CULTURE IN ARABIC TO ENGLISH

LITERARY TRANSLATION

by

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the
American University of Sharjah
College of Arts and Sciences
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Arts in
Translation and Interpreting (English/Arabic/English) (MATI)

Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

January 2014

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Dedication

To my father and mother

Abstract

This thesis explores the culture of literary translation from Arabic to English. It is assumed that English translations of Arabic literary works are dominated by an established system of representation of Arabs and their culture; a system that dates back well before the colonial period and serves the purposes of the hegemonic powers. The system has been maintained through the careful selection of what to translate and the application of manipulative and domesticating translation strategies. This thesis examines whether such a situation still prevails in our age of globalization and open communication. It does so by assessing Nancy N. Roberts' translation of Ghada Samman's novel *Beirut 75* (why it was selected for translation and how elements of Arab culture were handled in the translation process). The thesis concludes that the said system of representation continues to exist in the form of stereotypical images about Arabs and their culture in the minds of Western audiences. However, the way this system is maintained has changed with the addition of market demands, i.e. what readers want to read, what sells. Since Western readers overall still have the same stereotypical images about Arabs and their culture, these images still determine their expectations, and hence the culture in literary translation from Arabic.

Search Terms: *Beirut 75*, culture, literary translation, representation, manipulation

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1. Introduction

Arabs have historically complained about their image in the West. They accuse this West of deliberately distorting their image to justify its political approach towards them. According to Said (1978), this image of the Arabs was established through the work of Orientalists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including the translation of selected Arab literary works. Those works were carefully chosen and manipulated to help create the desired image of Arabs.

According to Faiq (2007), Said's argument is still valid today; i.e. the selection of Arab literary works to be translated into English and other Western languages is still made based on the degree of their conformity to the stereotypical image of Arabs. Further, translators deliberately manipulate texts to ensure consistency with that image.

The aim of this thesis is to examine the above argument to establish whether it is still valid in our age of globalization and open communication through digital media. To do so, the thesis assesses Nancy N. Roberts' (1995) translation of بيروت ٧٥ (1993), a novel by the Syrian novelist Ghada Samman. The thesis concludes that things have changed somehow, with the addition of market demand as an important element in the process of literary translation from Arabic. As for deliberate manipulation by translators, this is not always applicable, because such manipulation can now be easily detected and may well damage the reputation of the translator.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the topic and significance of this research. It also outlines the organization of the thesis. Chapter two provides an overview of translation studies. It starts with the linguistic-based works of Jakobson, Nida, Catford, Newmark and Vinay and Darbelnet, and then moves onto the functional theories of Reiss, Vermeer and Nord. This is followed by the discourse analysis approaches of House and Hatim and Mason. The chapter ends with the cultural approaches to translation pioneered by Lefevere and Bassnett.

Chapter three focuses on literary translation from Arabic to English. It outlines three phases of interest in translated Arabic literature, and then examines the master discourse of translation from Arabic. As this discourse is dominated by stereotypical representations of Arabs, the chapter traces how these representations were developed in the first place, and how they have been maintained. According to the manipulation school, these stereotypical representations have been maintained primarily through the selection of literary works to be translated and the application of manipulative

translation strategies. The thesis suggests that this explanation may have changed; since with globalization and information technology the selection of works for translation is today made on the basis of market demand, and that translators are less likely to resort to manipulation and distortion as was the case before.

Chapter four assesses the translation of Ghada Samman's novel بيروت ٧٥ to tease out the reasons behind its selection for translation. Further, it examines 19 examples of cultural references in the novel to see how the translator handled their transfer into English. In the majority of the examples, the translator opted for foreignization. Domestication was used in very few examples, and only when it was justified.

Chapter five concludes the thesis by stating that the novel بيروت ٧٥ was chosen for translation not because it conforms to the stereotypical representation of Arabs and their culture, but because it meets market demand. Further, the translator showed respect of the Arab culture and did not try to distort it in the translation. This may suggest that translating literature may not be used anymore to sustain the stereotypical image of Arabs. Unfortunately, this image is still being shaped through the media, and if we can affect the media, we can change this image, and consequently increase the demand for translated Arabic literature.

This chapter has introduced the topic of this research and its significance, and has provided an outline of the succeeding chapters. The next chapter presents a selected literature review.

2. Review of Literature

This chapter explores the emergence of translation studies, and selectively reviews its different theoretical models, including linguistic, functional, discourse analysis, and cultural approaches to translation.

The debate of free versus literal translation is as old as translation itself. The first record we have of this debate goes back to the first century BC, when Cicero explained that in translating the speeches of two Greek orators, he adopted the sense-for-sense approach rather than the word-for-word one. In the fourth century CE, St. Jerome stated that he adopted the same approach as Cicero's in translating the Bible. Moving to the 17th century, we find that Dryden talked about two extremes in translation: paraphrase and literal translation. In 1813, Schleiermacher used the terms 'alienating' and 'naturalizing' for the two opposite approaches.

These dichotomies were further developed and elaborated in the second half of the twentieth century with the emergence of translation studies out of linguistic studies with scholars such as Keller, Catford, Nida and Newmark, followed by a cultural shift in the 1990s pioneered by Lefevere, Bassnett and other members of the 'manipulation school' (Munday, 2008).

2.1 Linguistic Theories of Translation

Modern translation studies emerged out of linguistics and literary studies. Since translation is a language activity, it was widely looked at as part of linguistics. According to Catford, "any theory of translation must draw upon a theory of language - a general linguistic theory" (cited in Fawcett, 1997, p. 1). The most important concept in this area is equivalence.

2.1.1 Roman Jakobson: linguistic meaning and equivalence. The Russian-born American structuralist Roman Jakobson is considered to be a pioneer in the study of equivalence. He follows the de Saussurean relation between the signifier and the signified. This relation is arbitrary. So, a certain signified will have different signifiers in different languages, and these signifiers are expected to have equivalent meanings. However, in his essay "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation" (1959), Jakobson points out to the problem of equivalence of meaning, stating that "there is ordinarily no full equivalence between code-units" (cited in Munday, 2008, p. 37). Therefore, the translator substitutes messages in one language for entire messages in

the other language using the appropriate grammatical and lexical forms. Jakobson's work encouraged other linguists to examine the concept of equivalence.

2.1.2 Eugene Nida's formal and dynamic equivalence. Eugene Nida is among the first linguists who tried to analyze the act of translating scientifically. His theoretical contributions are based on his work on the translation of the Bible. In his book *Toward a Science of Translation* (1964), he attempts to establish a scientific approach for the translation of the Bible based on Noam Chomsky's work on generative-transformational grammar.

Nida proposes two types of equivalence: formal and dynamic. He defines formal equivalence as follows:

> Formal equivalence focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content. In such a translation one is concerned with such correspondences as poetry to poetry, sentence to sentence, and concept to concept. Viewed from this orientation, one is concerned that the message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements in the source language. (Nida, 1964, p. 159)

Gloss translations are most typical of this kind of translation.

Dynamic equivalence, also called 'functional equivalence', focuses on having an equivalent effect on the receptor; in other words, "the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message" (p. 159). To achieve this effect, the translation should sound natural for the receptor, and any bilingual or bicultural person should be able to say "that is just the way we would say it" (p. 166).

In this sense, Nida has shifted the focus in translation from the form of the message to the response of the receiver, which remains his best contribution to translation studies. As for other aspects of his theory, many have criticized his ideas. First, in his search for dynamic equivalence, Nida is prepared to do things such as repeating information and altering the sequence of sentences, and "this automatic behaviorism authorizes any kind of manipulation" (Henri Meschonnic, as cited in Fawcett, 1997, p. 58). Second, dynamic equivalence is essentially impossible due to the very nature of language: "two speakers of the same language may have such different backgrounds that they will often not understand the same utterance in the same way" (Fawcett, 1997, p. 58). Further, according to Peter Newmark (1988), "equivalent effect is the desirable result, rather than the aim of any translation"

(p. 48). Newmark explains that there are cases where such a result is unlikely: (1) if the purpose of the SL text is different from the purpose of the TL translation, (2) if there is a big cultural gap between SL and TL texts.

2.1.3 Catford and textual equivalence. Catford's theory is based on M.A.K. Halliday's 1961 linguistic model of systemic linguistics. Catford distinguishes between formal correspondence and textual equivalence. Formal correspondence exists where the position occupied by a certain category in the source language corresponds to the position occupied by that same category in the target language. For example, prepositions function in the same way in most European languages. As long as we can translate preposition by preposition across these languages, formal correspondence results in textual equivalence. When this is not the case, textual equivalence can be achieved by what Catford calls "translation shifts" (1965, p. 73), which include structure shifts, class shifts, unit shifts and intra-system shifts. He explains that textual equivalence is achieved when the source and target items are "interchangeable in a given situation" (p. 49).

Catford's work is heavily criticized as "more general and abstract" (Snell-Hornby, 1995, p. 19). It is seen to be motivated mainly by "a desire for theoretical completeness, covering all the aspects of his model, and is out of touch with what most translators have to do" (Fawcett, 1997, p. 56).

2.1.4 Peter Newmark: semantic and communicative translation. While Nida's and Catford's works provide significant theoretical value, Newmark's books *Approaches to Translation* (1981) and *A Textbook of Translation* (1988) include many practical examples and exercises and are popular in translator training courses (Munday, 2008). Newmark argues that the "gap between emphasis on source and target language will always remain as the overriding problem in translation theory and practice" (cited in Munday, 2008, p. 44). To bridge this gap, Newmark replaces Nida's terminology of formal and dynamic equivalence with his own classification of eight types of translation based on their level of emphasis of the source language or the target language. Starting with the ones having the most emphasis on the source language and ending with the ones with the most emphasis on the target language, these types are word-for-word translation, literal translation, faithful translation, semantic translation, communicative translation, idiomatic translation, free translation, and adaptation (Newmark, 1988). The most important of these are communicative translation and semantic translation, which are in many ways similar

to Nida's dynamic and formal equivalence respectively. Newmark distinguishes between the communicative and semantic types of translation as follows:

> Communicative translation attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original. Semantic translation attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original. (cited in Munday, 2008, p. 44)

2.1.5 Vinay and Darbelnet. In their book *Comparative Stylistics of French and English* (1958/1995), Vinay and Darbelnet analyze texts in French and English and identify various translation strategies. They distinguish between direct and oblique translation. Direct translation comprises borrowing, calque and literal translation. Under oblique translation, Vinay and Darbelnet list transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation (Fawcett, 1997).

- Borrowing is when "the source language form is taken into the target language, usually because the latter has a gap in its lexicon" (Fawcett, 1997, 34). E.g. Television = تلفزيون

- Calque is "a literal translation at the level of the phrase" (Fawcett, 1997, 35). E.g. Aircraft carrier = حاملة طائرات

- Literal Translation is "the rare but always welcome case when a text can go from one language into another with no changes other than those required by the target language grammar" (Fawcett, 1997, 36). E.g. Ali hit Ahmad = ضرب عليٌ أحمد

- Transposition is the process where parts of speech change their sequence when they are translated. It is in a sense a shift of word class (Fawcett, 1997, 37). E.g. Snakes are good at swimming = تجيد بعض الأفاعي السباحة (adjective-verb transposition).

- Modulation is "a variation in the message, obtained by changing point of view, lighting" (cited in Fawcett, 1997, 37). E.g. He washed his head = غسل شعره

- Equivalence is defined as "the translation of idioms when two languages refer to the same situation in totally different ways (Fawcett, 1997, 38). E.g. A friend in need is a friend in deed = الصديق وقت الضيق

- Adaptation occurs when something specific to one language culture is expressed in a totally different way that is familiar or appropriate to another

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language culture (Fawcett, 1997). E.g. Before you could say Jack Robinson =
قبل أن يرتد إليك طرفك

Although the strategies identified by Vinay and Darbelnet are based on a comparison of French and English, they have been widely applied to other languages as the above examples from English to Arabic translation show. Vinay and Darbelnet prescribe literal translation as the ideal strategy unless there is good reason to use another. A good reason could be that literal translation:

a) gives a different meaning;
b) has no meaning;
c) is impossible for structural reasons;
d) 'does not have a corresponding expression within the metalinguistic experience of the TL';
e) corresponds to something at a different level of language. (Munday, 2008, p. 57)

2.2 Functional Theories of Translation

2.2.1 Katharina Reiss and text types. Katharina Reiss is a pioneer in the exploration of the function of texts. Her aim is to develop a system for assessing translation based on the type of the text. She builds on the work of the German scholar Karl Bühler, who categorizes the functions of language into three types: informative, expressive and operative. Reiss identifies three language dimensions, which correspond to the three functions: logical for the informative text, aesthetic for the expressive text, and dialogic for the operative text. An informative text focuses on the content and represents plain objects and facts. The translation of such text should transmit referential content. In the case of the expressive text, the focus is on the aesthetic form, and this needs to be conveyed in the translation. Finally, the appellative text type makes an appeal to the receiver of the original text, and the translation should have an equivalent effect on the receiver of the target text. Reiss adds a fourth text type which involves the use of other media such as visual images and sound. This is the audio-medial text type, which comprises films, operas, TV advertisements, etc. Finally, Reiss recognizes the fact that most texts are hybrid and cannot be classified as purely informative, expressive or operative. For example, a biography is both informative and expressive, and a sermon is both informative and operative. Still, there is always a dominant text type which dictates the translation strategy to be followed (Fawcett, 1997; Munday, 2008).

2.2.2 Skopos theory. In 1984, Katharina Reiss and Hans J. Vermeer co-authored a book titled *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie* ('Groundwork for a General Theory of Translation'). As the title suggests, their aim is to develop a general theory of translation. In the first part of the book, Vermeer explains his Skopos theory (Skopos is a Latin word meaning aim or purpose), which focuses on the purpose of translation, rather than the form or content of the text, as the main factor to consider in determining which translation strategy to use. This purpose is usually specified by the initiator of the translation and may be completely different from the purpose or function of the original text (Munday, 2008). For example, a Shakespearean play could be translated for theatrical performance or for publication in a series for youngsters, and the translation strategy would be different in each case.

2.2.3 Nord's text analysis. In her book *Text Analysis in Translation* (1988/1991), Christiane Nord distinguishes between two types of translation: documentary and instrumental. In documentary translation, the target text receiver is aware that the text is a translation, while in instrumental translation the target text receiver does not feel that the text is a translation. In 1997, Nord published another book, *Translating as a Purposeful Activity*, presenting a revised version of her model and highlighting "three aspects of functionalist approaches that are particularly useful in translator training" (cited in Munday, 2008, p. 82) as follows:

(1) *The importance of the translation commission*. Understanding the intended function of the text, and knowing who the addressees are.

(2) *The role of ST analysis.* Analyzing the text to determine the priorities of the translation strategy.

(3) *The functional hierarchy of translation problems*. Deciding the intended function of the TT (documentary or instrumental), and the translation style (source-culture or target-culture oriented).

According to Munday (2008, p. 84), this approach "brings together the strengths of the various functional and action theories"; i.e., Holz Mänttärï's translatorial action, Reiss' text types, and Vermeer's skopos.

2.3 Discourse Analysis Approaches

Discourse analysis approaches are based on Halliday's work on systemic functional grammar. In brief, discourse analysis focuses on how language is used in

communication and how different linguistic choices convey different meanings. Genre is influenced by the sociocultural environment and influences the register, which comprises field (subject matter), tenor (participants) and mode (the medium used). These three components are associated with three meanings, or metafunctions; the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual. The analysis of these metafunctions forms the core of this model (Munday, 2008).

2.3.1 House's model for translation quality assessment. House creates a model for assessing the quality of translation based on register analysis. According to this model, the textual profiles of the ST and TT are compared, any differences or errors are classified according to the different elements of register, and then a statement is made about the quality of the translation (Munday, 2008). House (1997) distinguishes between two types of translations: overt translation and covert translation.

An overt translation is one which is obviously a translation: "In an overt translation the source text is tied in a specific manner to the source language community and its culture" (p. 66). On the other hand, "a covert translation is a translation which enjoys the status of an original text in the target culture …a translation whose text is not specifically addressed to a particular source culture audience" (p. 69). In this type of translation, the TT has the same function as the ST, and the translator might need to apply a cultural filter to maintain equivalence and give the impression that the text is originally written in the TL.

2.3.2 Hatim and Mason. In *Discourse and the Translator* (1990), and *The Translator as Communicator* (1997), Hatim and Mason develop a model for analyzing texts that goes beyond House's register analysis, focusing on discourse analysis and examining the way social and power relations are communicated. They examine the pragmatic and semiotic dimensions of translation, showing how changes in transitivity cause shifts in the ideational function, while changes in modality cause shifts in the interpersonal function (Munday, 2008).

2.4. Cultural Translation Studies

The last two decades witnessed the emergence of culture as an influential area in translation studies. The pioneers of this field are Susan Bassnett and André

Lefevere, who argue that, "neither the word, nor the text, but the culture becomes the operational 'unit' of translation" (1995, p. 8).

Lefevere (1992) proposes five categories for translation analysis that go beyond just studying individual texts. These are audience, authority, image of the culture, expertise and trust.

1. **Audience**: Various audiences require different kinds of translations. This is somehow related to the Skopos theory, as the purpose of the translation and the intended audience are strongly connected.

2. **Authority**: Under authority, Lefevere discusses the authority of patrons and the authority of the dominant culture:

a) Patrons: the ideology of the party which commissions the translation affects the choice of the texts to be translated and the methods to be used in the translation. In this respect, Venuti (2000) states that "translating is always ideological because it releases a domestic remainder, an inscription of values, beliefs, and representations linked to historical moments and social positions in the domestic culture" (p. 485). According to Hatim (2001), ideology covers the following:

- the choice of works to be translated
- the power structure which controls the production and consumption of translations
- who has access to translation and who is denied access
- what is omitted, added or altered in seeking to control the message (pp. 83-84)

b) Cultures: Lefevere (1992) explains that "at certain times certain cultures are considered more prestigious, more 'authoritative' than other, neighboring cultures or successor cultures" (p. 118). Further, Leeuwen (2004) admits that "literary translations and cultural exchange are tightly linked to power relations and to hierarchic divisions between hegemonic and dominated societies" (p. 14).

3. **Image of the culture**: Some translations preserve the self-image of the target culture. They protect their own world against images that are too radically different either by adapting them or by screening them out.

4. **Expertise**: Patrons commission and publish translations, but they do not check them. They leave this task to the experts.

5. **Trust**: Experts are not always successful. This is partly because readers sometimes trust the reputation of the translator more than they trust the comments of the expert.

This chapter has examined the emergence of translation studies and the most prominent theoretical approaches that have dominated translation theory and practice over the last half century. The next chapter focuses on the translation of literature, and particularly explores the different views regarding the culture in literary translation from Arabic into English.

3. Literary Translation from Arabic to English

The previous chapter has presented the various translation theories, including linguistic, functional, discourse analysis, and cultural approaches and models of translation. This chapter explores literary translation, which is strongly connected to cultural theory, and focuses on the translation of literary works from Arabic into English.

3.1 The Translation of Literature

The translation of literature is unique because literary texts fall under the expressive type of texts, where the focus is on the aesthetic form, and this needs to be conveyed through translation. This is easier said than done. It is very difficult to translate puns, figures of speech, and rhymed poetry. The translator needs to have talent in appreciating the literary value of the original text and the ability to preserve this value in the translation.

Another aspect of the translation of literature is the fact that literature carries the culture of the language in which it is written. This dimension makes it even more difficult to translate literature.

3.2 The Translation of Arabic Literature

In the modern era, interest in translation from Arabic began with the European colonialism of the Arab region in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The motive for this interest and translation was Orientalist interest rather than literary appreciation. Arabic literature was looked at as a documentary record of the social conditions without any real literary value. This continued in the twentieth century until 1988 when Naguib Mahfouz was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature (Büchler & Guthrie, 2011).

Altoma (2005) distinguishes three phases that Arabic fiction went through in the twentieth century. The first phase was between 1947 and 1967, and during which it was very difficult to find publishers willing to publish translated Arabic literature because of the very limited interest then. The second phase starts in 1968 and extends to 1988. During this period, Arabic fiction started to be appreciated, and more Arabic works were translated. The awarding of the Nobel Prize to Naguib Mahfouz marks the beginning of the third phase, which extends from 1988 to the present day. This period

has witnessed an increasing demand for Arabic fiction with more publishers willing to invest in translating and promoting Arabic literature.

Interest in the Arab world has significantly increased after the events of September 2001. In the UK, there were initiatives aimed at promoting translated Arabic literature. The Arts Council of England funded translations from Arabic as part of the subsidies provided to publishers, and in 2009, it joined efforts with the British council to organize an Arabic-English literary translation workshop in Cairo and to support Beirut 39, a project by the Hay Telegraph Festival which selected and celebrated 39 Arab authors under the age of 39 whose works were translated. Those works were published in 2010 in a Bloomsbury anthology titled *Beirut 39: New Writing from the Arab World* (Büchler & Guthrie, 2011).

Translation of Arabic literature into English is now dependent on subsidies, which is an obstacle in the face of its dissemination in English as the selection of titles for translation, the translation strategies, and the marketing of translated works are dictated by the commercial aspects of the publishing industry. The leading translated genre is the novel, with short stories in the second position (Büchler & Guthrie, 2011).

3.3 The Master Discourse of Translation from Arabic

According to Faiq (2007), the master discourse of literary translation from Arabic into Western languages has been dominated by "established systems of representation, with norms and conventions for the production and consumption of meanings vis-a-vis people, objects and events" (pp. 1-2). These systems of representation are based on certain "topos" or stereotypes which "dictate the discoursal features used in the writing of translations or other texts about the source culture" (p. 14). Despite the passage of time, "the Arab and Islamic worlds are still seen as stagnant entities with the dangerous addition in the last few years of new terms to the vocabulary of a master discourse that refuses to alter its system" (p. 4). Within this system, the Arab and Islamic worlds are seen as a homogeneous entity, with its main characteristics being: primitive, barbarous, destructive and dependent.

But how did these stereotypes develop? And how are they maintained? These are questions that will be answered in the following sections.

3.4. Stereotype Development

In his book *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said explains how the stereotypes of representation were created and maintained in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. When the French and British empires started expanding into the Orient, they needed to know its peoples to be able to maintain their domination over them. So a new branch of studies developed to cater to the needs of the colonial empires; some researchers lived among the people in the Orient and started recording their observations. However, at this stage, the political goal of domination affected the way those observers saw the 'Orientals.' In their observations, the dominant idea was the contrast between the civilized conquerors and the primitive inhabitants of the land who needed to be civilized. According to Said, the problem is that these images and stereotypes of the Orient never changed later, "The Orient [is] always the same, unchanging, uniform, and radically peculiar object" (1978, p. 98).

When a second wave of Orientalists came to the region, they saw it through the eyes of their predecessors:

> In a fairly strict way, then, Orientalists after Sacy and Lane rewrote Sacy and Lane; after Chateaubriand, pilgrims rewrote him. From these complex rewritings the actualities of the modern Orient were systematically excluded, especially when gifted pilgrims like Nerval and Flaubert preferred Lane's descriptions to what their eyes and minds showed them immediately. (Said, 1978, p. 177)

So, when the Orientalists attempted to translate the literature of the Orient, including Arabic literature, they had an established system of representation which they adhered to. For example, Richard Burton, who translated *The Arabian Nights*, describes Arabs as follows:

> Our Arab at his worst is a mere barbarian who has not forgotten the savage. He is a model mixture of childishness and astuteness, of simplicity and cunning, concealing levity of mind under solemnity of aspect. His stolid instinctive conservatism grovels before the tyrant rule of routine, despite the turbulent and licentious independence which ever suggests revolt against the ruler; his mental torpidity, founded upon physical indolence, renders immediate action and all manner of exertion distasteful; his conscious weakness shows itself in an overweening arrogance and intolerance. His crass and self-satisfied ignorance makes him glorify the most ignoble superstitions, while acts of revolting savagery are the natural results of a malignant fanaticism and a furious hatred of every creed beyond the pale of Al-Islam. (cited in Faiq, 2004, p. 6)

Carbonell (1996) notes that this image presented by Burton is not the result of any encounter he had with an Arab; but had rather been established "long before Burton even set foot in Alexandria." (p. 81).

While Said (1978) contends that "Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient's difference with its weakness" (p. 204); Leeuwen (2004) argues that Said's framework is too rigid and inconsistent. Instead, he proposes Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of 'dialogism' to analyze the cultural exchange between Europe and the Arab world. He explains that the nineteenth century witnessed a cultural exchange between the two sides. The commodities exchanged were of a different nature; Europeans were fascinated by the mysticism, romantic barbarism and sensual sophistication of the Arab world, while the Arabs were interested in the sciences, technology, warfare and socio-economic organization of the Europeans. Hence, "Orientalism in Europe and Occidentalism in the Arab world are two sides of the same dialogic process" (p. 20).

In essence, Leeuwen provides an alternative explanation of the process through which the stereotypical image of the Arab was created, but he does not deny the fact that such an image exists. On the other hand, Said seems to be more interested in how Orientalism created and perpetuated that stereotype than in whether it had its roots in reality; "The things to look at are style, figures of speech, setting, narrative devices, historical and social circumstances, not the correctness of the representation nor its fidelity to some great original" (Said, 1978, p. 21).

This thesis is more concerned with the *result* than the *process*. The stereotype of the Arabs was created out of the encounter between the East and the West in the colonial period, and this stereotype proved to be very difficult to change. Even though Said provides a valid explanation of how this stereotype was created by the powerful West at a time when the East was not able to speak for itself, his theory does not explain the continuity of this stereotype after the East started acquiring the ability "to speak for itself". Most third world countries, including the Arab countries, gained their independence from the former colonial powers in the 1950s and 1960s. Still, more than 50 years later, the same stereotype is still dominant. Why?

This is partly because in any encounter between individuals, the first impression lasts. The same applies to encounters between two groups of people. In

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this case, an image is created through the observation of the behavior of few individuals, and is then generalized to the whole group. This is stereotyping thinking. Hilton and von Hippel (1996) explain that:

> Stereotyping thinking typically serves multiple purposes that reflect a variety of cognitive and motivational processes. Sometimes, for example, stereotyping emerges as a way of simplifying the demands on the perceiver. Stereotypes make information processing easier by allowing the perceiver to rely on previously stored knowledge in place of incoming information. Stereotypes also emerge in response to environmental factors, such as different social roles, group conflicts, and differences in power. Other times stereotypes emerge as a way of justifying the status quo, or in response to a need for social identity. (p. 238)

There is nothing wrong with using stereotypes; it is part of human nature. The human mind tends to categorize people using similar attributes because this makes it easier to understand and control the world. These categories highlight the differences; the other is defined as lacking the characteristics of the self.

Stereotypes do change, albeit slowly, based on any change noticed by the human mind. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the stereotype of the Arab seemed fixed for Said because the Western mind did not notice any major change in the behavior of Arabs. So, the Arab was seen as leading a primitive life in the desert, riding camels, etc. However, in the last few decades, the stereotype of the Arab in the mind of the Westerner has had new characteristics added to it to reflect new observations. Some of the new descriptions of the Arab, which did not exist before, are "bomber" and "billionaire", which reflect current changes noticed in the real world. This means that the stereotypical image of the Arabs can be changed for better or for worse, mostly depending on how the media portrays them.

The stereotypical image of the Arabs still dominates the mind of Westerners, and it determines what they expect when it comes to Arabic literature. Faiq captures this idea very well when he says "as with native texts, the reception process of translated texts is determined more by the shared knowledge of the translating community and its language, than by what the translated texts themselves contain" (2007, pp. 9-10).

It is assumed that this image has been maintained through manipulation and the selection of certain works for translation. The following sections examine this assumption in detail.

3.5 Manipulation

According to Faiq, texts are domesticated to fit with the established system of representation of Arabs and their culture; "exotic, manipulating, subverting and appropriating translation strategies still govern intercultural encounters through translation from Arabic and associated representations of its speakers" (2007, p. ix). For Venuti (1995), this is not limited to Arabic, but is part of the dominant trend in Anglo-American translation projects; i.e., invisible translators producing translations which reflect the dominant culture.

Hatim & Mason (1997) refer to Venuti's distinction between foreignization and domestication. Venuti shows that "the predominant trend towards domestication in Anglo-American translations over the last three centuries had a normalizing effect by depriving the source text producer of his voice and re-expressing foreign cultural values in terms of what is familiar to the dominant culture." (p. 121).

For Faiq, the very act of translation involves "manipulation, subversion, appropriation and violence" (2004, p. 2). This view is also held by Venuti (1995), who sees violence in the very purpose of translation:

> The reconstruction of the foreign text in accordance with values, beliefs, and representations that pre-exist in the target language, always configured in hierarchies of dominance and marginality, always determining the production, circulation, and reception of texts ... Whatever difference the translation conveys is now imprinted by the target-language culture, assimilated to its positions of intelligibility, its canons and taboos, its codes and ideologies. The aim of translation is to bring back a cultural other as the same, the recognizable, even the familiar; and this aim always risks a wholesale domestication of the foreign text, often in highly self-conscious projects, where translation serves an imperialist appropriation of foreign cultures for domestic agendas, cultural, economic, political. (pp. 18-19)

One of the key arguments of Said's Orientalism is that the Orient is manipulated in such a way as to make it resemble the European ideas about the Orient.

Orientalism exhumes the turaath (tradition) but in order better to mummify it, in that it makes the works accessible to us, but in unreadable translations, which at the same time widens the distance between them and us. It enshrines in the target language the image of a 'complicated Orient', to use de Gaulle's expression, and in doing so, not only reinforces that very stereotype, but also confirms the orientalist's status as the expert and as the indispensable mediator. (Jacquemond, 2004, p. 121)

Appiah states that the aim of a literary translation is to produce a text which complies with the literary and linguistic conventions of the culture of the translation. He added that producing a translation that is identical to the original is impossible and that "it might be necessary to be unfaithful to the original in order to preserve formal features that are more important" (cited in Venuti, 2000, p. 397).

Carbonell (2004) makes an important statement in this respect:

This does not mean that the translator always substitutes familiar references for foreign ones, which may be the case in certain texts where those references are secondary to the purpose of the translation (e.g. Bible translation), but rather the opposite is true particularly in literary translation from languages such as Arabic where references to alien concepts or customs are usually preserved and somehow clarified in the translated text or explained in footnotes. (p. 27)

This is less applicable now than it was in the past because of globalization. Any unjustified manipulation in the translation, especially in how a different culture is presented, will affect the reputation of the translator. Many more people now have access to both the original and the translation, and can easily spread the word of how a certain translator dishonestly manipulated through translation. Therefore, it is expected that there will be less domestication and more foreignization, as we will see under the analysis of the translation of بيروت ٧٥.

Manipulation is not necessarily the result of a hidden agenda. It could simply occur because of the structural and lexical differences between languages. According to Hatim and Munday (2004), "The key problem for the translator is the frequent lack of one-to-one matching across languages" (p. 35).

Leeuwen is one of those who reject the idea of manipulation and subversion. For him:

"Translations are not merely aimed at cultural appropriation, but are rather points of reference in a broader context of relations and a means to rethink and revise existing practices and ideas. The texts will never be understood or interpreted according to the society that produced them, but will always be placed in the receiving society and be utilised according to its specific needs. (2004, p. 19)

These two opinions will be examined in relation to the translation of بيروت ٧٥ to determine whether the translator manipulated the text, and if so, what dictated the manipulation.

3.6 Selection of Works for Translation

As previously mentioned, it is assumed that the selection of works to be translated depends on the extent to which they are consistent with the established systems of representation. In the case of Arabic, texts which fit with the established stereotypes about Arabs are selected for translation, and texts which do not fit are filtered out. Said points out that "there seems to be a general 'embargo' except for texts that reiterate the usual clichés about 'Islam,' violence, sensuality, and so forth" (cited in Faiq, 2007, p. 15).

Faiq elaborates on the same idea:

The West, satisfied and content with its own representations, has not deemed it necessary to appreciate appropriately, through translation, the literatures and respective cultures of these peoples, except for texts that fit the requirements of the master discourse of the translating culture. (2007, p. 14)

He goes on to state that "Arabic literary texts are rarely chosen for translation for their innovative approaches or for their socio-political perspectives, rather texts chosen are recognizable as conforming to the master discourse of writing about and representing Arabs, Arab culture and Islam" (2007, p. 17).

So, two processes are at work: an exclusion process whereby undesired texts are left out, and an inclusion process whereby some members from the other (Arab writers) are accepted as long as their writings are in line with the systems of representation. According to Leeuwen (2004):

Translators are often reproached for selecting titles for translation, which are bound to strengthen European prejudices about the Arab world and for refusing to give a balanced picture of the Arabs' cultural heritage. They are accused of seeking financial gain or promoting orientalist biases, appropriating texts to fit their own discourses and endorsing the European foothold in Arab culture. Moreover, they fail to appreciate Arabic literature, as

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it should be, because of a traditionally depreciative attitude towards Arabs and because of the European monopoly on the formulation of literary standards. (pp. 23-24)

It is true that texts are selected for translation when they are consistent with the established stereotypes in the minds of the target audience. However, today the underlying factor behind this is the economic factor; i.e., because some texts will be expected to generate much more sales than others, and not because the translator or the publisher has an agenda to reinforce certain stereotypes. In fact, it is rare to find a publisher who is prepared to invest in publishing books for which there is no demand, which is the case of literary works translated from Arabic.

Neil Hewison, the Associate Director for Editorial Programmes at the American University in Cairo Press, which has a policy of systematic publication of contemporary Arabic literature in English translation, has the following to say regarding the demand for Arabic literature in translation:

> We're a non-profit organization: we publish a range of books, some make money and some lose money. Literature — with the two exceptions of Mahfouz and al-Aswany — doesn't generate income! So if we were a commercial house we would have dropped most of our literary list years ago. […] Our literature sales are not spectacular. Mahfouz and al-Aswany sell well enough, but the rest of them are done for love, and for the idea of it, the mission, really, of making Arabic literature available to a wider audience, not for money. (cited in Büchler & Guthrie, 2011, p. 25)

But this problem is not limited to literature translated from Arabic. Ashley Biles, the Sales Manager at Saqi Books, points out that this is a problem of translated literature in general:

> There's no particular struggle with the promotion of the Arabic books over all, no particular prejudice against it — it's a general prejudice against all translated literature! Shelf life is determined by sales, so shops return the books to us if they don't sell quickly. (cited in Büchler & Guthrie, 2011, p. 38)
>
> The same idea is reiterated by the Lebanese author Hanan Al-Shaykh:

> Any author, not only an Arab author, needs a little bit of commercial success — if you don't have that, they won't publish you again. So if you're not funded by the Arts Council or someone else, you must sell or you won't get published again. You must sell at least 2,500 – 3,000 copies of a book for it to be fully commercially viable. (cited in Büchler & Guthrie, 2011, p. 32)

According to Landers, "literary translation, at least in the English-speaking world, faces a difficulty that texts originally written in English do not: resistance by the public to reading literature in translation" (2001, p. 7).

The question here is: if there is little demand for Arabic literature in translation, how do publishers select works which they expect will sell?

Here are some answers:

- "Presumably for commercial reasons, publishers often choose works which they think will sell well for their extra-literary features" (Translator Catherine Cobham, as cited in Büchler & Guthrie, 2011, p. 68).
- "I'm pretty disappointed [about the way publishers approach Arabic literature], as often as not. One respected editor told me that he was looking for a comedy about ethnic tensions in Iraq" (Translator William Hutchins, as cited in Büchler & Guthrie, 2011, p. 68).
- "I do think that generally the books that are translated are the ones that are making noises in the Arab world, the controversial best sellers like Girls of Riyadh or The Yacoubian Building being so widely read in Arabic clearly deserve to be translated so they can be read in English. I don't believe that we should just be translating arty stuff that no one in the Arab world is reading" (Translator Tony Calderbank, as cited in Büchler & Guthrie, 2011, p. 31).
- "Publishers say 'I'm really interested in stuff from Iraq right now,' with politics as the main impetus behind that interest" (Translator Marilyn Booth, as cited in Büchler & Guthrie, 2011, p. 69).
- "We try to select books carefully, on good advice. Although we publish 10 to 15 or even up to 20 a year, we would never put out books just to keep up that quota, definitely not. And of course this is all subjective, so we please some and upset others. There's no way I can say that our selection represents absolutely the best books of the year — we can only translate a tiny drop per year from that ocean of the thousands of books which appear in Arabic" (Neil Hewison, Associate Director for Editorial Programmes at the American University in Cairo Press, as cited in Büchler & Guthrie, 2011, pp. 23-24).
We cannot but ask: whose advice is Hewison talking about?

According to Büchler and Guthrie (2011), when UK publishers select Arab authors for translation, "Information is filtered selectively through certain sources without enough direct reference to native speakers of Arabic familiar with the Arabic literary scene of various countries" (p. 30). Hanan Al-Shaykh expresses her frustration with this situation:

I would like to know about a group of judges, a panel, who would choose the best novels to be translated. You seldom find mainstream UK publishers who

are willing to use [professional] readers to tell them about books — they just go for something that has already been translated. The Yacoubian Building was already a best-seller in Arabic and doing well in its French translation before it was picked up in the UK. (cited in Büchler & Guthrie, 2011, p. 30)

So, why was بيروت ٧٥ selected for translation? Was it because it adhered to the established system of representation of the Arab culture, or because it sold well in its Arabic version? This is one of several questions that the following chapter addresses.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

Chapter 3 explored the master discourse of literary translation from Arabic to English, by examining the criteria for selecting works to be translated and the dominant translation strategies used. This chapter examines the reasons why Ghada Samman's novel بيروت ٧٥ was selected for translation —whether it adhered to the established system of representation of Arab culture, and if so, whether there was deliberate manipulation on the part of the translator to conform to this system. Examples from the novel are discussed to establish how the translator handled cultural references, how Arab culture is presented through translation, and when foreignization or domestication is used and the implications in each case.

4.1 Methodology

This chapter examines the novel بيروت ٧٥, the author Ghada Samman, the translator Nancy N. Roberts, and the way the translated novel was received to find out the reasons behind its selection for translation. The result of this examination will confirm or otherwise the commonly held assumption that Arabic works are selected for translation only when they conform to the established system of representation of Arabs and their culture in the West; in other words, to further sustain the stereotypical system of representing Arabs. For this purpose, 19 examples with references to Arab culture have been chosen from the novel. These examples are discussed to establish the translation strategies used by the translator, and how those strategies relate to the theoretical approaches presented in chapters 2 and 3 above. Particular reference will be made to the approach of Vinay and Darbelnet who prescribe literal translation unless there is a good reason not to do so.

4.2 The Novel

بيروت ٧٥ tells the story of five people (Farah, Yasmeena, Abu'l-Malla, Abu Mustafa, and Ta'aan) who share a taxi heading from Damascus to Beirut, where the two main characters (Farah and Yasmeena) hope they will be able to achieve their dreams. Beirut, however, turns out to be a corrupt place, which will eventually destroy the five characters. Farah sells his soul to become a singer, but eventually loses his mind. Yasmeena sells her body to get love, but is eventually killed by her brother because she stopped giving him money after her rich lover deserted her.

Abu'l-Mulla dies of a heart attack when he tries to steal an ancient statue from a site he is supposed to guard. The fisherman Abu Mustafa carries dynamite and hysterically jumps in the water to catch the magic lamp, which he has been dreaming of for 30 years. Finally, Ta'aan becomes paranoid about people from a rival family trying to kill him in revenge, and ends up killing a stranger who was about to ask him for directions.

4.3 The Author: Ghada Samman

Ghada Samman is a Syrian writer and journalist born in Damascus in 1942. She received a B.A. in English Language and Literature from Damascus University, and a M.A. in Theatre Studies from the American University of Beirut. After completing her study, she became a journalist and worked in Beirut. She lives between Beirut and Paris, and has never returned to Damascus since she left in the 1960s.

Samman's first collection of short stories, عيناك قدري (*Your Eyes are My Destiny*), was published in 1962, followed by another collection, لا بحر في بيروت (*No Sea in Beirut*), in 1965. She published her first novel, بيروت ٧٥ (*Beirut 75*), at the end of 1974. Her other works include novels such as كوابيس بيروت (*Beirut Nightmares*) (1977) and ليلة المليار (*The Night of the First Billion*) (1986), and many collections of short stories, poems and articles (Ashour, Ghazoul, & Reda-Mekdashi, 2008).

4.4 The Translator: Nancy N. Roberts

Nancy N. Roberts is a North American prolific literary translator best known for her translations of Ghada Samman's works: *Beirut 75* (1995), *Beirut Nightmares* (1997), and *The Night of the First Billion* (2005). She also translated other works such as Mohamed El-Bisatie's *Over the Bridge* (2006), Salwa Bakr's *The Man from Bashmour* (2007), and Naguib Mahfouz's *The Mirage* (2009) and *Love in the Rain* (2011), to name just a few. She works in other fields as well, such as healthcare, law, current affairs, Christian-Muslim relations, Islamic law and Islamic thought and history. In fact, she presents herself as a translator specialized in Islamic thought, as she has translated several works in this area (Büchler & Guthrie, 2011).

Talking about her translations of Ghada Samman's works, Roberts states that she translated them "just for the love of it" (Büchler & Guthrie, 2011, p. 66), before

finding publishers to publish them. She won the Arkansas Arabic Translation Award in 1995 for her translation of *Beirut 75,* and received commendation from the Banipal Literary Award committee in 2008 for her translation of Salwa Bakr's *The Man from Bashmour*.

4.5 Why *Beirut 75?*

As mentioned under the previous sub-section, the translator chose to translate this novel 'just for the love of it', but what exactly made the translated novel likely to sell in the West and most importantly convinced the publisher to take the risk?

There are several factors which make the novel a good choice from the perspective of a Western publisher. Some have to do with the writer Ghada Samman, and some have to do with the novel itself.

When Ghada Samman wrote بيروت ٧٥, she was 32 years old. There is high demand in the West for novels written by young female writers. Reporting on personal experience of translating contemporary Arabic literature into English, Peter Clark writes:

> I wanted ... to translate a volume of contemporary Syrian literature. I ... thought the work of 'Abd al-Salam al-'Ujaili was very good and well worth putting into English. 'Ujaili is a doctor in his seventies who has written poetry, criticism, novels and short stories. In particular his short stories are outstanding. Many are located in the Euphrates valley and depict the tensions of individuals coping with politicisation and the omnipotent state .... I proposed to my British publisher a volume of 'Ujaili's short stories. The editor said, "There are three things wrong with the idea. He's male. He's old and he writes short stories. Can you find a young female novelist?" Well, looked into women's literature and did translate a novel by a woman writer even though she was and is in her eighties. (cited in Faiq, 2007, pp. 14-15)

Memory in the Flesh by Ahlam Mustaganami is another example confirming this idea. The novel was translated into English twice. The first translation had many errors, which made the publisher arrange for a retranslation by another translator. The second translation was also criticized for the use of inappropriate register. However, the book survived all this and sold well due to "the fame of the original and that of its *female Muslim rebel* author" (Büchler & Guthrie, 2011, p. 37) [emphasis added].

Another factor which has to do with the writer herself is the fact that Ghada Samman studied English language and literature and was influenced by the Western

literary tradition. بيروت ٧٥ includes references to Dante's *Inferno*, Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *Faust*, *Odysseus*, Atlantis and Columbus. The writer also breaks taboos. This makes her work closer to the Western audience, although she was not writing specifically for them.

One of the factors which relates to the novel itself is the title بيروت ٧٥. The first image that this title conjures up is the Lebanese civil war, which started in 1975. As explained above, Arabic literature is very often appreciated for its documentary value as a record of the social conditions in Arab countries. So, Western readers would be eager to read the novel and expect to learn something about the causes of the Lebanese civil war. In fact, this is how the novel was received, as will be shown below. In the words of Awwad (cited in the introduction of the translated novel, p. vi), "the novel may almost be described as prophetic, in that its characterization and setting lay bare the complex roots of the ongoing strife."

Another factor is that in 1975, Beirut was the most Westernized Arab city. Most cafés and restaurants in Beirut mentioned in the novel carry foreign names: Café de Paris, Horseshoe Café, Popeye's Restaurant, Café du Roi, The Panache and Wimpy's. There is also a reference to Carl Orff music. All these references would bring the novel closer to Western audiences. In this sense, it becomes not only the capital of Lebanon, but a globalized city where every reader would find something to relate to. In her introduction to the translation, Roberts notes that:

> *Beirut 75* offers a message relevant both to the Arab and the non-Arab reader. Deepening our understanding of central issues facing men and women of Arab society may offer insights into problems and questions plaguing Western society as well, for the concerns laid bare in *Beirut 75* are not unique to the experience of modern Arabs, but in one degree or another are reflective of the "human condition" common to present-day societies throughout the world as they are forced to rethink previously unquestioned values and practices and as they search for ways of establishing communal identities which affirm the dignity of all individuals. (p. vii)

4.6 Reception of the Translated Novel

The translated novel was awarded the University of Arkansas Arabic Translation Award in 1995. The University of Arkansas press website (2013) describes the novel as "a creative and daring work which prophetically depicts the social and political causes for the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war in 1975. It

addresses the struggles of Arab, and particularly Lebanese, society, but the message is one of the universal human condition."

Kim Jensen wrote a review of the novel in Al Jadid Magazine under the title "Ghada Samman's *Beirut 75* Unmasks Gender and Class in Post-Colonial Society." Jensen describes the novel as:

> a short, yet harrowing exposé of the political reality of Beirut at the outset of the civil war. This frighteningly raw novel, which traces the lives of five strangers, lays bare the deep social divisions which led to one of the most dismal periods in modern Arab history.
>
> With a storyline reminiscent of such Western works as Balzac's "Lost Illusions" or Flaubert's "A Sentimental Education," "Beirut '75" describes the unveiling process whereby "the glittering city" is revealed to be nothing more than an alienating prison. In this case, Beirut replaces Paris as the city of madness and death. But here Beirut, unlike Paris, is the site of post-colonial dismemberment -- a city torn asunder by class rivalries and outdated allegiances (ironically, to Paris). This political and cultural "dismemberment" is incarnated in the book in haunting ways -- all too prescient of the butchery that became prevalent during the war. (Jensen, 1999)

So, the novel is viewed mostly as a record of the political and social conditions prevalent in Beirut at the time of its publication. Ghada Samman is applauded for her ability to depict 'the social and political causes for the outbreak of the Lebanese civil' and reveal 'the political reality of Beirut at the outset of the civil war.' This stresses the idea that Arabic literature is still viewed as a record of the political and social conditions in the Arab world and is not appreciated as much for its literary value.

4.7 Examples

This section examines how the translator handled cultural references in the novel. Nancy Roberts is quoted above to the effect that her technique has always been "fairly intuitive," and that as she gained experience and confidence, she became "less bound" to the literal text than she used to be at the beginning of her career (Büchler & Guthrie, 2011, p. 66). In the light of this and keeping in mind that *Beirut 75* was among Roberts' first translations, it is expected that her strategy in translating the novel would be more intuitive and literal.

Example One

والرجل الواقف أمام باب الكراج، وهو ينادي بصوت مذبوح "بيروت. بيروت." (ص. ٥)

and the man standing in front of a nearby garage calling out hoarsely, "Beirut! Beirut!" (p. 3)

Commentary

'Garage' is a mistranslation of the word 'كراج' in this context. In Syria, this term is used to refer to a bus terminal, or to a shared taxi terminal in this particular case, as people travelling between Damascus and Beirut in the 1970s used to share taxis rather than ride buses. The translator seems to be unaware of this meaning of the word in the Syrian culture. She could not understand what a garage has to do with someone traveling from one city to another, and assumed it must be a 'nearby' garage. A more appropriate translation would be:

The man standing at the entrance of the shared taxi terminal calling hoarsely, "Beirut! Beirut!"

Example Two

والسيارة تغادر المدينة، تمضي في طريق الربوة والهامة. (ص. ٧)

Departing the city, the taxi headed for the foothills and mountain peaks, (p. 4)

Commentary

This is another mistranslation resulting from the translator's unfamiliarity with some aspects of the Syrian culture. 'الربوة والهامة' refer to two villages near Damascus on the road to Beirut. So these are proper nouns (names of villages) that need to be transliterated and not translated, or at least the ways they are internationally represented in English are used. An appropriate rendering would be, and perhaps substantiated with a footnote:

Departing the city, the taxi crossed Rabwa and Hama.

Example Three

آه .. آه يا زمن (ص. ١٠)

Oh-oh my! (p. 9)

Commentary

In this example, the translator goes for domestication to convey the feeling of pain expressed by the character. Literal translation would have resulted in something

meaningless in English, and there is no need to explain to the reader that this is how people in Syria or Lebanon express their pain. So although the translator did not use the word 'time', this is completely justified and cannot be considered manipulation on the part of the translator. Still, the translator was not very successful in this instance. Perhaps, a functional translation would be:

Life sucks.

Example Four

هذا المرابي سيمتص دمي (ص. ١١)

This moneylender is going to milk me dry (p. 10)

Commentary

The context here is that the fisherman, Abu Mustafa, is reflecting on his recent visit to the moneylender. We learn later that he had to pledge his boat as a bond against the money he owed to the moneylender. The word 'مرابي' is culturally loaded. It refers to someone who lends money and charges high interest to the borrower. It has bad connotations because taking interest is something forbidden in Islam. 'Moneylender' in the Western culture implies taking interest, but does not have an equivalent bad connotation as the word 'مرابي'. The translator could have added a footnote to explain the negative meaning of the word in the Arab culture, but this is not really necessary because the rest of the sentence 'milk me dry' conveys the idea that this person is doing something unethical.

'سيمتص دمي' is a figure of speech that is used idiomatically in the Arab culture. The translator opts for an equivalent figure of speech and an idiom in English. In this case, domestication is more effective than foreignization, because literal translation would have sounded unidiomatic. The translator's strategy here is consistent with the approach of Vinay and Darbelnet who prescribe literal translation unless there is a good reason not to do so.

The translator could have preserved the blood sucking figure of speech by using 'bloodsucking' as a pre-modifier of 'moneylender':

This bloodsucking moneylender is going to milk me dry.

Example Five

حتى أنه حين داس على قدم كلب وجد نفسه يقول هل معتذراً: عفواً يا أخ! (ص. ١٧)

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Once when he accidentally stepped on a dog's foot, he even found himself saying, "Excuse me, sir!" (p. 16)

Commentary

In This context, Farah, the main character reflects on the contrast between poverty and richness in Beirut. Even the dogs of rich people lead a better life than poor people; they wear colorful clothes and have scornful looks. When Farah accidently stepped on a dog's foot, he felt he must apologize to it.

'يا أخ' is used in the Syrian culture to address a stranger in a relatively formal situation. So, the character is formally apologizing to a dog. Using the literal translation 'brother' in English would not have resulted in the same level of formality as it corresponds to something at a different level of language (here again is one of the reasons given by Vinay and Darbelnet for avoiding literal translation). The translator's use of the word 'sir' is very effective in conveying exactly the same meaning of the original text. So, again this domestication, or departure from literal translation, is completely justified.

Example Six

نيشان بيك في أوروبا (ص. ٢٢)

Nishan Bey is in Europe (p. 22)

Commentary

The translator opts for foreignization here by using the literal translation 'bey' which is associated in the mind of Western readers with people from the Orient. There is no reason for departure from literal translation which has a foreignizing effect here. The translator reminds the reader that these characters belong somewhere else. Using 'Mr. Nishan' would have distorted the identity of the character without any textual justification.

Example Seven

معك قرش بتسوى قرش (ص. ٢٢)

If you've got a piaster, you're worth a piaster. (p. 22)

Commentary

This is another instance where the translator chooses literal translation to achieve a foreignizing effect. Domestication could have been achieved by replacing

the whole sentence with 'Money talks', but the translator prefers to preserve the otherness of the source culture.

Example Eight

يمسك بزجاجة "الكيتشاب" (عصير البندورة المكثفة) (ص. ٢٣)

He picked up a bottle of catsup (p. 23)

Commentary

This is one of two examples in the novel which show that the writer Ghada Samman was writing for Arab readers. Back in 1975, most people in Syria would not have known what 'catsup' is, so she provides an explanation. The translator deletes this explanation in her translation because it will be redundant for the English language reader. This is a fully justified strategy.

The use of 'catsup' is an over-domestication since such use is limited to some parts of southern United States, while 'ketchup' is the word used in most countries around the word. So, using 'ketchup' looks to be a better alternative:

He picked up a bottle of ketchup

Example Nine

لكنه حين فكر "بالمصباح السحري" وجد في نفسه قوة (ص. ٢٥)

However, when he thought about the magic lamp, (p. 25)

Commentary

This reference to the 'magic lamp' is reminiscent of *The Arabian Nights*. The translator preserved this cultural reference because it is consistent with the Western reader's idea about this exotic region where people still believe in magic and practice it.

Example Ten

سيدعكه ثلاث مرات فينتصب جني المصباح عموداً من دخان، مهيباً كالليل، ثم يركع بين يديه ويقول له: شبيك لبيك عبدك بين يديك (ص. ٢٥)

He would rub it three times, and a genie would rise up in a pillar of smoke, awesome and terrible as the night. Then it would kneel before him and say, "Master! Master! Your wish is my command!" (p. 25)

Commentary

Like the previous example, in this case all references to Arab culture with its exoticness are preserved. This conforms to the established system of representation of Arabs, who are still living in a magical world of genies that come out of the lamp when their master rubs it three times and are ready to fulfill his wishes. Still, the word 'Master!' is unnecessarily repeated. The result is redundancy, which can be avoided by deleting the second instance of the word 'Master'. So a suggested translation of the last sentence could be:

Master! Your wish is my command.

Example Eleven

ابريق فخاري للشرب (ص. ٢٦)

clay water pitcher (p. 26)

Commentary

This is another cultural reference that is carried into the target text. It reminds the reader of the otherness of the source culture, where people are still using clay pitchers. The translator could have domesticated this reference, but that would have been unjustified manipulation.

Example Twelve

هذا ابني مصطفى بصف البكالوريا (ص. ٢٧)

This is my son Mustafa. He's been studying in the university (p. 27)

Commentary

In this example, the word 'بكالوريا' is mistranslated into 'university' without any clear justification. One explanation could be that the translator thought that the important thing is that he is studying, regardless of the level he is at. But this is not true. 'بكالوريا' means Grade 12. It is the final stage of secondary education, and in Lebanon, the successful completion of Grade 12 puts the person in a higher social position than someone who has not completed this level of education. When Abu Mustafa forces his son Mustafa out of school when he has reached Grade 12 to work with him, it means that he is in a very desperate situation that he cannot even wait one year until his son has completed this important level of education. This implication is

lost in the translation when Mustafa 'has been studying' in the university for a couple of years or at least for few months. A more appropriate translation would be:

This is my son Mustafa. He is a secondary school student.

Example Thirteen

سيحل محل أخيه المرحوم علي (ص. ٢٧)

He'll take the place of his brother Ali. (p. 27)

Commentary

The word 'المرحوم' is unnecessarily deleted from the translation. There is no justification why the translator decided to omit the reference to the fact that Ali is now dead. A more effective translation would use something to indicate that the person is dead. It is true that the Arabic word carries an implied wish of 'may God have mercy on his soul', but with repeated use, this meaning has become so weak that most people do not have it in mind when they use the word. So, the translation of this sentence can be restructured as follows:

He'll take the place of his brother Ali, who is no longer with us.

Example Fourteen

نقلها من منصة المدعي العام إلى قفص الاتهام (ص. ٣٨)

In so doing he had removed her from behind the prosecutor's podium and placed her on the witness stand. (p. 39)

Commentary

In this example, the translator did a very good job translating 'قفص الاتهام' as 'witness stand.' This is because the Arabic sentence is used figuratively. The heroine of the novel, Yasmeena, was indirectly accusing Nimr of being unfaithful to her, and he replied by suggesting that by not trusting him, she was unfaithful to him. So, she was trying to interrogate him, but he started questioning her behavior.

In the courtroom in Arab countries, the accused person will sit in a box all the time, and will answer questions from the box. In the Western culture, however, the accused usually sits next to their lawyer. A person who is to be questioned in the courtroom, be they a witness or an accused, will sit in the witness stand. Therefore, to say that Nimr placed Yasmeena in the seat of the accused will not convey to the Western reader the meaning that he started interrogating her. This meaning will be

well conveyed by having Yasmeena removed from the prosecutor's podium and placed at the witness stand. This is domestication for a very good reason: to bridge the gap between the source culture and the target culture.

Example Fifteen

تسمونهم "فدائيين" وهم سبب خراب القرية! (ص. ٤٦)

You call them 'fedayeen' or fighters willing to sacrifice their lives for their homeland. But they're the ones who've brought ruin on the village! (p. 47)

Commentary

In this example, the word 'فدائيين' has no equivalent in the target language. Although 'fedayeen' found its way to English dictionaries in the last few decades, it may have acquired a different ideological connotation from that of 'فدائين' in Arabic. Therefore, the translator had to decide between domesticating the text by choosing the closest available English equivalent, or foreignizing it by borrowing the Arabic word, with the associated risk of losing the ideological connotation. She chose foreignization, and to make sure the reader understands the meaning, she added the explanation of the word. This is a sign of respect of the Arab culture.

The second sentence can be improved by replacing the word 'ruin' with 'pillage', which rhymes with 'village' and makes the translation more idiomatic:

You call them 'fedayeen' or fighters willing to sacrifice their lives for their homeland. But they're the ones who've brought pillage to the village!

Example Sixteen

"وقل اعملوا فسيرى الله عملكم ورسوله والمؤمنون" (ص. ٤٦)

God said to the prophet Muhammad in the Holy Qur'an, "Say, work, and God shall see what you do, as well as His apostles and the believers." (p. 47)

Commentary

In this example, Ghada Samman uses a verse from the Quran for a particular purpose. Arab readers will instantly know this and will understand its pragmatic function, but English readers will not. The translator added an introducer sentence, 'God said to the prophet Muhammad in the Holy Qur'an', to clarify that this is from the Quran, but she did not explain the pragmatic function of the verse.

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Usually, when encountering a Quranic verse in a text to be translated, most translators simply relax and copy one of the available translations of the Quran, such as Yusuf Ali's, without considering the pragmatic function of the verse in the particular context. Nancy Roberts did not do that. Instead, she translated the Quranic verse herself, albeit she was not very successful; 'ورسوله' was mistranslated as 'His apostles'.

We have two clear mistakes here. First, the word 'apostle' could mean 'رسول' in a Christian context, but not in a Muslim one. In Islam, the phrase 'رسول الله' means the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), unless the name of another messenger of God is clearly stated. So, the correct translation here is 'Prophet.' Second, the word 'رسول' is singular in the original text, but plural in the translation. These mistakes are the result of the translator's unfamiliarity with the Islamic culture. The translator could have conveyed the intended meaning without translating the Quranic verse by opting for an English idiom such as 'you reap what you sow.' But she preferred to foreignize the text and preserve the verse. To avoid the mistakes, she should have asked or searched for help re the meaning of this verse. In this case, a more effective translation could be:

God said to the prophet Muhammad in the Holy Qur'an, "Say, work, and God, His Prophet and the believers shall see what you do."

Example Seventeen

قرع باب الرفيق نديم .. قرع طويلاً، ثم أطل صوت مسكون بالنعاس: من؟

أنا مصطفى. افتح يا نديم

صرير باب. ضوء متماوت. نديم يسأل وهو يرى شباب مصطفى مغسولاً بالمطر والدمع والرعد: ماذا حدث؟

سأنضم إليكم. لم أجد حلاً آخر.

لن تندم أيها الرفيق. أهلاً بك. (ص. ٥٨)

He knocked on the door of his friend Nadeem. He knocked for a long time. Then, finally, a sleepy voice answered, "Who is it?" "Open up, Nadeem. It's Mustafa." The door creaked as it opened [...] Nadeem asked, "What's happened?"

"I'm going to join you. I haven't found any other solution." "You won't regret it, friend. Welcome." (p. 61)

Commentary

In this example, the word 'رفيق' is mistranslated as 'friend' instead of 'comrade.' The context is that young Mustafa decided to join a socialist party to fight social oppression and exploitation. This is implied by the word 'رفيق' which is used by communist and socialist parties to refer to party members. It seems the translator did not notice this reference because of her unfamiliarity with the political culture in Syria and Lebanon. A more functional translation could be:

He knocked on the door of comrade Nadeem

…

"You won't regret joining us, comrade. Welcome."

Example Eighteen

في المقهى طلبت الفتاة كوباً من "بلودي ماري" (الفودكا بعصير البندورة) ... شربته برشفة واحدة. (ص. ٩٧)

We went into a cafe where Fifi ordered a Bloody Mary which she downed in a single gulp. (p. 104)

Commentary

This is the second example in the novel which shows that Ghada Samman wrote for Arab readers. She explains 'Bloody Mary'. The translator deleted this explanation in her translation because it would be redundant for the English reader. Again, this is justified.

Example Nineteen

كانت له عين واحدة في منتصف وجهه كغول الأساطير (ص. ١٠٢)

He had one eye in the center of his face, like a ghoul straight out of legends and myths. (p. 110)

Commentary

This is one of many references in the novel to legendary creatures, exotic places and magical worlds. The translator preserved all these references, thereby meeting the expectations of Western audiences and enforcing their stereotypical ideas about Arabs, who still live in those enchanting worlds.

4.8 Discussion

In most cases, the translator seems to be following Vinay's and Darbelnet's approach of sticking to literal translation unless there is a good reason not to do so. Literal translation has a foreignizing effect. The translator presents elements of Arab culture without any changes. The use of domestication is very limited and used only when necessary. Sometimes, the translator provides explanations for terms or references that are difficult for the English language readers to know by themselves. The result is keeping the readers aware all the time that they are looking at a different culture.

Still, the readers find shared elements between their culture and that of the novel. This has nothing to do with the techniques used by the translator, but rather with the novel itself; a novel by a 'Westernized' writer about characters living in one of the first globalized cities in the Arab world.

This chapter has examined Ghada Samman's novel بيروت ٧٥ to establish the elements which contributed to its selection for translation. The chapter has discussed 19 examples from the novel to determine the translator's approach in dealing with cultural references in the Arabic text. The next chapter summarizes the findings of this thesis.

5. Conclusion

This thesis has examined the culture of Arabic to English literary translation with a view of establishing whether the master discourse of translation is still dominated by stereotypical images about Arabs and Islam. It has done so by assessing Nancy Robert's translation of Ghada Samman's novel بيروت ٧٥ to determine the reasons why it was selected for translation. It also analyzed examples of cultural references in the novel to explore the strategies used by the translator.

The stereotypical image of Arabs and their culture still exists in the minds of Western audiences, and it determines the demand by these audiences when it comes to literary works translated from Arabic. The selection of works to be translated is governed by this demand, as literary translation is looked at as a commercial activity that should yield profit. No publisher is ready to risk publishing a work which is not expected to sell.

The novel بيروت ٧٥ was translated and published because it meets the demand in the market for novels written by young Arab female writers. Further, it is seen as a documentary of the political and social conditions in Lebanon on the eve of the civil war, which started there in 1975. So, it was not selected for translation because it conforms to the established system of representation of Arabs and their culture.

The examples discussed in the previous chapter show that the translator opted for literal translation, which has a foreignizing effect, most of the time with the aim of preserving elements that reflect Arab culture. She departed from literal translation and resorted to domestication only when there was a good reason for that; a gap between the two languages and the two cultures that would make it impossible to properly convey the intended meaning through literal translation. Overall, it seems that the translator did not manipulate and distort the image of Arabs to make it consistent with their stereotypical image in the mind of Western readers.

The assumption that translated literature is used to maintain the stereotypical image of Arabs and their culture is not always a valid one, and does not squarely apply in the case of Nancy N. Roberts' translation of Ghada Samman's بيروت ٧٥. In fact, it may be the other way round; the selection of works to be translated is affected by the stereotypical image, an image that is now maintained through the media. If Arabs are to change this image, they have to focus on the media and not on translated literature.

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Work Examined

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