AJAAJ AND NATIONAL IDENTITY: A COMIC BOOK WITH A SERIOUS MISSION

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AJAAJ AND NATIONAL IDENTITY: A COMIC BOOK WITH A SERIOUS MISSION

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ABSTRACT

Translation is often influenced by its social, political and cultural context. These factors soon begin to define the very concept of translation, its role, directions and traditions down to the strategies adopted by the translators to fulfill the purpose of a given text. A great many of the studies in that area have focused entirely on the manipulation that often results from this controversial relationship. However, there is an increasing interest nowadays in looking at the more benign implications of this relationship on the role of translation.

This thesis examines the role of translation as an intervention, i.e., a means to resolve socio-political problems and achieve representational justice. The study focuses on the case of the UAE and how translation began to be seen as part of the solutions for the socio-political challenges that are posed by the unique diversity of its population and the misrepresentation of its culture abroad. The resulting paralysis of some of the most fundamental functions of the Emirati national identity has highlighted the role that translation can play in overcoming these challenges. The translation of the Emirati comic book, Ajaaj, which was created by the Watani social development program for this purpose, is examined to see the degree to which this particular vision of translation has influenced the strategies adopted by the translator.

It appears that translation strategies and decision-making are influenced by the translator/translation project’s conception of the role of translation within the spatial
and temporal context and an understanding of the purpose of a given translation within this context. In the case of the Emirati comic book, achieving the purpose of the translation seemed to be the main factor playing a role in the translator’s decisions. Against common expectations, the cultural message has necessitated a certain commitment to the target culture’s expectations, especially with regard to language and form.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADACH</td>
<td>Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSBC</td>
<td>The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL</td>
<td>Source Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Source Text</td>
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<td>TL</td>
<td>Target Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>TT</td>
<td>Target Text</td>
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<tr>
<td>UAE</td>
<td>The United Arab Emirates</td>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>The United States of America</td>
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing this thesis has been interrupted a number of times because of the other tasks that I have been juggling for the past two years. Mustering up the courage to approach books that I have neglected for a month or two at a time or to put down in writing the fragmented ideas would have been more difficult without support. For this reason, I owe acknowledgement to my supervisor, Professor Said Faiq and to Professor Basil Hatim, who have throughout their lectures, questioned our satisfaction with our initial translation and understanding of the text and the situation and taken us to the level of professionalism in translation.

I am also grateful to Mohamed Baharoon, Deputy Coordinator-General at Watani, Amna Al Hashemi, Head of Communication and Media at Watani, and Kenneth Wise, Director of Policy Research Division at Dubai Consultancy Research and Media Center, who took the time to answer my questions regarding the comic book.
Chapter One: Introduction

It is rather difficult – almost painful – to think of art or literature as a tool. However, no one can deny the role of art in fulfilling such basic needs as communication, expression, or imagination. No one can deny the function of art as a means of communication or source of entertainment or as a socio-political force. No one can deny that art has a purpose. The same goes for translation.

Translation is quite adaptable when it comes to purpose. Plainly put, the purpose is communication. What is communicated and, more importantly, who is communicating it and to whom, is what decides the path down which the translator goes. By knowing those basic facts, translators go on to make decisions across the board from the moment they set eyes on the text until they submit it, every decision made toward achieving the purpose counts.

In that sense, translation becomes an intervention, a means for achieving a purpose, often changing the course of events. Discussion of translation as an intervention may have come relatively late, but the realization was not entirely new. For ages, those who had power used translation to reinforce their agendas in various ways. Depending on their visions, translation took shape by assuming a role and, on a lower level, by adopting policies and strategies that fulfilled the required tasks.

Today, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is experiencing changes that again call on translation as an intervention. In recent years, the UAE has witnessed considerable progress on the economic and international levels. It has put itself on the map by establishing itself as an international hub for trade, tourism, and sports. This new-found position has attracted professionals and entrepreneurs to work and set up their businesses in the UAE. This has caused a dramatic increase in the expatriate population of the UAE, which now stands at an ominous 80% and is still growing (Interact, 2009).

Different organizations, both in the public and private sectors, show considerable concern over the possible consequences of the ever-increasing disparities among the different components of the UAE community and the gap between the UAE’s economic reputation and human representation worldwide. It is interesting – and equally relieving – to see that all those organizations seem to realize the role that translation should play to deal with these socio-political challenges.
This interest is not at all surprising, given the long historical relationship between power and translation. For a long time, post-colonial and translation theorists have discussed this relationship and the manipulation it may involve. Issues such as censorship and representation have been the axes around which this discussion revolved. Little has been said about the way translation can excel because of the support of power, or about the way translation can play a major role in changing the course of events or intervene in resolving problems or offering more space by opening doors to other languages and cultures. This thesis examines the active role that translation can play in creating and preserving national identity by looking at the case of the UAE and the way translation is being viewed increasingly as a part of a set of solutions for the socio-cultural challenges that are weakening its national identity and hindering the performance of its internal and external functions.

Chapter Two explores the theoretical development of translation studies as the field moved from the confines of linguistics to the vast realms of politics and humanities. Despite the diversity of the theories, it is not too difficult to see how they overlap in the process of translation.

Chapter Three takes a close look at the theories and studies that explore the basic concepts on which this thesis is based and the multifaceted role of translation with regard to national identity, politics, and power. The chapter then explores the possibility of translation as an intervention and as a power in itself, regardless of its inherent bondage to power that scholars have discussed.

Chapter Four looks at how the theories discussed in Chapter Three on the role of translation are manifested in the UAE and how the needs of the community define much of the translation activity in the UAE. It then proceeds to examine the translation of the Emirati comic book series, Ajaaj, and the role it is expected to play on the national and international levels. The chapter also includes a close study of the first volume of the comic book as translated by the author of this thesis and the way strategies that were adopted took into consideration the purpose of the translation. It also looks at further examples from other volumes to examine the series’ treatment of socio-cultural issues and whether the opportunity to tackle them in the translation was taken.

Finally, Chapter Five summarizes the main findings of the research and their relevance to the evolving field of translation.
Chapter Two: Translation Studies

Translation is at the heart of the simplest human communication. The organized study of translation came to be seen as an independent discipline in the mid-nineteenth century. The primary translation challenges of the word-for-word versus sense-for-sense question, standardization, and term creation have long been discussed by scholars, beginning from Hunein Ibn Isaaq and St. Jerome to Newmark and Venuti. The significance of the field of translation studies lies in the world of opportunity that it has opened up for these basic concepts to be developed into full-fledged theories and practical applications, highlighting by that the complexity of the field itself.

Translation theories were gradually liberated from the restriction of the linguistic perspective on translation by moving into a wider socio-cultural context. This chapter traces the development of some of the most prominent translation theories, which constitute the mainstays of the discipline.

2.1 Formal Correspondence

In 1965, Catford presented one of the most indispensible equivalence-based translation notions. He distinguished between formal correspondence and textual equivalence; while formal equivalence is defined as “any [target language] category (unit, class, element of structure, etc.) which can be said to occupy, as nearly as possible, the ‘same’ place in the ‘economy’ of the [target language] as the given [source language] category occupies in the [source language]” (as in Munday, 2001, p. 60). Textual equivalence is seen as more applicable to specific source text (ST)-target text (TT) pairs rather than the entire linguistic systems as they constitute the relations between “any TL text or portion of text” and the source language (SL) text that it is considered equivalent to (as in Munday, 2001, p. 60).

Translation shifts compliment the theory of formal equivalence and are defined as instances when, “in a given TT, a translation equivalent other than the formal occurs for a specific SL element” (Hatim & Munday, 2004, p. 28). Catford describes these instances as “departures from formal correspondence” (as in Munday, 2001, p. 60) and divides them into level shifts and category shifts. The former refers
to shifts from the grammatical to lexical level while the latter refers to structural shifts, class shifts, unit shifts, and intra-system shifts.

2.2 Dynamic Equivalence

Nida (2004) attempted to transcend the literal versus free translation discussion, by replacing it with the concepts of formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. Formal equivalence aims to produce a target language (TL) message that is as close as possible to the source language (SL) message elements while adhering to the source text (ST) form and content. The newer, more controversial form of equivalence that Nida proposes aims to produce an equivalent effect on the TL native speakers to that affecting the SL native speakers through making sure that “the relationship between receptor and message [is] substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message” (p. 156). According to this definition, the mission of the translator here is to produce a translation that not only takes into consideration the TL audience but also gives priority to its requirements, while aiming throughout the process at “naturalness of expression,” the ultimate goal of dynamic equivalence (Munday, 2001, p. 42). Natural translation involves fitting into the receptor's language, culture, and context of the message. Furthermore, Nida (2004) stresses the role that cultural and linguistic distance play in determining the level of difficulty of the translation process and the need for formal and dynamic shifts.

Although Nida breaks new ground by suggesting a different level of equivalence, that did not spare him criticism. Generally, the principle of equivalent effect seemed rather vague and elusive as it cannot possibly be measured. Gentzler argues that Nida confuses translation with missionary work as he focuses on the explanation rather than “the way the message is rendered and what remains of the original formulation” (2001, p. 56).
2.3 **Pragmatic Equivalence**

Aiming to create a comprehensive vision of equivalence, Koller developed a new set for classifications. Equivalence here is taken to be essentially the outcome of the juxtaposition between the systems of two languages. Denotative equivalence, connotative equivalence, text-normative equivalence, pragmatic equivalence, and formal equivalence are the five types of equivalence that Koller identifies (as in Munday, 2001, pp. 46-47). Koller believes that the mastery of equivalences (e.g., the avoidance of mother-tongue interference and false friends) indicated the competence of the translator.

2.4 **Discourse and Register Analysis**

Discourse and register analysis found their way into the field of translation studies through the application of Halliday’s systemic functional model in translation-oriented text analysis (Munday 2001). This model highlights the socio-cultural influence on the linguistic choices that the writer makes. The socio-cultural environment shapes genres and genre conventions. The latter then influence register which consists of three elements: (a) field, i.e. the topic that the text discusses; (b) tenor i.e. the addresser and the addressee; and (c) mode i.e. the form of the text. Each of these elements performs a meta-function that together with the other meta-functions creates the discourse semantics of the text. The field is linked to the ideational meta-function, which is performed on the lexico-grammatical level through patterns of transitivity (e.g. verb types, agents …etc). The tenor is linked to the interpersonal meta-function, which is expressed through patterns of modality (e.g. use of modal verbs and adverbs). The mode is linked to the textual function and expressed through: (a) semantic and information structure and (b) cohesion (p.91).

Based on this theory, House created a model for translation quality assessment that compares profiles of the ST and TT’s register, genre, and function to finally classify the TT as an overt translation which does not enjoy the status of an original text in the TL system and does not perform the function of the ST or as a covert translation that enjoys the status of an original text (p.93-94). Relying on the Hallidayan model to address issues of thematic structure, cohesion, and pragmatics, Baker stresses the importance of translator’s awareness of the different TT thematic
structures, their association with certain genres, and the degree of their markedness and the importance of reflecting the cohesive ties in a way that makes sense in the TL system. In her study of pragmatics, Baker draws attention to matters such as presupposition and implicature, which prove problematic when the translator tries to convey them to a target audience whose extra-linguistic knowledge differs greatly from that of the audience of the ST.

Hatim and Mason (1990) focus in their study of pragmatics in translation on the ideational and intrapersonal functions and point out that context does not only have a communicative dimension but also pragmatic and semiotic dimensions that remain significant in the translation process. The pragmatic dimension stresses the significance of the analysis of speech acts and the co-operative principle in the process of translation. The theory of speech acts is based on the assumption that utterances have the ability to perform functions. It suggests that every utterance must have: (a) a locutionary act i.e. the act of uttering a meaningful sentence; (b) an illocutionary act i.e. the force that adds effect to the literal sense of the utterance; and (c) a perlocutionary act i.e. a consequence that may or may not be of a linguistic nature. Analyzing the individual illocutionary force of the sentences and predominant illocutionary force of the text can help the translator convey these acts into the TL appropriately.

The cooperative principle is based on the assumption that people interact smoothly and co-operatively believing that the communication is governed by an obligation to be sincere. Grice (As in Hatim and Mason, 1990) describes certain co-operative maxims that constitute the basis of this principle and that speakers normally observe in their speech. They are quality, quantity, relevance and manner. Implicature involves instances when speakers depart from these maxims in order to imply a different meaning. Hatim (1997) suggests that examining the rules that govern implicature in the TT allows the translator to reconstruct “the same indirection.”

The semiotic dimension seeks to achieve equivalence on the level of the sign and helps locate the message within “an overall system of values appropriate to a given culture” (p. 59). The sign consists of (a) an initiator, (b) an object, and (c) an interpretant which together create the connotation of the sign and locate it within a
given cultural structure. Each culture organizes its perception of the world differently and so this gives the translator the task of representing this sign in a way that preserves as much of its SL connotations as possible. Options to deal with signs include transliteration, giving information through explaining the content of the sign, and indicating the connotative value of the sign. Hatim and Mason (1990) conclude that pragmatic and semiotic analysis and understanding of the SL and TL semiotic systems and cultural norms that affect genre, discourse, and texts allows revealing a substantial portion of the meaning that literal translation would have missed.

2.5 Text Type

This theory suggests that communication and equivalence happen ideally at the level of the text. Reiss (2004) classifies texts into three categories: informative, expressive, and operative. The multimedial text type was isolated as a hyper type that is seen as a super structure for the three basic types. Reiss isolated this type because translations may be presented in a different form than the written form (e.g., orally) and because they may be presented as part of a bigger picture made of different sign systems (e.g., drama). Each type necessitates the adoption of specific translation methods that better convey its contents and purpose. When a given text possesses the characteristics of more than one type, then the TT is judged by the delivery of the source text’s predominant function. The theory admits that, in some cases, the function of the TT differs greatly from that of the ST.

2.6 Skopos Theory

Moving further from the world of equivalence, Vermeer identifies the purpose of translation as the main factor determining the strategies adopted by the translator to render it. The status of the ST here is reduced in favor of the final TT, and the adequacy of the TT is highlighted rather than its equivalence to the ST. The significance of the Skopos theory lies in the fact that it transferred the focus of translation from the source text to the purpose of the target text and the communicative role it plays. This shift is obviously aimed at increasing the communicative value of the text and allowing it to play the role it was intended to play when it was first written and when it was selected to be translated (as in Nord, 1997, p. 28).
Nord (1997) points out that the “prime principle determining any translation process is the purpose (skopos) of the overall translation action” as intentionality is part of any action (p. 28). This theory presupposes the existence of different possible choices from which the translator can freely choose the most appropriate to achieve the purpose of the text. In translation, there are three types of purpose: the purpose of the translator in the translation process, the communicative purpose of the target text, which the term skopos mainly refers to, and the purpose of the translation strategy adopted. The skopos rule means that a translator should translate in a way that allows the text to function the way it was intended to when used, which in turn means that the choice between literal or free translation is based on the purpose of the text. A majority of translation actions have different purposes, and the translator is expected to justify his/her choice in the translation situation. The second rule of this theory is that the purpose of a given text is primarily determined by the reader's expectations. Vermeer explains,

What the skopos states is that one must translate, consciously and consistently, in accordance with some principle respecting the target text. The theory does not state what the principle is: this must be decided separately in each specific case (as in Nord, 1997, p. 30).

Munday (2001) notes that, according to this theory, the purpose of the TT may differ entirely from that of the ST. This suggests that the same text is likely to be translated into an infinite set of target texts according to the purpose of each translation.

2.7 Foreignization

Foreignization is a translation strategy through which the translator takes the reader to the text, writer, and source culture (Munday, 2001). Venuti, who places a great deal of emphasis on this strategy, describes it as an effort to pressure the target culture into acknowledging the “linguistic and cultural difference” of the foreign culture. Venuti further explains,

Foreignizing translation signifies the difference of the foreign text, yet only by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language. In its effort to do right abroad, this translation method must do wrong at home, deviating enough from native norms to stage an alien reading
experience – choosing to translate a foreign text excluded by domestic literary canons, for instance, or using a marginal discourse to translate it (1995, p. 20).

This method is seen as a revolt against the long history of text manipulation and to the predominance of the domestication strategy in the Western culture.

2.8 Poly-system Theory

The poly-system theory suggests that literary genres are in a constant competition for the central position in the literary canon. Even-Zohar questions the substantial emphasis on fine literary genres, recognizing the historical role of translation in creating new models and reinforcing existing ones (Gentzler, 2001). Even-Zohar (2004) draws attention to the systematic nature in which STs are selected and to the influence the overall literary system has on preferences regarding translation strategies. Moreover, the status of translated works in the poly-system is heightened when the literary system of a given society is peripheral or relatively weak, at a formative stage, or at a turning point in terms of leading trends and canons. In this case, translators are more likely to move away from conventional translation norms than when translation occupies a secondary position.

Building on Even-Zohar's theory, Toury calls for the organized study of translation from a descriptive point of view to systematize and verify independent studies in the field. A three-stage methodology was suggested for the descriptive study of translation. The first stage is to look at the acceptability and significance of the text within the target culture system. The second stage is a close comparison between the ST and the TT and aims to come up with generalizations regarding the “underlying concept of translation” (Munday, 2001, p. 112). The final stage is to draw conclusions for future decision-making.

Along with this descriptive methodology, Toury develops the concept of translation norms which he defined as the socio-cultural norms determining the behavior that is deemed “appropriate for and applicable to particular situations” (1995, p. 55). Investigating the norms governing the translation of a particular text can be achieved through analyzing the text and reconstructing the norms governing its translation.
Toury distinguishes the basic initial norms and the lower order preliminary and operational norms. The initial norm is basically the translator's choices. The preliminary norms determine the translation policy (e.g., the selection of texts to be translated) and the directness of the translation. The operational norms, on the other hand, govern decision-making during the translation process including modifications and deletions, ultimately affecting the “presentation and linguistic matter” of the TT (Munday, 2001, p. 144).

2.9 Post-colonial Translation Studies

“The central intersection of translation studies and post-colonial theory is that of power relations” (Munday, 2001, p. 134). Translation is believed to have played an essential role in the colonization process, particularly by spreading an ideologically motivated image of the colonized culture. Niranjana's work revoked the role of translation within the power structure, suggesting that the colonial states’ power stemmed from their manipulation of translation to convey a corrupt image of the “orient.” Niranjana (1992) maintains that translation is always a political act and criticized the field of translation studies for disregarding the issue of power imbalance between languages and for submitting to the western translation theory without questioning its validity, in addition to neglecting to redefine the humanistic role of translation to rid it of its colonial legacy in the eyes of the western culture. Bassnett and Trivedi (1999) highlight the manifestation of power relationships in the imbalanced struggle between the colonized culture’s languages and the dominating English language. Echoing Venuti’s theory of foreignization, this theory calls for increasing the western reader’s awareness of cultural differences through translation.

This chapter has presented an overview of translation studies and highlighted the shifts in focus that each theory caused. Translation studies have over the years taken translation out of the box of language and equivalence and drawn attention to the wide-ranging issues in which translation is involved.
Chapter Three: Translation, Power, and Identity:
From Manipulation to Intervention

The words above cross paths very often and in countless ways because of the integral role that language plays in the formation and expression of views about the self and the other and the power dynamics that it ultimately reveals. With power, translation becomes a tool to control those perceptions. A look at how translation has been employed in the representation of such cultural views reveals how language and culture intertwine to create identity.

While the previous chapter presented a general review of translation studies, this chapter embarks upon a quest to investigate the role of translation in identity construction and image making. It first defines national identity and then looks at its interaction with translation, globalization and power, highlighting the increasing role of translation as intervention. Finally, the UAE’s need to adopt translation as part of its strategy to enhance national identity and spread its culture abroad is examined and several attempts to do that are discussed, including the bilingual comic book, Ajaaj

3.1 National Identity

Identity is composed of gender, location, territory, social class, and religion. National identity typically originates from territory, physical location, and ancestry, and considers the basis of the political community to be common institutions, a unified code of rights and duties, an evident political will, and a clearly defined social and temporal space to which individuals feel that they belong (Smith, 1991). A less western-oriented definition of the notion would heavily emphasize birth, descent, and native culture.

The features that signify this cultural and political bond between the members of a given nation are historical territory, common history, collective memory, mass public culture, clearly defined legal rights and duties, and common economy with territorial mobility. These features interweave to create the social fabric that holds the community together and generates this sense of belonging and pride.
The sense of national identity that results from this formula actually plays a number of roles that serve the interests of the community. Smith (1991) differentiates between the external and internal functions of national identity. On the external level, national identity has territorial, economic, and political functions, while on the internal level it plays the role of socialization (education), creating a social bond, and defining identity.

The external functions are aimed at maintaining the organization of the nation and protecting its rights. Territorially, the national identity demarcates the space within which the members of a given nation live. Economically, this territorial definition helps protect the resources within the territory and also defines a unique economic system according to which trade and hiring are carried out. Politically, a nation expresses its unified political will in its accepted political systems and its selection of the mode of governance and the people who participate in the process. Also, the unique values and mores of each nation are reflected in the legal rights and duties in society.

Nowadays, the socialization of individuals is achieved through public education systems which authorities standardize across the state with the aim of nurturing national loyalty and maintaining a homogeneous culture influenced by “national ideals” of cultural authenticity and unity. Secondly, national identity maintains the social bond between individuals and classes through providing common ground of social values, symbols and traditions. Symbols such as flags, ceremonies, monuments, and cultural artifacts are used constantly to remind the individuals of their common heritage and culture, so that they may feel “strengthened” and “exalted” by this kinship. Finally, national identity is perhaps the most fundamental of the layers that form the identity of an individual, hence playing a role in defining the individuals and their position in the world.
3.2 National Identity and Translation

The role of translation in the construction and assertion of national identity was discussed widely by translation scholars. While some focused on the role of translation in constructing the identity, others discussed the supporting role it plays in allowing national identity to perform the national and international functions discussed by Smith (1991).

“Translation wields enormous power in constructing representations of foreign cultures” (Venuti, 1998, p. 67). Not only does the method in which foreign texts are selected and translated at the expense of other texts create an imbalanced image of the foreign culture, but it also builds the stereotypes by which the foreign culture is judged. What is more dangerous is that when a given foreign text is translated, it is transplanted into the master discourse of the target culture and its ties with the original context are severed so that it may consolidate existing stereotypes, making them endlessly perpetual. Moreover, by establishing those stereotypes, translation may contribute to associating certain emotions with the different groups, which, on a larger level, translates into the bases upon which international relations, alliances, and animosity are built.

Venuti (1998) suggests that a “calculated choice of foreign text and translation strategy can change or consolidate literary canons, conceptual paradigms . . . in the domestic culture” (p. 68). These possible effects depend on the strategy adopted by the translator and the presentation, distribution, and use of the translated text in the target culture. When translation creates a cultural identity, it maintains coherence in representing this identity, but with this, it also provides an opportunity for changing this image and resisting its cultural implications.

The contribution of translation in constructing identity goes beyond the foreign culture as it is also capable of affecting the domestic identity in various ways by confronting it with the foreign text. The effects happen whether they were unintended by the translation project or if it were especially tailored to elicit those effects. The literary influence of translated texts in reviving the local literature is one example of this process, which is discussed in more detail by Even-Zohar (2004).

Cronin (2006) highlights the role of translation in forging the nation. A young upcoming multi-cultural nation would resort to translation with the aim of gaining cultural legitimacy. A new national identity is molded through the expansion of
language to include others in order to achieve political and social unity and stability. Translation is used to bring about harmony through incorporating the new elements and presenting them as part of the original fabric of the community. This of course is always threatened to be overturned by the possible desire to return to or be close to the original state or to be replaced with a new form of linguistic and translational forgery.

3.3 Translation, National Identity and Globalization

Globalization and the telecommunication revolution have had their effects on national identity and translation. Robertson (1992) defines globalization as the "compression of the world" and as the "intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (as in Fairclough, 2006, p. 14).

According to Smith (1991), the notion of national identity has been greatly emphasized by the advent of globalization. The closeness that the advanced network of communication brought inevitably highlighted the different national identities and national and global scales across the world. It has also given rise to the concept of the super-nation which creates a larger identity notion that supersedes national identity (e.g., the European Union). This new form of identity first threatens the smaller national identity and redefines national identity, probably doing away with such vital elements as common language and culture and replacing them with common aspirations, such as the desire for peace. Smith (1991) concludes that the growth of the super-nation threatens the loss of the most important aspects of national identity.

Venuti (1998) finds that translation has become a two-way means of communication. As it was important for the project of colonization to succeed, so it is important for the success of multinational corporations in taking advantage of the resources and markets of the developing countries. Interestingly, the activity of translation is serving them exactly as it served colonization and missionaries; through the formation of identities in a way that creates inequality between the corporations and local consumers, translation helps in creating the factors that guarantee the corporations success with little skepticism from the local receivers. On the other hand, translation has been equally capable of incorporating and communicating initiatives made from subordinate positions that aim at talking back or finding a way into the
global canon. Venuti (1998) points to the imbalance in the representation of translation of the hegemonic countries and developing countries.

Relying heavily on the dominance of the English language, institutions, publishers, and film producers not only found a local audience worldwide for their cultural products but also to some extent affected the local cultures by exporting hegemonic values to them. Publishers depended a great deal on the income coming from their sale of their foreign rights of their bestsellers as, according to UNESCO statistics, nearly 60% of the world’s translation output is from English, but only 2% of the books published in the United States of America (USA) are translation (Venuti, 1998). This selectiveness, or negligence, has lead local critics to judge local texts by their ability to gain international recognition by adaptability for translation into hegemonic cultures, yet little was being translated into those languages.

In a similar vein, Cronin (2003) emphasizes the dominance of the hegemonic English language as a key factor in the success of multinational corporations, which constitute the core of globalization. He points out that the centrality of the activity of translation to both the globalization and anti-globalization processes is in fact a strength that could be drawn upon to achieve understanding of these phenomena. By its name, globalization cannot be achieved without translation. Cronin (2003) further argues that translation has far more potential than merely providing fast-track solutions for the problems that face hegemonic multinational corporations. A look at the directions of translation activity reveals that the role of the translator has transformed immensely as a result of the increasing availability of resources and the increasing impact of the variability of purposes on the translation process, which increases the responsibility of the translator. It also highlights the asymmetrical relations that characterize globalization; while the cultures of hegemonic powers such as the USA would spread worldwide due to the dominance of the English language; other minority cultures and language not only were largely influenced by the American culture, but their inconformity with it, their very existence is threatened by this hegemony. Cronin (2003) concludes that a better understanding of the role of translation can truly affect the general perception of globalization.

Snell-Hornby (1999) observes that globalization and the information and technology revolutions have affected not only language, but more importantly, the role of the translator. The conflict between globalization and tribalism has inevitably affected the concept of cultural identity which in turn began to require extra careful
handling in translation. This profession has undergone such drastic changes in this
globalized era that it does not only require bilingual proficiency, background
knowledge of the subject being translated or the advanced translation tools but also
requires a great deal of intercultural communication knowledge and experience. Snell-
Hornby (1999) concludes that the shifting concept of cultural identity has become one
of the translators’ major concerns.

3.4 The Translation and Power Discussion: The Dominant Color

Schaffner stresses the strong kinship between politics and translation that has
manifested itself in several ways. Authorities over the centuries seemed to rely on
translation to enhance their image abroad and import fresh ideas, among other
reasons. Authorities thus tended to offer patronage to translation institutions in order
to control their productions (as in Kuhiwczak & Littau, 2007).

Another relationship form between power and translation is censorship, a
technique that totalitarian regimes (e.g., the Fascist and Nazi regimes) resorted to
when dealing with the outside world to preserve and promote national identity and to
prevent foreign influence. States going through stages of change offered patronage to
translators and/or imposed censorship on it as part of its nation-building efforts or
with the aim of influencing national identity formation process. Moreover, power
relations do not only dictate translation policies but also influences directions. As an
example, Schaffner points to the dominance of the English language as a Lingua
Franca and as a preferred target language as a result of the USA’s dominance over the
international community and of the continuing heritage of the British Empire, leading
to unequal translation directions and thus incomplete, imbalanced representations (as
in Kuhiwczak & Littau, 2007).

Lefevere (1992) develops the concept of patronage to describe the way power
manipulates writing. Patronage involves providing the writer with financial support
and with a prestigious status in society, while in exchange relying on the writer to
control the flow of literature so as to make sure it reflects the ideology that the power
has spread across the system. Faiq (2007) highlights the interconnection between the
state’s ideology and the translation tradition, which in the medieval age in the Arab
world received a great deal of attention and support from the state. In exchange, the
priorities of the medieval state affected the genre of the translated material, the language direction, the quantity and speed, down to the adopted translation strategies.

3.4.1 Unequal representation

Bassnett and Trivedi (1999) point out that translation was “part of an ongoing process of intercultural transfer” (p. 2). In the post-colonial times, the term translation began to be re-evaluated and its relationship with colonization questioned. Translation transformed from a one-way process through which the empire’s vision was imposed on the colonies. Moreover, the western norms were imposed on the texts translated into their languages, screening the text for anything that would shock the western reader, so that it would fit comfortably in their master discourse and correspond with their presumptions, which pleasantly complimented their superiority. According to Bassnett and Trivedi, the newly independent colonies were struggling to find a way to reject the view of the empire as the high and mighty party of this cultural exchange without having to entirely reject all of the exports of the empire. This led to extreme reactions: while some called for restricting translation into European languages, others called for more open approaches. Bassnett and Trivedi finally stress that translation was not a purely linguistic phenomena as it always interacted with and reflected its historical, cultural, and political background.

3.4.2 Distorted representation/manipulation

In their investigation of the translation of the Treaty of Waitangi, Fenton and Moon (2002) demonstrate how the translators’ understanding of their role could result in the disempowerment of an entire nation. The treaty has been accepted for decades by the indigenous people of New Zealand. However, it became a source of controversy because of the way it was translated. Analysis of the Maori translation of the Treaty has stirred some disagreement as it revealed the translator’s manipulation of the language to ensure the acceptance of the chiefs. The translator intentionally produced an ambiguous translation which simplified the text and avoided all the sensitive terms that could have given away the real intentions behind the Treaty. The translator Henry Williams had been instructed by his superior to exert his influence in order to make sure the chiefs would sign the Treaty as the British interest in New Zealand was growing. As a missionary who had been in New Zealand for twelve
years and who had gained the trust of the natives, who considered him to be a father to all tribes, Williams had a strong desire to spread Christianity among the natives, and so he naturally welcomed the increase in his country’s presence. Interestingly, Williams used in his translation the same Maori words that were previously used by the missionaries in their translation of religious discourse so as to influence the decision of the chiefs. Williams also faced challenges such as time pressure and relatively mediocre translation experience. Fenton and Moon (2002) conclude that the work of the translators is not only affected by the circumstances and struggles that make up the background of the text but also by their understanding of their culture and of their role as translators.

3.4.3 Control of information and censorship

Keratsa (2005) suggests that radical nationalistic movements in the past have relied on censorship in translation as a useful tool to protect national culture from foreign influence and to promote the mainstream ideology. Even children’s literature and comics have been tampered with in order to suit the government’s policy. To protect young generations and provide them with guidance through literature, Mussolini’s government eliminated all harmful characters from children’s books and comics. Character appearances were localized to look more Italian and the Anglo-Saxon features of the characters were eliminated completely. Keratsa (2005) concludes that when translation is viewed as a threat and involved in power games, ethical and cultural shocks are inevitable.

Investigating similar manipulation of translation during Franco’s dictatorship in Spain, Lanza (2002) reveals that, to protect and reinforce the values of the state, the state not only imposed censorship, but also translation strategies that aimed at “maintaining the ideological uniformity of the target culture” (p. 141). By appointing government bodies to neutralize the translated texts and implant the regime’s values in them, the state filtered the foreign material that its subject were exposed to so as not to provoke unwarranted questions about the current state of affairs. For example, in film subtitling, any references that implied sexual relationships were replaced with more neutral ones or omitted altogether. This resistance of foreign culture was constantly being weakened by the invasiveness of the American movie industry and abandoned soon after the fall of the regime. The control over intercultural
communication proved useless as the people embraced the foreign values presented through foreign movies. Interestingly, the view of film subtitling transformed from being a filtered source of information about the other into a doorway to new concepts that ultimately raised questions about the status quo.

3.5 Translation as Intervention

3.5.1 Intervention on every level

The theme of translation as intervention has gained more prominence in recent years, especially with the publication of *Translation as Intervention*. In reality, translation has been employed to fill that role by several agents on different levels in order to achieve various goals. The idea of intervention in translation has manifested itself in countless situations that it has now become difficult to define. The attention that this role received recently was partly because of the development of the study of translation theory and as a result of the increasing interest in the common areas between the different fields of study (Munday, 2007).

In general, intervention in this discussion refers to the social and political role that translation plays and the possible effects it may have in society. The scholars who were concerned with this aspect presented different pictures of intervention at work in which the agents of intervention, its purposes, and the visibility of its dynamics and consequences are different. Within the book, *Translation as Intervention*, Verschueren (as in Munday, 2007) and Mossop (as in Munday, 2007) suggest that intervention is carried out through re-contextualizing the text or remolding it with the aim of securing an acceptable position for the target text within the larger target system and bringing the text closer to the reader without compromising its message. For Hatim (as in Munday, 2007), the translator intervenes by adapting the translated text according to the conventions governing its genre and discourse within the target culture. Moeketsi (as in Munday, 2007) and Drugan (as in Munday, 2007) discuss intervention on the level of technique and work policies that institutions adopt aiming to maximize the capacity and efficiency of their translators. More relevant to this study is intervention that is carried out with the aim of giving rise to political, cultural, or social changes either within the source culture or target culture as discussed by Kothari( as in Munday, 2007), Billiani (2007), and Yameng (2007).
Kothari (2007) suggests that the translation of minority literature into English has played a role in gaining more support for the minority in their struggle against the insidious caste system in India, especially by the choice of language direction, but more importantly by the interesting power relations surrounding this choice. The Dalit literature is the literature written by the ostracized untouchables who represent the lowest division of the Indian discriminatory caste system. Through this literature, the Dalits express their pain and suffering, but only in their minority languages, the only languages they can afford to speak. However, the translation of their literature into English has caused quite the revolution. English, being the language of the colonizer, and currently of the elite and middle classes, and of globalization, was equally capable of representing the minority and making the works that were once restricted to regional languages available in an international language, in what the author described as a “silent revolution” (p. 40). The translational intervention gave popularity to Dalit literature on the level of the diverse nation as well as the international level.

Kothari points out that the popular Dalit leader B. R. Ambedhaker supported the translation of the minority’s struggle as he realized the role English played in social change. He himself relied on English translations of Sanskrit texts to prove their support for the hierarchical system and systematically used the English language to discuss his ideas of democracy, and also to write autobiographic narratives of his life to demonstrate the impact of the caste system. The Dalit literature is not written or translated for its aesthetic value. A literature that has an agenda is “meant to be articulated and heard and acted upon” because its aim is “confronting the unpleasant” (2007, p.43).

Realizing this point, the translators of Dalit literature seemed to agree on preserving the register of the narratives, the strong imagery, and the terms that were associated with the caste system, making the English language “learn the experience of the caste” (2007, p. 46). Kothari concludes that it was the power that the English language had as the language of the colonizer and of the elite that empowered the periphery in India by welcoming its literature into it and representing it comfortably.

Billiani (2007) discusses the way publishers intervene in the translation process, particularly in text selection and translation strategies to serve their ideological, cultural, and commercial interests, ultimately revealing the power relations initiating such intervention. In 1945, Italy had just emerged from the
devastating Second World War after having been ruled by Mussolini’s regime. Italian intellectuals and publishers were faced with the task of inducing a cultural rebirth that would eradicate the culture of the dictatorship, popularize culture, and contribute in shaping people’s perceptions through presenting them with an alternative to the conventional literary tradition. Poetry as a genre was selected for translation to widen the horizons of traditional Italian poetry and to attract more readers to the genre and to stimulate similar writings. Publishers focused on anthologies because of the important role they play in canon formation.

It was believed that, to construct a fresh cultural identity, every resource should be utilized. In the process, translation was relied on heavily by Italian publishers in order to fill the cultural and ideological void that was only natural during this formative stage. Gentile stated that it was hoped that the introduction of foreign texts would highlight the cultural space for innovation and overcome the cultural ambivalence that characterizes the Italians’ outlook on other nations (as in Billiani, 2007).

Yameng (2007) argues that intervention in translation at this time should be aimed at achieving representational justice. Eschewing foreignization and Venuti’s ethics of difference as a means for achieving that, Yameng (2007) suggests instead a methodology that takes into consideration how the choice of the text and translation strategies affect the source culture, while at the same time seeking through the translation strategies to ascertain that the target text highlights the universal human aspect for the target audience to identify with the source culture. Yameng (2007) points out more care should be taken when texts are selected; instead of choosing those written by alienated writers, authors who are considered more representative of the source culture and are identified with within the source culture should be selected. Secondly, Yameng points out that the translator’s interpretation of the text often differs from that of the source audience because of the nature of the “translation commission, the need to be oriented towards the target culture, and the socio-cultural and politico-ideological context in which the translation is carried out” (p. 66). This flow in the translation process has serious consequences as it threatens to hurt the target culture instead of conveying an honest picture of it. “An entire nation, culture, even civilization might be put at a disadvantage as a result of a controversial reading of a key text, even a single key term” (p. 68). He also suggests that bilingual critics should play a role here in assessing this problem. Moreover, a deeper awareness of the
impact that the target text may have on the source culture and its perception abroad would inspire a more researched choice of text and more deliberation of the possible meanings of the source text before conveying it to the other culture.

Hardwick (2000) suggests that the potential and limitations of the role of translation are deeply influenced by the political and cultural setting. Socio-political restraints often pressure writers into seeking methods that allow them to criticize securely and to give voice to the disenfranchised minority. One method that was often used was the translation and rewriting of temporally and spatially distant material (e.g., classical literature); this method allowed writers to express themselves without the fear of criticism, censorship, or prosecution. The translated texts were regarded for their historical role and considerable potential for remolding as their value could be redefined in the modern context. The use of the translations varied from distancing devices to cultural shock methods. The aim was to transform the audience’s perspectives without coming into a direct confrontation with the authority.

According to Faiq (2007), the view of translation has witnessed a paradigm shift that ultimately underpinned the role of translation in cultural development and the different cultural outlooks on the role of translation. The word translation for each culture represents the translation discourse it adopts and the techniques and strategies that come with this discourse. Translation in the medieval age in the Arab world received a great deal of attention and support from the state. In exchange, the priorities of the medieval state affected the genre of the translated material, the language direction, the quantity and speed, down to the translation strategies. Thus, an adopted discourse at a given period of time is significant in that it deeply affects both intra-cultural and intercultural communication and plays a role in a culture’s perception of the self and the other. Studying translation from a historiographical perspective highlights the vital role of translation in the construction and development of national literary and cultural identities, Faiq (2007) concludes.

Venuti (2005) believes that nationalist movements were fostered by literature and translation, which exposed them to experiences of other nations and contribute to their steady growth and strength. Nationalist translation agendas adopt criteria and strategies that comply with the overall sociopolitical circumstances in which they find themselves. They may also have diametrically opposed approaches to foreign texts and culture ranging from admiring to xenophobic, and they may preserve or erase linguistic and cultural differences in the process. Although it is thought that
nationalist translation agendas are often initiated by the elite to impose their national literary values on the rest of the population, Venuti (2005) concludes that this is not necessarily the case as the success of these agendas in constructing or contributing to languages, cultures, and identities is contingent on their acceptability to the mass audience.

3.5.2 Nation-building

Watson (2004) defines nation-building as “constructing a society supported by institutions based upon the rule of law and various other norms … to the benefit of the population” (p.10). The state usually resorts to this process when it needs to create unity between its constituents in order to ensure its stability and prosperity. There are several methods to achieve this aim: creating cultural icons to give the different groups aimed to be united with common ground (e.g., the flag and the national anthem), mass education and boosting national identity through it (e.g., unified national education curriculum), carrying out major projects that promote economic and social prosperity through overcoming the challenges that face harmony (e.g., Dubai metro). Although the concept was created first to describe the efforts of newly independent countries to overcome the division that colonialism caused over the time, it can be applied here to the experience of the UAE as it is trying to make smoother its shift from a simple harmonized society into a bigger multicultural society.

Anderson (2006) defines nation as an “imagined political community” that is seen to be both “limited” and “sovereign” (p. 6). Members of a nation may not know each other, but they do share a feeling of belonging to one nation. For instance, the invention of the printing press gave the public access to knowledge that was restricted to the church and eliminated the boundaries between the speakers of the vernaculars resulting in the emergence of a common discourse between them. It became easier for the state to take nation-building into its hands through such means as the printing press, mass media, education, the creation of symbols, etc. Anderson (2006) highlights the significance of the concept as he suggests that a nation is

imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible,
over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings (p. 6).

3.5.3 The poly-system theory

The poly-system theory reflects the role of translation in nation-building. Even-Zohar (as in Gentzler, 2001) notes the important role that translation played in history, in that it created new models and genres and reinforced existing ones. The development of this theory was crucial to the development of Israeli literature, which was entirely dependent on and influenced by foreign literatures. The theory shifted the focus of translation to the target culture, giving the norms of the target culture the highest priority in decision making. It focused on the process of production of translation and “change within the entire literary system” (Gentzler, 2001). The theory was also inspired by Russian theories on systems, especially those by Tynjanov, who suggested that the world comprised interrelated systems and that just as the literary system is influenced by the systems surrounding it, the literary system also has its influence on the systems around it and on the way people perceive things.

As explained in Chapter Two, Even-Zohar (2004) focuses on the study of the functions of the different literary systems within the culture. Historical studies show that the function of translated literature is based on the state of the receiving literary system. The literary poly-system differs from one culture to another, and therefore, it is not right to classify translation always at the bottom of the hierarchy. Even-Zohar demonstrates that the poly-systems of strong, established cultures had different hierarchies than weaker and younger cultures. While the stronger cultures almost always classify translation as a secondary system, when a literary system is young or weak or when it is going through a crisis, translation begins to occupy a more central position. For some time, translated texts maximize the young literature’s opportunity to use its language and be exposed to it. Translation continues to occupy a major status in a young literary poly-system until it begins to fill the gaps on its own.

Even-Zohar was also concerned with the nature of text selection. He stresses that selection is governed by certain conditions in the receiving culture, particularly the needs of a given literary poly-system and the norms of the target culture influence the way a translation behaves within it. He adds that this process is equally influenced
by other elements such as “patronage, social conditions, economics, and institutional manipulation” (as in Gentzler, 2001, p. 119).

3.5.4 Soft power: carrots and sticks away

The concept of soft power was developed in the early 1990s to refer to one of the different power options. According to Nye (2004), power is the ability to shape the preferences of others to get the outcomes that one wants. One has to choose between coercion through threats and monetary inducement or winning over support through attraction, which is exactly what soft power means. In political terms, this has a great many implications. It means that for a country to gain support, it could instead of going to war simply present an example that others would admire. Nye (2004) points out that,

Political leaders have long understood the power that comes from attraction. If I can get you to want to do what I want, then I do not have to use carrots or sticks to make you do it. Soft power is a staple of daily democratic politics. The ability to establish preferences tends to be associated with intangible assets such as an attractive personality, culture, political values and institutions, and policies that are seen as legitimate or having moral authority. If a leader represents values that others want to follow, it will cost less to lead (¶ 10).

Nye (2004) concludes that the currency of soft power differs greatly from that of power because it goes beyond persuasion to the level of attraction and identification. Soft power is achieved through attraction to common values and the responsibility of contributing to their achievement.

3.5.5 Reinforcing national identity in the UAE

Intellectuals in the UAE continue to express their concern over the fate of the UAE’s national identity. The United Arab Emirates and the world have changed a great deal in the recent years. These demographic, social, economic, and technological developments have raised several questions about the position of the UAE’s national identity and its ability to maintain its strength in the face of globalization efforts. Local intellectuals and scholars have been expressing their concerns over the possible loss of identity that the UAE may suffer as a result of its unique population division. Khalfan Musabih, cultural adviser at the Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Foundation, believes that, “We are not afraid of others but we are concerned about losing our identity, heritage and language” (Mohammad, 2008).
Musabih points out that the communication with other cultures allows for enriching the local culture; it is necessary that the majority expatriates should also be open to the local culture, while they bring aspects of their cultures with them. Ameena Al Daheri stresses that the main reason behind this concern is that the nationals of this land constitute a minority. According to Al Daheri, the rapid expansion of the society has taken away the locals’ sense of security and familiarity with their own country (2008).

The United Arab Emirates’ demographics have evolved dramatically during the past two decades. It is estimated that the population rose by 68% between 1995, when the figure stood at 2.41 million, and 2003, when it reached 4.04 million (Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation [HSBC], 2004). In 2008, the population peaked at 4.765 million, out of which only 892,000 were locals. The Ministry of Economy expects this figure to rise by a 6.3% growth rate to reach 5.066 million, with the number of locals rising to 923,000 (Interact, 2009). The UAE nationals have not grown as fast as the expatriates. In 1993, UAE nationals were estimated to be 604,000, which makes 29% of the total population, but their numbers dropped to an estimated 20% in 2004 (HSBC). It is expected that in 2009, they will not represent more than one fifth of the entire population.

The population has not only grown in numbers, but also in diversity. Expatriates constitute a substantial sector of the population. According to Dubai Municipality, in 1998 the Asian population alone in Dubai made up about 71% of the overall population of the emirate and 85% of the expatriate population (as in HSBC 2004). The Abu Dhabi Department of Planning (2001) states that the expatriate level stood at 74.4% of the population in 2001 (as in HSBC, 2004). In 2003, the overall expatriate population in the UAE was 3.25 million, and it was distributed as such: 2.62 million Asians, 610,000 expatriate Arabs, and 120,000 of other nationalities. The UAE has a male:female ratio of 2.6:1, one of the highest in the world. The UAE’s population is considered relatively young as the median age was only 27. Along with this diversity came the diversity of religion. According to the World Factbook, while the official religion of the UAE is Islam, the religion of 96% of the population, other religions are practiced in the UAE by the expatriate community, such as Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism. The population problem is not the biggest problem, but it is the most immediate
The UAE has been seeking to be at the forefront in every field. To attract international students and refine the level of higher education in the UAE, Sharjah opened its University City in 1997, which includes six universities, a large library, and an educational hospital, while Dubai established the International Academic city to host 32 higher education institutions. On the economic level, the oil spurt has allowed the UAE to leap forward in its economic and commercial development. The UAE has in fact been working on its policies, facilities, infrastructure and financial services to attract international businesses and be a prominent commercial and economic hub. The UAE attracts now the headquarters of major international companies and skills. In 2008 alone, the UAE’s gross domestic product (GDP) rose by 23% to reach 934 billion. In 2009, it ranked as the fourth retail destination in the world, due to its rapid economic growth, rising purchasing power, and favorable policies (Reuters, 2009).

The facts discussed above reveal that the source of the concern over the status of UAE’s national identity is the fact that the UAE has gone through both a substantial and rapid transformation that its conventional sense of national identity has ceased to perform some of its major functions. While the sense of national identity is supposed to be shared among the members of the community regardless of their classes and backgrounds, the UAE’s national identity is shared by what is estimated as one fifth of the entire population, which explains the loss of security that Al Daheri points to (Mohammad, 2008). Besides the public, standardized, education that was aimed at nurturing loyalty and maintaining a homogeneous culture, expatriate children were sent to foreign private schools to learn their languages and cultural values. Moreover, the UAE’s cultural image abroad is not as widespread as the news of its international economic achievements. The UAE national identity does not have the means to market itself and its cultural values in the face of the hegemonic superficial descriptions of its oil riches and construction boom and later the descriptions of its bubble finally bursting.

The UAE is now at a stage where it needs to revive and remold its national identity so that it plays the role it is expected to play. On the national level, the transition into a multi-cultural society, the expatriate majority, and the unnatural and rapid growth has created a gap in the UAE’s social fabric. The UAE hopes to bridge this gap by enacting a nation-building process. Although the concept was created first to describe the efforts of newly independent countries to overcome the division that
colonialism caused over time, it can be applied here to the experience of the UAE as it is trying to make smoother its shift from a simple harmonized society into a bigger multicultural society. This process essentially creates common ground among the different components of society. The standardization of education plays an integral role in homogenizing the culture of the nation and feeding loyalty for it (Smith, 1991). The cultural icons that once marked the Emirati national identity needed to be spread, re-defined, and expanded so that they may make more sense to the expatriate communities and the younger national generations. Placing emphasis on existing cultural icons and creating new ones are some of the most important steps toward establishing common ground and opening channels of communications among the different groups (Anderson, 2006).

Moreover, the rapid economic growth has not spurred a similar social and cultural development. The resulting gap not only stresses the feeling that the culture is now weak but also renders it incapable of representing the UAE appropriately. The economic and political development also created a gap in the UAE’s image abroad as its economic sweeping successes were not matched with a similar spread of the UAE’s culture abroad. Another reason why the UAE needs to export its culture is to fit into the global canon and therefore resist the possible ostracization about which Cronin (2003) warned. Nye’s soft power comes into play when the reasons behind the UAE’s need to assert its nationality abroad are discussed and the incorporation of translation in this strategy is vital. Nye (2004) suggests that a country may be able to influence the perception of other countries through presenting itself as a good example and highlighting its successes. According to Nye (2004), if a given country is successful in gaining others’ admiration, it becomes easier for it to win their acceptance, identification, and alliance.

The UAE needs to include translation into and out of Arabic as part of these efforts for the following reasons. On the national level, the UAE needs to translate into Arabic in order to revive its own literature at this stage and to fulfill its needs to have scientific and theoretical books available in Arabic in order to keep up with the world, something it has already given considerable attention to through such programs as Kalima and Tarjim, which are discussed in detail in Chapter Four. The UAE needs to translate into other languages, especially English, in order to reach out to the expatriates.
As for the international aspect, the UAE needs to translate in a consistent manner into hegemonic languages, especially the English language, whose dominance is believed to be the reason behind the success of globalization. Just as translation was capable of conveying the message of colonizers, and later of multi-national corporations, so it is capable of conveying the initiatives made by the receivers in this process to assert their cultural identities and find a way into the global canon.

And yet a subordinate position in the global economy must not be seen as passive submission. Under colonizing regimes the functions of translation are extremely diverse and unpredictable in effect, always allowing the colonized discursive space to evade or tamper with discriminatory stereotypes imposed on them (Venuti, 1998, p. 170).

Using translation as a form of resistance will not only place the UAE in the global cultural mainstream, but it is hoped that it would gain respect and recognition for a country that is only known in terms of its oil resources and economic advancements (M. Ba Haroon, personal communication, July 4, 2008). This should help in bridging the gap between the UAE’s political and economic reputation and its cultural representation.

It seems that this form of cultural resistance is what is happening in the UAE. With translation aside, the UAE has already taken initiatives across the board to assert its unique identity. In 2007, the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Community Development announced that it will be working in 2008 on the UAE National Culture Encyclopedia as part of its strategy to reinforce national identity and spread information about the UAE’s national culture abroad (UAE Unveils Strategy to Protect National Identity, 2007). It is hoped that this initiative will help preserve the UAE’s culture and heritage. In March 2008, the government confirmed that Arabic was the official language of the UAE following the confusion caused by the heavy use of the English language (Baik). On September 1, 2009, the Emirati Ministry of Education announced that as of this academic year, all public and private schools were obliged to raise the flag and play the national anthem every day during the morning assembly. According to the Minister of Education Humaid Al Qutami, this directive was aimed at reinforcing national identity among students (WAM, 2009).
This chapter highlighted the significance of national identity and how it can be affected by other processes such as translation and globalization. How powers manipulate translation to control national identity is often highlighted; however, translation still plays a major role in allowing the expression of national heritage and representing national identity. Translation also plays a substantial role in processes that help reinforce national identity, such as nation-building on the national level and soft power on the international level. It is especially true in multi-lingual societies and in this globalized era. The role of translation will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.
Chapter Four: *Ajaaj*

The previous chapter explores the relations among national identity, power and translation and discusses the view of translation as an intervention. Historiographical studies show that there always seems to be a connection between the development of civilization and its utilization of translation; the overall situation in society and the vision of the leadership in a given period define the shape that translation takes during that period. Because it ideally fulfills the needs of the civilization, it is always viewed within the frame of the role it plays in each society.

This chapter explores the scene in the UAE and the way translation comes into play to fill the needs of the community. It then proceeds to investigate the translation of the Emirati comic book series, *Ajaaj* and its expected role within the UAE. A close examination of Volume 1 of the comic book series occurs to find out whether strategies adopted by the translator have complimented the purpose of the translation. Examples from other volumes are discussed as well to look at the way socio-cultural elements were dealt with in the translation.

4.1 **Background**

4.1.1 **The scene**

The rapid economic growth that the UAE has witnessed was coupled with a similar population boom. This sudden spurt has left the UAE with a population that lacked harmony, as the percentage of the locals dropped to 20% while the numbers and backgrounds of expatriates was expanding by the minute (World Factbook). On the other hand, it was increasingly believed that there was a serious gap between the UAE’s legendary economic growth and its academic, scientific, and cultural growth. Local governments as well as independent organizations in the UAE have taken initiatives to fill this gap and to harmonize the diverse population. Interestingly, these organizations have all shown interest in translation as an inextricable part of the possible solutions. Organizations, such as the Kalima and Tarjim initiatives, have taken steps to fund translation in order to fill this gap.

In 2005, the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH) established the Kalima program as an independent authority that is described as a “non-profit initiative which funds the translation, publication, and distribution of
high-quality works of classic and contemporary writing from other languages into Arabic” (Kalima, n.d.). The new authority’s website lists the reasons behind the establishment of the project as addressing the rarity of high quality translated works. It revives the medieval Arab Golden Age of translation, reinforces the publishing industry, empowers the Arabic language, and makes world knowledge available to Arabs in order to encourage development and minimize knowledge and cultural gaps. The authority selects titles from all genres (about one hundred annually) and funds their translation, marketing, and distribution. It also aims to promote the profession of translation so as to improve the work quality of the translators (Kalima).

In Dubai, Mohamed bin Rashid’s Foundation launched two separate initiatives to promote the translation industry. The first is Tarjem, which offers funding for the translation of a variety of works to and from Arabic, operating in a similar way to the Kalima initiative. The program is best known for its “a-book a-day” challenge, which aspires to produce 365 translated works annually (Tarjem). In its first phase, the initiative focused on translating books on administration to respond to the rising need to learn about such a challenging field. One of its recent projects is the translation of 100 Arabic literary books into English. The aim of this project is “conveying the bright image of the Arab civilization to the outside world” (Tarjem). The second initiative is Turjuman, which provides professional development for translators with the aim of improving the quality of the translation product. Not only does it seek to increase the number of qualified translators and enhance their work, but it also improves the process itself through the introduction of the usage of machine translation and training translators to use it.

The social development program Watani, which is funded by institutions from both the public and private sectors, has begun to address the population problems on two levels. On one level, it seeks to promote the national identity of the UAE, and on the second, it carries out several projects to encourage harmony among the sectors of the now-multinational society. Watani launched the bilingual comic book, Ajaaj, in 2007 as part of these projects to achieve those goals. Set in 2020 UAE, the Emirati comic book Ajaaj depicts a modern version of the UAE, which has apparently reached a leading position in international trade, industry, and tourism. The first volume begins with natural disasters and freak accidents that strangely end with a sandstorm that leaves considerable damage. The media goes on promoting this view until the twins Shamma and Humaid see an Emirati man standing in the middle of the
sandstorm. It turns out eventually that Ajaaj was saving the day rather than causing all the damage. The story goes on from there as Ajaaj appears every time villains threaten the security of the UAE.

4.1.2 The Foundation

Ajaaj was not created spontaneously. Its greatest aim was not to merely entertain. A closer look at the series reveals that there is more to it than entertainment. To fully grasp the function of this comic book requires an investigation of the institution behind it. Launched on the UAE’s National Day in 2005, Watani is a social development program that aims to promote the UAE’s national identity and good citizenship values across the social spectrum through carrying out various social, religious, economic, cultural, and humanitarian programs and projects. The program also aims to “encourage a community feeling…among all who have chosen to make the UAE their home whether nationals, expatriates, or visitors” (Jandaly, 2005). The program is supported by Dubai police, the Executive Council of Dubai government, and other institutions both in the public and private sectors.

The Deputy Coordinator General of the Watani program, Mohammed Baharoon, (Watani launches Ajaaj comic book series, 2007) points out that Watani used the universal medium of comics to communicate with two audiences: children in the UAE and the international community. For children in the UAE, the comic book stresses the importance of holding on to and taking pride in their national identity and for the international audience, it simply reveals the human face of the UAE, away from international trade and tourism.

The different natures of the target audience point to the manifold mission of the comic book. It more interestingly reveals that the purpose behind the comic book series is different from that behind its translation and that the translated version is expected to play an entirely different role from that of the original.
4.1.3 The purpose.

4.1.3.1 On the national level.

Watani created *Ajaaj* as a new cultural icon with the hope of kindling in local children the desire to find connections with their heritage and to minimize the negative impact of globalization (A. Al Hashimi, personal communication, July 4, 2008). However, the local audience is not the only target; the expatriate community in the UAE constitutes a major sector of *Ajaaj*’s target audience. *Ajaaj* informs them about the UAE by using a light art form. Moreover, it provides the new community with the cultural icons that are crucial for this stage of its growth (Anderson, 2006). The UAE is undergoing a process of nation-building; the Watani program is a concrete example of these efforts. A more homogeneous national identity shared by both the locals and the expatriates is hoped to result from this process. Cultural icons, such as *Ajaaj* and other old or new concepts, provide common ground for these two sectors to share. It is hoped that this will enhance communication and harmony within society.

4.1.3.2 On the international level

There were several issues on the international level for Watani to tackle through such a portal as this comic book. First, there are the western stereotypes of the UAE which have reduced its heritage into such symbols as camels or jerboas and mocked its progress as “excess.” It was rather alarming to see the UAE’s international role and reputation on the political and financial levels growing, while its voice continued to be muted and its image continued to be portrayed in the frame of oil riches. The absence of proper media representation threatens not only to corrupt the image of the UAE, but also to cause its culture to disappear gradually in this highly globalized world.

Watani has taken the initiative to try to make the human face of the country as visible to the world as its petro-dollars. Watani seeks world recognition of the Emirati culture through the use of soft power. It also hopes through highlighting the human aspect of the culture, namely its values, literature and cultural icons, to achieve identification. This will eventually help in positioning the UAE in the global cultural mainstream, moving it out of the periphery so that its iconic cultural elements can be easily identified as are cultural elements of other cultures such as igloos and Chinese
lanterns. It will ultimately make the most of globalization through globalizing the icons rather than allowing globalization to muffle them (M. Ba Haroon, personal communication, July 4, 2008).

4.1.4 The process

Knowledge of the process through which the comic book and particularly its translated version goes contributes to a better understanding of the translator’s decisions. After a storyline is agreed upon, the script of the volume is written and discussed with the art director to explore possibilities regarding backgrounds and sequences. This process focuses on creating an engaging adventure rather than spoon-feeding information about the UAE. However, some effort is eventually made to include aspects of the Emirati culture and lifestyle. The process of translation begins as soon as the Arabic version is complete. The role of the translator can simply be described as reproducing the text into a language that is relatable to the English speaking audience. However, instances were reported when translator comments on the text have actually required looking back at the Arabic version. Having been the translator of the first volume of Ajaaj, the author of this thesis has been encouraged to translate and comment, while the idea of making use of the form to present aspects of the Emirati culture was made clear. The importance of preserving cultural references while trying at the same time to adapt the text into the English comic book genre was also stressed.

The translated text then moves to the editor whose role is to “look at cultural sensitivities and how would some of the Arabic elements translate well or not so well to English speaking audience. This role allows for avoiding mis-interpretation or cross-cultural difficulties” (M. Ba Haroon, personal communication, 2008). After each of the steps detailed here, the text goes back to the editor for review. This means the translation process is followed by two or three steps of editing. This makes it difficult to attribute translation strategies solely to the translator, especially as the translators have changed a few times.
4.1.5 The future of Ajaaj

Ajaaj seemed to have had a tremendous success. The extensive media coverage it received promised of attracting the attention of more young readers. The book was distributed gratuitously among libraries, schools, and families as making profit was not part of the aims of the comic book. In 2008, Watani created an “Ajaaj adventures” guided tour in Mudhesh Fun City during the Dubai Shopping festival, which received over 25,500 visitors. “Ajaaj: 2020,” the theatrical show that was based on the comic book received over 500 spectators.

However, the production of the comic book stopped soon after that. The website only says “we will be back soon.” Watani was contacted to clarify the reasons behind the sudden stop and reveal possible future plans for Ajaaj. However, none of the officials responsible of Ajaaj responded to those queries.

4.2 Methodology

The volumes produced until the beginning of work on this thesis were collected and analyzed for instances that reveal aspects of the following: (a) national identity, such as location, territory, ancestry, language/dialect and religion (Smith, 1991); (b) the Emirati material culture; (c) the Emirati life style, family life, traditions, and values; and more importantly (d) attempts to employ the policy of soft-power or of contributing to nation-building efforts. Examples of soft-power use include instances that indicate an attempt to present “an attractive personality, culture, political values and institutions, and policies that are seen as legitimate or having moral authority” (Nye, 2004, ¶ 10). It should be noted that the significance of soft power lies in the fact that it is achieved through attraction and identification rather than persuasion. Examples of nation-building efforts, the process of constructing national identity include instances that point to the existence of common cultural and political bonds such as references to territory, common history, collective memory, and mass public culture (Smith, 1991). It is generally understood that the comic book form does not allow for complete and direct manifestation of soft-power use or of nation-building because of the restriction that the form imposes. Therefore, such instances are expected to subtly blend into the context and themes.

The search was not only carried out on the level of the text, but also the graphics, the themes, and the characters. The translation of these instances is then analyzed to see how they were dealt with. In particular, the extent of the
foreignization or domestication of these linguistic and cultural features is looked at to determine the degree to which the purpose of the translation affected the translator’s final decision. The main concern of this analysis is to discover strategies that were used systematically and decide their significance for the overall purpose of the translation. The text itself is generally analyzed for linguistic features that may reveal the translator’s tendency to domesticate or foreignize the language. This can be seen in the translation of common expressions and dialect. Code-switching as a writing technique is always used with a purpose (Dickins, Hervey, & Higgins, 2002). The translation of the dialectal features of the protagonist’s speech is then examined to see if the intended effect was preserved. Given the light nature of the text, the analysis of one sample volume would have resulted in inadequate evidence of the dominant strategies. For this reason, the analysis was based on the examination of a complete volume and of examples from other volumes that met the criteria detailed above. The analysis of the translation is presented in the order of the dominant strategies. Earlier volumes lacked page numbers. For the sake of consistency, the page numbers of all the examples were not included.

4.3 Analysis

4.3.1 The context

4.3.1.1 Setting and storyline

The story is set in 2020 Dubai, thus offering a futuristic outlook on the UAE society. This allows the Watani organization to create a setting that reflects its goals. It depicts a weapon-free, developed, almost utopian state that has found harmony in its diversity. The futuristic setting also gives room for the organization to demonstrate its concept of national identity and good citizenship values. The utopian setting allows for the representation of such ideals as gender equality and female empowerment.

The comic book tells the story of Ajaaj, a mythical superhero that people began to forget about until some unfortunate events began to lead to his reappearance. International organized crime begins to target the UAE and finds out about his existence, and soon he becomes their major target. However, it is later revealed that Ajaaj is invincible because he gains his power from the desert sand. In this light, Ajaaj symbolizes the heritage and culture of the UAE that should resist erosion in the face of globalization.
4.3.1.2 Themes

One of the major themes of the comic book can be found in its slogan, “Legends of the past that came to protect the future.” Through this, Watani aims to stress that the UAE’s culture and heritage do not go against modernization or globalization and that they actually provide the younger generations with support while going through these processes. This is done to create a sense of continuation rather than conflict between the two and to assert that the younger generations need to believe strongly in this if they are to be exposed to globalization without eventually losing their identity.

Some of the themes seem to have been chosen with a futuristic outlook as noted earlier. For example, there seems to be harmony on every level of the Emirati community. Within the family, love and respect seem to characterize relations. There are scenes where the parents lean down to kiss the grandfather on the forehead to express love and respect. In the panels that depict the streets, there always seems to be a mélange of dress codes, which resembles the situation in the UAE today. In volume 6, the people in the streets celebrating the National Day give up their cars willingly in order to help Ajaaj face the artificial hurricane that was created to destroy him. Those people include those who are wearing the national costume and those who are wearing typically western apparel.

Figure 2. Harmony
A feature of this futuristic community seems to be gender equality. This is largely demonstrated by the position of the mother of the twins in society. Against expectations, Um Humaid is an important scientist who holds an important position in a government agency and is entrusted with top secret information. At certain instances, the father of the twins, Abu Humaid, seeks her professional help in the cases he is investigating. Also, one of the members of the villains’ gang is female. She too seems to play an important role in the team; the leader directs her to give orders to the men and carry out important operations personally.

Despite the apparent progress that the UAE reaches in the year 2020, it is stressed throughout the comic book that the UAE community has not given up its values and traditions, such as family values and etiquette. The significance of family relations and of respecting the elders seems to be embodied by the relationship between the grandfather and the twins. A considerable part of the information they find out about Ajaaj actually comes through discussing the issue with the grandfather, who turns out to have been interested in the phenomenon in his youth.

Unsurprisingly, the nature of the conflict seems to revolve around national security. To spur Ajaaj into action, the international gang always targets important national symbols. Jeopardizing the safety of a bus full of children, for example, seems to symbolize the future of the entire nation. Carrying out an operation on the UAE’s National Day seems to represent a direct threat to the solidarity of the union. Moreover, targeting Ajaaj, the ancient legend that protects the future of the UAE, seems to symbolize an attempt to strip the nation of one of its strengths.

It must be noted that the dominant themes discussed above seem to correspond with one of the main objectives of Watani, specifically, aiding the UAE through the era of globalization by asserting its national identity, spreading its culture, and protecting it against the possible eradication that may result from globalization. As a product of Watani, Ajaaj seems to embody this objective as it strives to appeal to young readers through its adventures.
4.3.1.3 **Characters**

**Ajaaj**

The character of Ajaaj was carefully designed to represent the authenticity and uniqueness of the figure Emirati culture in every way. Ajaaj’s physical features seem to indicate his belonging to the UAE. His apparel is reminiscent of fishermen in the old days, although he describes himself as being of the desert. His speech is delayed until volume six in order to build up suspense and to indicate the grandeur of his character. When he does speak, he speaks the Emirati dialect, using elevated and poetic Bedouin language, while the rest of the characters continued to use Modern Standard Arabic except for a few instances where dialectal features appear in their speech to give a certain effect.

**Humaid and Shamma**

The attentive young twins are the only ones who could see Ajaaj form in the middle of the sandstorm. This indicates the significance of their relationship with Ajaaj as they represent the future, while he represents the past. Their cooperation in later volumes embodies Watani’s aim of connecting the Emirati youth to their heritage as the best way to embrace globalization without losing their identity.

**The parents**

The parents, and the rest of the community, represent the adults who were so deeply involved in their everyday lives that they could not believe in myths as do their children and the grandfather. The parents also represent the futuristic image of male and female roles and relationships. Firstly, the parents seem to be equals and cooperative as their dialogue demonstrates. Secondly, the mother turns out to be a major scientist working at the Advanced Meteoric Research Centre. The mother plays an important role in providing scientific information on what is happening. The father actually goes to her office to get the information he needs in order to know more about the sand storm.
**The grandfather**

The character of the grandfather is there to provide a bridge between the young generation and the legendary hero. Not only by representing the past, but also by lending the children his attention, he kindles their curiosity about the hero, and then tells them about him, as he takes them to the national history museum to see documents about Ajaaj. Interestingly, the grandfather is perhaps the only character who speaks the Emirati dialect aside from Ajaaj. He represents the connection between the twins and Ajaaj and only through his guidance do they find out more about Ajaaj.

**The antagonist**

The antagonist is an international organized crime that desired to destroy the economy of the UAE. Unlike the Emirati community and definitely unlike Ajaaj, the members of the gang have neutral looks that do not point to any identity and with names that are associated with different nationalities, including the Arab nationality (e.g., Dr. Noon, Lt. Cyber, Sakher, Sam, and Chapter). It is also interesting to see that Sam is a woman, and like Um Humaid, she also plays a prominent role in the leadership of the gang as she appears to be making major decisions on behalf of the leader of the gang. The significance of creating such an antagonist helps in creating a common bond between the members of the community because it directs the attention towards a single enemy that comes from outside the country.

![Figure 3](image_url) . Dress code
4.3.1.4 Graphics

As Keratsa (2005) notes, the censoring of graphics in the translation of comic books was one of the various strategies that the Italian dictatorship has adopted in order to avoid any kind of Anglo-Saxon influence on their culture. In the translation of *Ajaaj* into English, however, the graphics were not tampered with at all. On the very first page, the foreignness of the text is established with the image of the boy wearing the local dishdasha and later with the girl dressed in sheila and ‘abayah. The Emirati national costumes reveal the characters identity from the beginning. However, it must be noted that it was a graphical error to always depict the girl dressed in sheila and ‘abayah even when she is at her house as this unfortunately conforms to the common western misconception that Muslim women wear hijab all the time without any exceptions. Moreover, the outdoor images always depict a mixture of typically western and national dress codes, to reflect the unique harmony that Watani aims to highlight in 2020 UAE.

Images that reflected aspects of the Emirati culture and values were also preserved, even though some of them may have looked too strange for a western reader. In Volume 1, Shamma walks her grandfather and brother to the door on their way out to the mosque, which is understood as a gesture of respect. In Volumes 3 and 4, the mother and father respectively kiss the grandfather on the forehead or the head on their way out of the house also as an expression of love and respect.

The backgrounds were designed carefully to reflect the identity of the UAE. When the family pays a visit on Eid days to some relatives, the setting and background stress a great deal of the traditions of the UAE, especially those of generosity and simplicity. Everybody is seated on cushions on the floor around a tray full of fruit and later hosts begin to serve coffee. Although most of the buildings and locations reflect a futuristic setting, some of the most famous locations are shown in the background such as the Palm manmade island, the Dubai Waterfront, the Dubai metro and Fairmont hotel. Including these landmarks in the background contributed

Figure 4. Family values
to Watani's aim of informing others about the Emirati culture and taking pride in its achievements.

There are several reasons for the preservation of the graphic details. Clearly, Watani is carrying out the translation on its own; it is only natural that it would not foreignize the comic book at the expense of its cultural message. Having the graphics in that particular way reinforces the cultural message of the text, asserts its identity and informs the readers of different aspects of the Emirati culture. To delete them would simply defeat the purpose of the translation.

4.3.2 Analysis of the translation

The overall translation strategies adopted in the translation of the comic book series reflect the efforts to maintain balance between the desire to introduce one’s culture and assert one’s national identity to the other and the necessity of ascertaining the target reader’s understanding and identification with the image that is depicted by the series. Reminiscent of Venuti’s ethics of difference (1998), the strategy that is maintained here tries to let the text be linguistically absorbed by the target language, while seizing every opportunity to introduce cultural aspects without losing the reader’s attention.

There seems to be a strong emphasis on linguistic fluency. This is reinforced by the fact that the editor of the final translated version is a native speaker of English. Common Arabic expressions were consistently replaced with common English expressions used in similar situations. "إِرثّ ذٕقف," literally, “be careful/pay attention. Stop” is translated as “Watch out!” with an exclamation mark, which is exactly how it would appear in this context in English texts of the same genre. When the policeman calls for immediate back up, "حالاً" is translated as “asap” rather than “immediately” In this context, the earlier translation seems to fit more as it replicates the effect of the police jargon that is used in this context. When appropriate, the translator intervenes to switch the formal, Modern Standard Arabic into informal English in order to fit the context.
In Volume 1, the adult on the shaking cable car tells the children to calm down saying, "أرجو من الجميع المحافظة على الهدوء," which literally translates to sound more-or-less like "everybody, please remain calm". Instead, it is translated as, "Stay calm, kids, we'll be all right" With the use of "kids" rather than "everybody" and the abbreviated "we'll," the sentence relates to the context (by pointing to the children present) and fits quite comfortably in the realm of conversational English. In the next encounter with Ajaaj, the twins try to help a man who has accidentally fallen on the railway track in the metro station. When Humaid tells him to try to get up and takes his hand, he refers to him as "يا عم," i.e., "oh uncle". In the translation, "uncle" becomes "sir." The use of the word "uncle" generally in Arabic to express respect is equivalent in its effect to the more formal "sir." The shift helps preserve the fluency of the translation.

The shift strategy allows the text to linguistically assimilate into the language of English comic books to achieve a degree of acceptance. The significance of this strategy for the aims of Watani lies in the fact that it paves the way for the cultural message to reach the target language reader. The primary message of the comic book is cultural. Therefore, linguistic foreignization and loyalty to the source language would have repelled the reader.

While the fluency of the text was maintained to gain the target audience’s acceptance, the language of the translation displayed a certain degree of flexibility. It must not be forgotten that the target audience of the translation is both the non-Arabic
speaking expatriates residing in the UAE and the wider, English-speaking world. It would appear that the translation strategy takes into consideration the different purposes behind translating to these two audiences and that it gives precedence to the expatriate community over the wider international community. The translator predominantly transliterated common Arabic expressions that both the locals and the expatriates understand to reflect the existing bonds that make their relationship special. For example, in translating the sentence "لله ان نسأله بعاده" , the translator replaced the phrase “bi'idhnillah” with its Arabic equivalent "إن شاء الله" and transliterated the latter instead of substituting it with a common English equivalent such as “hopefully” . The phrase "in sha' allah" is widely understood and used among expatriates of different backgrounds, especially at schools and workplaces where they interact closely with UAE nationals. Similarly, the greetings of Islam, "السلام عليكم" and "وعليكم السلام", are not only preserved, but actually transliterated rather than translated simply as “peace be upon you.” Those greetings are known widely not only within the UAE but across the world because of the ubiquity of Islam. The less common, yet warm Bedouin greeting "يا مرحبا الساع، نورت ليوا" welcomes the fortunate hour of the arrival of that person and celebrates the happiness that he/she brought to them. The first phrase was reduced into “welcome” because of its relative unfamiliarity, while the second one was compensated for by “you bring light and happiness to Liwa!” as recommended by Dickins, et al. (2002).

Figure 6. Eid greetings (ST)
Figure 7. Eid greetings (TT)

Eid greetings such as "عساكم من عواده" "عيد مبارك" are treated differently according to their frequency. While eid Mubarak, which is a common phrase among those residing in the UAE and relatively outside because of their interaction with Muslims, was transliterated. However, "عساكم من عواده" the common Emirati and Gulf response to “Eid Mubarak” was simply replaced by the more common “Thank you! eid Mubarak” When translating the parents’ continuing reference to each other as "أم حمید" and "أبو حمید", the translator opted to preserve it also because it is generally understood that it is a local tradition to call people by the names of their eldest child, typically son, as an expression of respect, akin to the English Mister and Missus.

By drawing on common phrases and references, translation plays a role in establishing common ground between expatriates and UAE nationals, which is one of the functions that national identity is supposed to fulfill (Smith, 1993). Unfortunately, the rapid population growth and the unique diversity of the population’s backgrounds have paralyzed this function. This hybridity mirrors the situation in the UAE. The comic book here is actually drawing on the existing common ground between the expatriate community and the locals in order to demonstrate this unique aspect of the Emirati experience and reinforce the cultural bond within the UAE.

Moreover, the identity of the text was also emphasized by the preservation of references to place names in the UAE and to Emirati names. To begin with, the very title and name of the superhero, Ajaaj, literally “the swirling dust,” was not compromised. The names of the characters were chosen to reflect the Emirati identity...
such as “Humaid,” “Shamma,” “Butti,” and “Dha'in” were not adapted into English. Such a strategy is indispensable in the translation of a text that is fraught with cultural references, especially given its purpose on the international level. Because the text is part of a comic book, it is hard to domesticate it without making changes on the panels. However, because the organization producing the comic book took it upon itself to translate it with the same vision in order to fulfill the aims of the translation of the comic book, preserving such references was significant. Watani’s aim of this was to take the international audience to the Emirati culture. The strategy chosen is appropriate as it serves the purpose of placing the UAE in the global cultural mainstream.

According to Smith (1993), an important part of national identity is territory and physical location. Thus, it was important to preserve references to the famous “Jumairah Beach,” “Khor Park,” “Al Maktoum Hospital,” “Tunb Island,” and the tourist destination at the heart of the desert, “Liwa.” The reference to Tunb Island in Volume Three was especially significant and symbolic. Tunb Islands (Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb) are islands that were controlled by Al Qassimi clan, the ruling family of Sharjah, throughout the nineteenth century and that Iran seized control of on 30 November 1971, only a few days before the independence of the UAE on December 2, 1971. The dispute has not yet been resolved despite the numerous attempts (“Emirate’s Islands”). The story that is told about the island in the comic book involves a swarm of locusts invading the island but is then driven away by Ajaaj.

While compromising the linguistic specificities of the Arabic language, the translation strategy preserved cultural references and created the appropriate context for the reader to understand them without the need for translator notes, which are inappropriate for such a light genre. This strategy could be considered the strongest manifestation of the role that translation assumes to fulfill the purpose of the text. In situations where the context did not any offer any clues as to the meanings of those references, the translator opts to overlook them. During the first encounter with Ajaaj, Shamma tells Humaid to call the police immediately saying, "النجلة.أخبر النجلة بسرعة" or “call for rescue.” The translator here sees an opportunity to include some cultural information about the UAE by translating it as “Dial triple nine,” the emergency phone number for the UAE numbering plan. The reference does not seem imposed on
the text and the context helps in understanding what it could be, especially that the sentence that follows it reveals that “police cars and helicopters are on their way.”

Figure 8. Triple nine

Instances that reveal aspects of the Emirati identity such as its religion, celebrations, etiquette, and traditions were also preserved. In Volume 1, the grandfather promises the children to discuss with them what they saw (Ajaaj) when he comes back from the mosque. Then, Humaid tells Shamma that he was going to join him, and Shamma says that she was going back inside to pray with her mother. This scene not only shows prayer as part of the daily life of the Emirati family, but also tells the audience that the men traditionally go to the mosque to pray while women mainly pray at home. This reference is preserved in the translation, as one of the purposes of the translated text is to inform the others about the traditions and lifestyles in the UAE. In Volume 3, the time is in Ramadan. It is mentioned a number of times that the characters are fasting (e.g., the grandfather teasing his children about their enthusiasm for fasting as he wonders if they were really fasting, the mother reminding the father that he is fasting right before he absentmindedly drinks a glass of water). In Volume Four, during a family visit to Liwa during Eid, a robot is called to serve coffee to the visitors using the wrong hand, as the Emirati etiquette necessitates that a coffee cup is served to the guest using the right hand. The grandfather comments on the way the robot serves the coffee, saying that etiquette requires the host to serve coffee personally.
The time of the story is conveniently covering Ramadan, Eid, and the National Day celebrations. This provides the opportunity to include common jokes about people breaking their fast absent-mindedly and to refer to traditional family visits on Eid days and to the way the National Day is celebrated in the UAE. All these
references were not neutralized or domesticated for the same reasons discussed above. Reserving such cultural references in general is significant in that it fulfills the aim of conveying a clear message about the Emirati culture from an Emirati source and including the UAE in the global cultural mainstream.

4.3.3 Code-switching

The translator’s strategy to deal with the dialectal features of the text differed from one example to another according to the context. Only Ajaaj and, in some instances, the grandfather, use the Emirati dialect. In the stories documented in the National Heritage Museum, the characters speak a mixture of Modern Standard Arabic and Emirati phrases. Rarely do other characters use such phrases as "يا بوتي" i.e., "oh dad" and "يا مرحبا الساع، نورت ليوا".

The shift from one dialect or language to another may be defined as code-switching. It may be done for several purposes, including social camouflage, storytelling, and in writing in general. According to Dickins et al. (2002), the literary use of code-switching as a technique is always with a purpose. For this reason, translators must exert efforts in order to convey this into the Target Language, and in doing so, they are faced with three possible points that they need to address. Firstly, they need to look at the role that the dialectal elements play in the creation of the general effect of the Source Text. In literary works, this question gains more importance because code-switching as literary device is always used with a purpose, be it to indicate the social class or education of the character or simply to imitate real life situations. Secondly, translators may render the ST dialect features into TT ones, however, they must be aware of the dangers it might entail and of the other options open to them. For example, they are first faced with the problem of choosing a corresponding Target Language dialect. They also run the risk of sabotaging the
intended effect of the Source Text by making the character sound strange, speaking for example a Bedouin dialect while dressed in western cowboy costume. Thirdly, once a translator decides to translate into a certain dialect, the translation has to be consistent and accurate because, again, that would defeat the purpose of trying to simulate the effect of the Source Text. Dickins et al. (2002) generally find that eliminating the dialectal features of the Source Text is less likely to cause damage. One alternative that translators can consider to convey the effect of the dialectal features in the Source Text is using compensation techniques. For example, this can be done through additions that describe the speech of the character or through the addition of phrases that indicate the level of formality of the language.

The purpose of having Ajaaj speak the Emirati Bedouin dialect in the source text is clearly to assert his Emirati identity. The grandfather represents the rapport that connects the children to Ajaaj, and therefore, it is only natural to have him switch to the Emirati dialect sometimes to stress this connection. The speech of the characters that tell the documented stories about Ajaaj includes some typically Emirati dialect expressions to highlight the old nature of the documentation.

It is rather hard to tell if there is an English dialect that could truly correspond for the Bedouin dialect. For example, the use of Southern American English would not have been consistent with the appearance of the character. The general vision behind the translation of Ajaaj discourages the translator from making such choices that could sabotage the message behind Ajaaj such as the translator’s weakness in using the language variety consistently.

Instead, the translator used different strategies to deal with dialectal features, according to the context. The examples discussed above for example ("يا مرحبا الساع, "ناورت ليوا) are translated with a mixture of foreignization and compensation into “Welcome. You bring light and happiness to Liwa”. In translating "شيخ الفيله" as the leader of the tribe, the translator opted to draw on the fact that the word sheikh has already found its way into English dictionaries by translating it as “the sheikh of the tribe.” The sheikh is referred to as " طويل العمر" i.e., “he whose life may be long,” which is used frequently when speaking directly to a sheikh or when speaking about him. It is supposed to express loyalty to the sheikh by wishing him a long life. The reference is dropped completely in the translation and replaced instead with the repetition of the word “sheikh.”
When a tribesman says that the "نكٍ أفساد انقثٍهح قانٕا أٌ انؼجاج قرم انًاشٍح يٍ ْٕش ٔتٕش" which means “but the tribesmen said that the wind killed the cattle, goats and camels.” The phrase "هوش وبوش" is modified by "الماشية" to explain it to the non-Emirati Arab audience. However, the reference was deleted altogether in English and translated as “the cattle.” Simulating the Bedouin dialect seems to have been overlooked here.

Finally and most importantly, when the Bedouins describe the super hero as "كوبر الجن" or the swirling dust of the Jinnis, the term is transliterated as "Koweir Al Jinn" and then explained as "or Jinni fumes." "Kuweir Al Jinn" is then used four times in this volume without this explanation. The reason why the strategy changed here is that "Kuweir Al Jinn" is considered a key word in this volume because, according to the grandfather, “many thought it was a jinni.” The children then used this key word to look up more stories about Ajaaj.

The rendering of the features of Ajaaj’s speech seems to be one of the major weaknesses of the translation. In the Arabic version, Ajaaj spoke fluent and poetic Emirati Bedouin dialect that was fraught with metaphors. In the English version, Ajaaj’s speech is first written in a different and larger font. Most of the metaphors are overlooked or rendered poorly, and the register is shifted into rigid formal English. An example of that would be the translation of "مثل ما شفت يا حميد، أنا من تراب هالصحراء " in Volume Five into “As you see Humaid, I am made of the desert sands, my powers are derived from its origins, I surface when I have to protect the land” (emphasis added). The almost scientific words stripped the text of its smoothness and fluency. The metaphor in "انتو مستقبل هالأرض، والجذور تحتاج فروعها" was replaced with English cliché “children are the future of this land. They will take it from a glorious past to a brighter future.” Having overlooked the dialectal features seems to have resulted in overlooking the other significant features of Ajaaj’s speech. In volume 6, the informal "من سنين" (min snyn) i.e., for years, in the sentence, "مب هذا وقت الرمثة، الوقت وقت أفعال، وأنا أبا أسوي سور من " the phrase "الرملة يحمي البلاد مثل ما حماها أهلها ببروج وأسوار من سنين" was translated into “But this is no time for talk. We need to protect our country, as our great fathers have done throughout history” (emphasis added)
The decision not to render the dialectal features and instead compensate for the loss of their effect seems to correspond to the strategy to maintain the linguistic fluency of the text. However, the rendition of Ajaaj’s poetic language into rigid formal language has not conveyed the effect of Ajaaj’s speech. The significance of linguistic fluency for Watani’s aims lies in its ability to attract the reader to the text.
4.4 Discussion

There seemed to be a consistent balance between two seemingly opposed strategies. There was a tendency on the linguistic level to assimilate the text linguistically into the English language. Common Arabic phrases are replaced with similarly common English phrases with the same meaning rather than directly translated, as in the case of “Watch out!” At the same time, references to aspects of the Emirati identity, culture, traditions, and lifestyles were preserved in the translation. Common Arabic greetings were transliterated because of their familiarity, while other less familiar greetings were replaced with their English equivalents. In one case, the translator intervenes to include a reference that does not exist in the original text (“dial triple nine”). In cases where there was a clash between the two strategies, familiarity and acceptability seemed to be the criterion on which this conflict was resolved.

This struggle to balance linguistic domestication with cultural foreignization seems to stem from an understanding of the general purpose of the text, which is to help target readers achieve identification with the Emirati culture. The prevalence of one of these strategies over the other would have compromised the purpose of the translation. For this reason, familiarity took precedence over other criteria in balancing these strategies because it is an important factor in the identification process. When the extent of familiarity of a given phrase (e.g., en sha'allah) to the primary target audience proved higher than that of the secondary audience, the phrase was preserved. This, it seems, reveals a prioritization of the purposes of the comic book. Forging national identity and creating harmony among those residing in the UAE seems to come before the desire to merge with the global cultural mainstream, given its urgency.

Moreover, the nature of the comic book form of writing requires the writing to be light and precise. Including unfamiliar cultural references that would require translator notes at the end of the text would not only violate the norms of the comic book but also sabotage its artistic nature. More importantly, linguistic assimilation was of great significance because the nature of the message is cultural. The reader may not be familiar with the appearances or Ramadan and Eid traditions. Foreignization on the linguistic level as well would overburden the reader with issues
to understand. For this reason, the priority was given to the requirements of conveying the cultural message of the comic book.

Another sign of the influence of the purpose of the text over the translator’s decisions can be seen in the translator’s decision not to substitute the dialectal features of the protagonist’s speech with TL dialectal features. As Dickins, et al., (2002) warn, this decision may result in the creation of unwarranted effects that may in the end sabotage the effect of the TT. It also requires a strong knowledge of the TL dialects and necessitates consistency and fluency. Any error would compromise the purpose of the translation. The significance of the cultural message of Ajaaj seems to have discouraged the translator from translating dialectal features into corresponding TL dialects. The limitation that the graphics and the form posed seems to have contributed to that decision as well. Unfortunately, disregard of register has frustrated the translator’s attempt to preserve the effect of the protagonists’ dialect.

The strategies observed in this analysis generally demonstrate the degree to which the purpose of the translation may influence the translator’s choices. In such a cultural exchange, the choices that are made ultimately position the text somewhere along the foreignization-domestication continuum. The significance of this position lies in how much space it allows for the text to fulfill its purpose. To walk along the thin line separating exoticism and universalism seems to fulfill the ethics of difference that Venuti (1998) calls for. For Venuti, the ethics of difference lie in the, Translation project[’s] ability to deviate from domestic norms to signal the foreignness of the foreign text and create a readership that is more open to linguistic and cultural difference—yet without resorting to stylistic experiments that are so estranging as to be self-defeating. The key factor is the translator’s ambivalence towards domestic norms and institutional practices in which they are implemented, a reluctance to identify completely with them coupled with a determination to address diverse cultural constituencies, elite and popular. In attempting to straddle the foreign and domestic cultures as well as domestic readerships, a translation practice cannot fail to produce a text that is a potential source of cultural change (1998, p. 87).
Figure 14. Ajaaj on the continuum

It is the desire to effect cultural change that has necessitated commitment to the linguistic and stylistic norms of the target culture in order to gain the target audience’s acceptance and identification. While the policy of soft power required this concession on the level of the language and form, the desire to assert national identity has encouraged faithfulness on the level of the content and graphics. Placing all of these elements on one side of the continuum rather than the other would have defeated the purpose of the translation. The text instead yields on one level so that it may catch interest on the other.

In the case of Ajaaj, intervention was present on several levels. Generally, the translation of Ajaaj in itself is an intervention that aims to achieve harmony on the national level and representational justice on the international level. On the level of the text, a number of the examples discussed earlier clearly demonstrate a certain degree of intervention on the part of the translator to ensure (a) the linguistic fluency of the text; (b) its conformity to the TL genre norms; and (c) its continuing faithfulness to the national and cultural message it represents. The intervention on the level of the strategies has contributed to giving the text its unique position on the domestication/foreignization continuum.
Chapter Five: Conclusion

Local and expatriate young readers found *Ajaaj* engaging and looked forward to its next issue. The play based on the comic book was at the centre-stage of discussions on local blogs. Although it was too early for the Emirati comic book to be distributed internationally, *Ajaaj* received the international media’s recognition as Watani began to develop it into a televised cartoon series in 2008.

The translation of *Ajaaj* is examined in this thesis with the aim of finding out the way that the translation strategies are influenced by the purpose of the text to reveal an aspect of the role of translation in today’s UAE. The themes, graphics, and dialogue are analyzed for instances that reveal attempts to assert the identity of the text and the translation strategies used predominantly to relay them. The thesis looks at how these strategies fulfill the purpose of the translation by shaping the final outcome of the translation process.

The astonishing connections found between the overall purpose of the text and the translation strategies seem to reveal the strong influence of the overall socio-political situation over the role of translation, its traditions and strategies and the way translation is directed towards fulfilling the aims of the nation within that context. On a lower level, this correlation has enhanced the text’s ability to fulfill its purpose of reinforcing the Emirati national identity, creating new channels of communication with the new elements in the Emirati society, and giving a fresh view of the Emirati culture that negates western preconceptions. Interestingly, this is achieved with little violation of the English Language. In fact, the translation’s respect of the English language seems indispensible for the text to achieve its purpose of attracting others through identification. The translation strategies seem to work together harmoniously to achieve the purpose of the translation on both the national and international level, with the message of the text being the highest priority.
5.1 The Trojan Horse

The attempt of creating a superhero, bringing harmony into the evolving society, shifting the direction of cultural transfer, and demanding international recognition for the UAE’s cultural products, is admirable, even heroic. Through the translation strategies, Watani was able to find a strategic location for Ajaaj on the domestication/foreignization continuum that allows it to reach the target audience and fulfill its function at the same time. Instead of going against the linguistic and stylistic norms of the receiving culture, Watani assimilated the text to these norms in order to pave the way for the more significant cultural and national messages to reach the audience. Target language stylistic features of the genre of the comic book were largely adhered to when translating the comic book. The short sentences, the smooth transitions between panels, clarity, and unhindered communication were all taken into consideration throughout the process, while moving within the space that the text-picture combination allows (McCloud, 2006). At the same time, the translation strategies were still oriented towards fulfilling the purpose of the text. Seeking international recognition for the Emirati culture, for instance, required that references to place names, etiquette, national hobbies and sports, and National Day celebrations be preserved, while continuing to avoid the need for translator at all costs. The line should also be drawn at unconditional, ad hoc translation and transliteration of cultural references because this would render the attempt to bring the other closer and set the basis for the Emirati culture in the global village useless. As Watani demands the respect of the Western readers, so it should respect the simplest linguistic criteria of a “good read” in the West. Other factors affected the translation process such as the restrictions on decision-making that are not only imposed by the cross-cultural transfer process but also by the fixedness of the graphics and the age range of the audience (Cleaver, 2004).

The sandstorm has chosen to take the form of the comic book to sneak into the western canon and to gain acceptance and appreciation as it embarks on its national mission. Thus, the translation should adhere to the western concept of form so as to achieve the mission of opening communication channels with the world and opening up the doors to the Emirati culture.
5.2 The Not-So-Vicious Circle

Equitable representation may be a myth. However, it continues to be sought in hopefulness regardless of how unattainable it may be. There is always a measure of subjectivity involved in the translation process, whether the translation is carried out by the source culture or target culture. Whether the translator takes the audience to the author or vice versa, the considerations of one will have to be disregarded for the sake of the other at one point. Equitable representation is virtually unattainable also because of the inseparability of translation and power. The struggle for it, however, should not stop.

Manipulation will always be an excruciating part of the reality of translation. But alongside this vicious circle is another benevolent circle in which the power of translation comes to the aid of society in its development by assuming the role that it requires. In a sense, translation is always an intervention. The involvement of power in the activity of translation may have resulted in some injustice. The involvement of the power of translation in attempts to overcome socio-political challenges may equally make amends for such grievances. Translation may now open doors that it was once used to shut.
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Appendix B
VITA

Fatima Al Owais was born in Dubai on January 27, 1985. She was educated in both private and public schools. In 2002, she graduated from Al Zahra High School for Girls at the top of her class and as one of the top five in the emirate of Sharjah. She received a scholarship to the University of Sharjah.

In 2004, Ms. Fatima joined Dar-at-Tarjamah as a volunteer editor for three years. She graduated in 2006 at the top of her class with a Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature. In spring 2006, she began a master’s program in Translation and Interpreting at the American University of Sharjah. At the same year, she joined Dubai Consultancy, Research, and Media Center as a translator. She was awarded the degree of Masters of Arts in Translation and Interpreting in 2009.