### ○ Sample 2

الشخص : هل شاهدتم الحيتين على كتفيه، يا لطيف .. يا لطيف، شكلهما مخيف.

(Al Qasimi, 2008, p. 10)

### Translation

Person : Did you see the two snakes on his shoulders?

Goodness gracious they look terrifying!

### Commentary

The speaker is one of the observers of The Laughing King who is wearing snakelike pads on each shoulder. Once people are around him, he purposely shakes his body while uttering a horrifying cry as if the heads of the two snakes are alive.

The word ‘يا لطيف .. يا لطيف’ is repeated. It is an informal word not used in Classical Arabic, but perhaps the writer chose to put it as a sign of lack of formal language among the people of this area. Or it might be an outcome of fear where one does not pay attention to the language he is using.

Because the ST does not say “God,” I changed the word into “goodness gracious” which is the nearest in rendition to the situation. I have also thought of translating it into “my oh my,” but the first rendition sounds more appealing to me.

As most theorists agree, translation of rhyme is a challenging mission. There is rhyme in the sentence ‘يا لطيف .. يا لطيف ، شكلهما مخيف’ however, preserving that aspect in the TT was a dilemma due to the lack of equivalence and necessity of such preservation. So I chose to free translate it as it is.

## **B. Language**

### **o Sample 1**

النمرود : بل أنا ربكم الأوحد !!

(Al Qasimi, 2008, p. 17)

### **Translation**

Nimrod : Nay, I am your one and only god!!

### **Commentary**

The speaker is Nimrod. After he defeats The Laughing King, he assigns himself as not only the king, but as god himself. The people become confused and shocked telling him that they only wanted his help. Yet he confirms his statement by saying that he is the divine god who should be worshipped.

Nida (2004, pp. 157-159) argues that it is easier to translate the linguistic differences than the cultural ones, for the differences between cultures are more complex. However, the tone and meaning must always be preserved. For that, I have chosen to render the word ‘بل’ into “Nay” because although the word literally means “no,” but I saw that it preserved the tone and meaning of the speech. In my opinion, it suits the era they were in as well as the formal aspect it bears. It would have been

translated into “but,” yet this would imply that Nimrod is justifying himself in an uncertain tone.

Also, I have chosen not to capitalize the word “god” because this I believe that capitalization refers to our real God.

### ○ Sample 2

النمرود : من ربك؟

أول المحتشدين : هه !!

(Al Qasimi, 2008, p. 17)

### Translation

Nimrod : Who is your god?

First person in the crowd : Huh?!

### Commentary

Nimrod begins to question the people one by one asking them who is god, and whoever answers him erroneously is either killed or deprived of food.

Because of the supposed simplicity of the crowd being questioned, I have rendered the word ‘هه’ as it is pronounced and also used in the English language, “Huh.” It is an informal reply that could be translated to “What?” but for the reason I stated I chose to translate it as it is.

### ○ Sample 3

خبير البناء : أيها الرب العظيم .. أنا لدي خيرة في البناء..

سأبني لك صرحاً عظيماً، تبلغ به أسباب السماء.

أما الناس ، فيستطيعون أن يعملوا في البناء ، ويؤجروا على ذلك فتخف المجاعة.

(Al Qasimi, 2008, p. 27)

## Translation

Construction Expert : Oh mighty god..

I have an experience in construction.

I will build you a great tower through which you could reach the sky. As for the people, they could work in construction and get paid. That way, starvation would decrease.

## Commentary

Due to the lack of food, people have congregated outside Nimrod's palace. The speaker is an experienced builder who gives Nimrod advice and ideas. He is addressing Nimrod in the way he wants to be addressed, with complete subservience.

The TT is translated literally in order to preserve both meaning and tone.

The capitalization is avoided in “mighty god” because – as mentioned previously – this capitalization, in my opinion, should be restricted to our one and only God.

The use of ‘أسباب السماء’ is a rather common expression in Arabic especially in a formal context. It is known to be “gates of heaven” but usually translated to “heaven.” It is hard to literally translate the two words, so I have chosen to render it simply as “sky” instead of “heaven” because this might be interpreted as “paradise” itself.

### 6.3 Discussion

*Nimrod* is a play rich with uncommonly used vocabulary such as: نطعاً ، لوثة ، ، القرفصاء ، يلبد ، القرفصاء. If not understood properly, the rendition would not be faithful to the ST. On account of that, we can say that the words are a bit more complex than *Holaku's Return*.

The two plays tell us true stories of real tyrants who lived in the past. Despite the fact that Holaku was the main character in the play, the number of characters parallel to him is immense. But Nimrod was basically the hero of the play without a doubt.

Both protagonists share the same characteristics. Moreover, both plays take place in Iraq. And both are rich with historical backgrounds and calamities.

The names of the two kings in the play are linked with their own characteristics. Although his real name is Buraceb, the title by which he is known is Al Dhahhak, which in Arabic means The Laugher. I chose to translate this as The Laughing King to preserve the formal aspect of his name and position. On the other hand, Nimrod is his real name which in Arabic has the connotations of a vicious and dictatorial person. His name has proved to be both a name and a feature in this tyrant king who later claimed to be god.

The main difference between the two plays lies in the ending. In the first play, the ending is rather pessimistic where the catastrophe that engulfed the Arab and Islamic world is still recurring. Yet in the second play, the ending was fair and satisfying as it gave hope that evil will eventually be diminished by a greater force.

## Chapter Seven

### CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to research the issue of translating theatrical texts and the way in which they should be approached. The difficulties of the rendition of such texts, however, arises from the literary genre to which they belong and the various linguistic features involved. Unlike other literary texts, playtexts have more elements to concentrate on during the translation process in order to manifest the exact ST of the play onstage and still preserve the messages intended by the playwright. The research further examined the development of theater in the Gulf in general and in the United Arab Emirates in particular. Furthermore, the thesis highlighted the role of His Highness Dr. Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi and his immense devotion to educational and cultural fields, his outstanding contributions in both areas, and his consisting efforts to upgrade the standards of education in his country.

Chapter One presented an introduction of the thesis. It gave an overall synopsis of the thesis as well as the theme and summary of the contents of each chapter. Chapter Two considered general translation theories, presenting selected strategies from each theorist. The theories presented the following theorists: Nida's dynamic and formal equivalence, Newmark's semantic and communicative theory, Catford's shifts, Reiss's theory of text type, Lefevere's notion of translating as rewriting, Jakobson's meaning equivalence and translatability, Vinay and Darbelnet's systematic translation theory, and Vermeer's *skopos* theory. Chapter Three defined theater and specifically the word "drama" along with its jargons and sub-genres. The chapter then gave an idea of the notion of semiotics and sign systems. It concluded by listing the many strategies used and suggested by theorists and researchers of translational studies in order to approach playtexts in translation. Chapter Four offered an overview of the history of theater from its early beginnings in the Gulf until its development in the UAE and specifically in the Emirate of Sharjah under the guidance and encouragement of His Highness Dr. Al Qasimi. Chapter Five highlighted the life of the Member of the Supreme Council in Sharjah and current ruler of Sharjah, His Highness Dr. Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi. The



chapter further discussed his devotion to the educational and cultural fields and his outstanding contributions to his country, specifically in Sharjah. Moreover, his constant efforts to elevate the standards of education in Sharjah as well as the honorary degrees and positions he gained are reviewed. In Chapter Six, selected extracts from two plays for the purpose of the study are examined. The plays, *Holaku's Return* and *Nimrod* are both written by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi and take us back to a historical era where Dr. Al Qasimi reminisces about the Arab and Islamic nation's lost glories and power. The translations of the plays are assessed in light of syntax, religious aspects, linguistic features, pragmatic and semantic levels, etc. Finally, Chapter Seven concluded that the translation of a playtext (especially one that contains cultural and religious references) from Arabic into English results in a tendency to capture the essence of the source culture and keep it in the target language in order not to lose its original frame. Translators tend to apply both approaches of free or literal translations in one text depending on the context. Further translation studies in the field of theater are recommended and highly suggested.

## **7.1 Findings and Recommendations**

The study finds and recommends the following:

- When it comes to translating from one language to another (in this study, from Arabic into English) language loss is inevitable.
- No matter what strategies used or approaches applied, the TT would never parallel the original.
- When two cultures are involved, and the text is translated from one culture to another, a decision has to be made with regard to the cultures at both ends. This decision primarily takes place before initiating the process of the translation. The outcome should look and sound as if it is the original with respect to the receiving culture.

- The level of acceptability differs radically from one language to another, because what is considered to be appropriate in English might not be so in Arabic and vice versa.
- Deletion or severe modulation is done if a source culture is offensive or highly unacceptable in a target culture.
- One issue that should be pointed out is that the process of translation for theater differs drastically from prose or poetry translations, for the technique used in both forms is never the same.
- The most complicated sub-genre of literature is poetry or verses. These verses can be part of a play. For that, the task of rendering them into the target language can cause hardships. The translator can opt for literal translation, but in this case, the verse would be lost. The other option is to try and imitate the original with matching verse but still it would never parallel the original.
- Translation of theater is rather more intricate and complex than other forms of literature. Therefore, not everything that applies to the literary genres applies to translating playtexts.
- There is a series of features that are involved in the translation of theater, such as sign systems, stage directions, pitches, linguistic aspects, etc. These features should be accounted for as they aid in the production of any play and for that should never be belittled.
- If a word or even a whole part of a script is somewhat difficult to translate to the target language, other replacing solutions are offered; among them are transposition, manipulation, and allusion depending on the tactful translator who is indulged in the process.
- Translators should have awareness of the codes and focus on the intersemiotic translation.

- The translator has to acknowledge that the TT will be performed, thus s/he has to pay attention to the performability aspect beforehand.
- The text ought to be treated as a literary work with fidelity to the original, not neglecting the usage of the cultural context of the source text as frame text.
- The translator should bear in mind that he is the only one who has the ability to make the play either a successful or a disastrous piece of art. So the fate of the play rests on him.
- If translators wish to specialize in the translation of theater, they could immerse themselves in theatrical theories; they could also engage in an intensive study of sign systems and develop an understanding of the inner messages then render them into the suitable form of translation.
- One of the suggested approaches (if possible) is that translators could also consult the author of the play or the entire cast if they are unsettled with some symbolisms or implications. They should discuss the work with the playwright and get involved more often.
- The translated version should be handed over to a professional theatrical editor, if found.
- In terms of choosing a strategy to apply to a given text, it must be said that theories are endless and there is a multiplicity of approaches to choose from. Translators could also apply more than one approach to the same text to reach the level of the original.
- Some literary aspects found in the Arabic ST can be modified in the TT. For example, repetition is a distinctive feature in the Arabic language, but in English, this repetition might be awkward or distasteful and hence it is deleted.
- If a word is mentioned in the ST that is unintelligible to the target audience, (e.g., an Islamic reference or action) the translator should opt for explanatory sentences within the text, prefaces, or footnotes.

- Translators must note that the text is meant to be acted on stage. For that, the factor of performability is to be preserved as well as the tone and intended meaning of the ST to ensure that the message that reached the Arab audience will surely reach the foreign one as well.

Finally, the study highly recommends further research in the field of translating dramatic texts as well as exploring the notion of culture transfer through translation to determine whether or not this transfer preserved the original culture, tradition, implicit meanings and connotations.

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