ARABS FROM A JAPANESE PERSPECTIVE:
CULTURAL REPRESENTATION AND TRANSLATION

by

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

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

Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
October 2015
**Approval Signatures**

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Thesis Title: Arabs from a Japanese Perspective: Cultural Representation and Translation

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Acknowledgements

I am grateful to my thesis advisor, Professor Said Faiq, for his support, constructive comments and guidance during all stages of completing this thesis. It is an honor to have an expert in translation and culture as my supervisor for this project.

I would also like to thank Dr. Basil Hatim for his creative teaching methods and the great translation courses, especially pragmatics and rhetoric, and to Dr. Ahmed Ali for his continuous support and guidance during my years on the MATI program.

My sincere thanks go to my beloved husband, Ala El Malak, for his constant encouragement, support and understanding, and to my daughter, Luna Nour, for the joy and energy she generated in me to finish my studies. I wish to extend my thanks to my parents for their unconditional love. I would also like to thank my colleagues in the MATI program, who were always there for me, in moments of anxiety, joy and accomplishment. Special thanks go to my dearest friend Daniya Jackson for editing my work.
Dedication

To my mother and father, without you this would have not been possible.
Abstract

Identifying similarities and differences between cultures results in the creation of certain images and representations. This thesis explores the role of translation in creating cultural images within the context of a system of representation based the promotion of certain stereotypes across cultures. Incorporating a translation and commentary, the thesis examines the strategies adopted in handling issues of culture and cultural references. The data include the translation into English of a passage from the book *Arabs from a Japanese Perspective*, written in Arabic by the Japanese writer Nobuaki Notohara (2004) as a source of cultural examples and references. The commentary provides an analysis of examples that indicate the role of translational choices in cultural mediation and representation. It is concluded that despite of translation’s important role in bridging cultures and overcoming differences, images of the Arab culture remain prisoner of the old/new stereotypical representations.

Search Terms: Translation, Culture, Nobuaki Notohara, orientalism, Arabs, Japanese, representation
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ............................................................................................... 1
Dedication .................................................................................................................. 2
Abstract .................................................................................................................... 6
List of Tables ............................................................................................................ 9
Chapter 1: Introduction .......................................................................................... 10
Chapter 2: Translation and Translation Studies .................................................. 12
  2.1 What is translation? ......................................................................................... 12
  2.2 Approaches to translation .............................................................................. 14
  2.3 Cultural turn in Translation theory ................................................................. 14
Chapter 3: Translation and Representation ....................................................... 16
  3.1 Translation as representation ......................................................................... 16
  3.2 What is representation? .................................................................................. 16
  3.3 Orientalism ..................................................................................................... 19
  3.4 Strategies of Cultural Translation .................................................................. 22
  3.5 Strategies in Translating Cultural terms ......................................................... 23
  3.6 Material Culture ............................................................................................. 24
  3.7 Hatim and Mason socio-textual features: ...................................................... 27
  3.8 Acculturation/ Transculturation .................................................................... 29
  3.9 Conclusion ..................................................................................................... 30
Chapter 4: Source Text and its Translation .......................................................... 32
  4.1 About the Author: ......................................................................................... 32
  4.2 About the Book: ............................................................................................ 33
  4.3 The book and media coverage: ....................................................................... 34
  4.4 About the Publisher: ...................................................................................... 36
  4.5 The Source Text ............................................................................................. 37
  4.6 The Target Text ............................................................................................. 49
Chapter 5: Commentary ......................................................................................... 60
  5.1 Cultural Elements and translation .................................................................. 61
    5.1.1 Food in translation .................................................................................. 61
    5.1.2 Clothes in translation .............................................................................. 64
    5.1.3 Habitat and environment in translation .................................................. 68
5.2 Other considerations when translating the book

5.2.1 Translation of proverbs

5.2.2 Cultural concepts and values

5.2.3 Word connotations

5.2.4 Contradicting ideas

5.3 Conclusion:

Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations

References

Vita
List of Tables

Table 1: Cultural object classification .................................................................26
Table 2: Food in translation (Notahara, 2004) .........................................................62
Table 3: Food in translation (Geldermalsen, 2010) .................................................63
Table 4: Food in translation (Patai, 1973) ...............................................................63
Table 5: Clothes in translation (Notahara, 2004) ....................................................66
Table 6: Clothes in translation (Patai, 1973) ...........................................................67
Table 7: Habitat and environment in translation (Notahara, 2004) .........................69
Table 8: Habitat and environment in translation (Patai, 1973) ...............................70
Table 9: Habitat and environment in translation (Ibn Khaldun, 1377) ....................71
Table 10: Cultural concepts and values .................................................................72
Table 11: Word connotations .................................................................................73
Table 12: Contradicting ideas ...............................................................................74
Chapter 1: Introduction

Change is part of the nature of a globalized world. Rapid advances in technology and communication have made it easier to overcome boundaries caused by differences in languages. An evaluation of this change and its effects on cultures and nations is possible, but may be hard to examine fully. In the context of translation, and if we were to examine the change in the way Arabs have been represented by other cultures, we find that representations have changed very little over the past decades; if they have changed at all. The frame of orientalism has constantly guided the way Arabs are represented, or in this case misrepresented. The images residing in the translation of texts are part of a system, or the master discourse that forms/deforms cultural realities of the Arab culture (Faiq, 2008).

Within this context of intercultural encounters, the aim of this thesis is to examine the role of translators in amplifying or minimizing cultural misrepresentations of Arabs. To illustrate this, a chapter from the book *Arabs from a Japanese Perspective* by the Japanese Nobuaki Notahara (2004) was translated from Arabic into English, and a commentary on major cultural translation issues is provided. The role of the translator may be seen as minimal in carrying over pre-existing images of Arabs portrayed as Bedouins in tents. But with the help of translation strategies, elements of the Bedouins life can be explained in an attempt to generate a positive interest by the target culture so as to see perhaps new aspects of old and frozen images. This case is ideal, as it does not take into account the power of a superior culture over an inferior one. Depending on his or her cultural background and ideology, a translator can further reinforce or challenge cultural images and perhaps turn misrepresentations into somehow neutral ones.

The thesis concludes that despite the Japanese writer’s attempt in bringing out positive attributes about Arabs and their Bedouin life, his discourse shows conformity to images dictated by the established master discourse of representing Arab culture.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter one outlines the main topics discussed and introduces the argument. Chapter two provides an overview of pertinent approaches in translation studies. Linguistic, functional, cultural approaches are discussed respectively to provide the foundations for the emergence of cultural translation.
Chapter three explains the role of translation as a representational tool and as a manipulative and a deforming tool at the service of norms of a master discourse. The chapter also discusses “Orientalism” as expounded by Edward Said and the debate with Bernard Lewis. The chapter ends with a discussion of strategies employed by translators to deal with cultural terms such as “domestication”, “foreignization”, and “transculturation” and suggests looking at the wider implications of cultural references (micro and macro culture) beyond the limits of language. The use of certain strategies can reflect whether translators conform to the requirements of a particular master discourse and thus promote certain stereotypical images about source cultures.

Chapter four introduces the book, its author, the source Arabic text, and its English translation. Chapter five covers the commentary about aspects of micro and macro culture observed in the English translation and the way they were handled and mediated. The commentary refers to works by foreigners (non-Arabs) writing in English about Arab culture. The aim here is explore language choices in the texts of these authors and the English translation carried out for this thesis and how the choices reflect a particular cultural ideology.

Chapter Six concludes the thesis and shows that despite the Japanese writer’s attempt to represent Arabs in a positive way, the images of Arab culture overall remain conditioned by constraints of orientalism and a master discourse. Despite adapted translation strategies in minimizing the effect of misrepresentation, sadly translation from Arabic into English cannot completely alter existing images of Arab culture; images that have been in circulation for decades.
Chapter 2: Translation and Translation Studies

Translation is not a new activity; it has been practiced since the beginning of humanity. In every civilization, translation has always been an important cultural project that aims to enhance a nation’s reservoir of knowledge. The aim of translation is to transfer knowledge beyond the boundaries of countries and languages for cross-cultural communication.

Translation was the first and basic means for civilized interaction (from hieroglyphy into Greek, from Greek into Syriac, from both into Arabic, and, finally, from Arabic into Latin and other European languages, and today from the latter to the rest of the World). (Faiq, 2007, p. 52).

In a globalized world, translators are no longer good users of dictionaries, but cultural mediators, bridging gaps, or, in some cases, manipulating texts. This chapter briefly defines translation and explores the relationship between translation, culture and language. It also gives a summary of the most pertinent theories in translation studies, namely: linguistic, functional, and descriptive. These theories provide important frameworks for the work of translators. After all and depending on their culture and ideology, translators chose a theory or theories they deem appropriate for a given translation. Ultimately, translation is not a mere transfer between languages, but rather a process involving cultures and ideologies, as Lefevere (1992, p. 94) argues:

Translators do not just translate words: they also translate a universe of discourse, a poetics, and an ideology. Moreover, their decision whether or not to translate something is likely to be based much more on considerations of the levels of ideology, poetics … than on the level of illocutionary use of language or universe of discourse.

Bearing in mind that loss is inevitable in translation regardless of the approach adopted; translators find themselves in a position where they have to make decisions not only about linguistic choices, but also about important cultural representations (see chapter 3 in this thesis).

2.1 What is translation?

Defining translation may sound easy, if one does not realize its function and influence in many aspects of culture, politics, and ideology. According to Catford,
translation is “an operation performed on languages: a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another” (1965, p. 1). Newmark defines translation as a “craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or a statement in one language by the same message in another language” (Newmark, 1981, p.7). The definitions suggested by Catford and Newmark focus on the linguistic aspect of translation. Language is part and parcel of any translation since it is the medium through which a text is expressed and translation cannot be isolated from language. But at the same time language is connected to culture. Lefevere sees language as “the expression and the repository of a culture. Many of its words refer to reality that no longer exists: things and concepts die, but the words used to express or denote them may survive for centuries or just decades” (1992, p.16).

Given this connection between culture and language, defining translation should not focus on language alone, but also on cultural aspects and context as Bassnett (1998, p. 81) forcefully states, “Try as I may, I cannot take language out of culture and culture out of language”. Along similar line of argument, Faiq tries to capture the connection between culture and language by coining the term “culguage” (2010, p.17). There is no culture without a language expressing its beliefs and traditions. Culture and language co-exist to mutually express each other. Understanding this intrinsic relationship allows us to connect vicariously translation to culture.

Tymoczko identifies the role of translation in bringing out what is different and unique about other cultures: “If cultures everywhere were the same and if translation were only a matter of switching linguistic codes to express the same cultural confirmations, human translators could much more easily be replaced by machines” (2007,p.231). By nature, translation is a way of exploring new ideas and experiencing other cultures in different languages. This beauty of translation as a cultural activity can only be enjoyed if practiced ethically and responsibly. But this also means that translators often manipulate texts if they feel that these may be inappropriate in the target cultures and languages. In such cases, the translation becomes problematic, as argued by Faiq (2007, p. 52), “Because it brings language and culture together, translation is thus by its nature a multi -problematic process with different manifestation and realization in various cultures/traditions.”
2.2 Approaches to translation

This section provides a summary of the main approaches to the study of translation. The major difference between these approaches lies in what theorists see as the central problem in the study of translation. For example, the linguistic approach, which is source text oriented, sees the problem of translation in finding equivalent meanings. Roman Jakobson, for example, emphasizes linguistics by suggesting that “No linguistic specimen may be interpreted by the science of language without a translation of its signs into other signs of the same system or into signs of another system” (Jackobson, 2000, p.118).

On the other hand, the functionalist approach, which is target text oriented, sees culture as influential and problematic in translation. An example of the functionalist approach is Skopos (purpose or goal) theory developed by the German scholars Katharina Reiss and Hans Vermeer. Skopos focuses on “aspects of the translation process as interactional dynamic and pragmatic purposes” (Hatim, 2013, p.79). Skopos theory assumes that a translator is able to understand the purpose and the function of the text, and thus produces a translation based on this understanding. This theory, however, neglects the possibilities of not understanding the purpose of the text and context, which may result in a bad translation (Tymoczko, 2007, p.35).

Given the apparent disparity between linguistic and functional approaches, other translation theorists have tried to develop more comprehensive approaches to translation that go beyond linguistics and functions. James S. Holmes, for example, suggests developing a theory that looks at texts and contexts of translation and how texts “convey very complex patterns of meanings..., and how they function communicatively in a given socio-cultural setting” (cited in Hatim, 2013, p.35). Other research in translation has resulted in approaches that bring postcolonial studies and cultural studies to bear on translation theory and practice. These approaches see the combination of language and culture to be central in any exploration of translation.

2.3 Cultural turn in Translation theory

In 1990, Lefevere and Bassnett offered a new insight to translation studies by examining how cultures affect translation. They examine a number of factors such as ideology, context, history, and colonization that consider translations rewritings of the original work (Hodges, 2010, p.1). According to Lefevere and Bassnett, the “cultural turn” in translation studies evolved as people in the translation field started realizing
that “translations are never produced in a vacuum, and they are also never received in a vacuum” (1998, p. 3). The cultural turn employs linguistic approaches, but moves beyond them to consider aspects of translation historiography (1998, p.123). The cultural turn also focuses on translation as a manipulatory process. According to Lefevere, translators are “image makers, exerting the power of subversion under the guise of objectivity” (Lefevere, 1992, p. 7).

In the same vein, Lawrence Venuti (1998) explores how publishers and editors play a major role in choosing texts for translation. Translations become part of a profit-making game, along which they decide if the translations will be read /accepted by audiences and what manipulative strategies can be used to achieve profitable outcomes. The nature of translation as a manipulative act and the strategies identified by Venuti and other theorists are discussed in detail in the next chapter. This chapter has given a brief summary of the major approaches to translation. The basis of translation theory was purely linguistic before moving to being functional, descriptive and cultural. The next chapter elaborates on the cultural approach, introduces translation as representational activity, and the debate about “Orientalism” as a lens through which Arab and Islamic culture are represented in translation.
Chapter 3: Translation and Representation

This chapter examines translation as a representational tool and summarizes the views on Orientalism and how both affect the selection of texts for translation. The chapter also reviews some strategies used in cultural translation such as domestication, foreignization, and transculturation and how each of these strategies has its own weaknesses if not effectively utilized by translators. It is concluded that strategies used in cultural translation have wider implications than the simple transfer of information from one culture to another; the process of transference involves a universe of discourse with its ideologies, attitudes, and manipulative techniques.

3.1 Translation as representation

Translation is an experience in the target language that is considered to be a representation, a reflection of the source text (ST), or at least this is the way it should be. However, when we consider most translations, we notice many representational aspects of “other” cultures that have been either enhanced in the target text (TT), deleted, or even manipulated into different images than those depicted in the ST, depending on the ideology, authority, and influence of the translator or publisher. According to Tymoczko, the role of translation as representation is not new; it has always been used as a form of cultural representation: “Translation is not only a principal form of intercultural representation, it is one of the oldest and most practiced forms of representation in human culture” (2007, p.114)

This thesis explores misrepresentations encountered in the English translation of Arabic texts. The question is how and why these representations in translation are generated in a particular way, and on what basis? In spite of the wide-ranging debate about Orientalism, the attempt to justify the ways Arabs are represented in foreign cultures, and how these images changed, and whether they have really changed at all, it seems that these images have remained static for a very long time. The rich Arab culture that exists in the mind of its people, is only and sadly a ghost of the past and has no place in the present realities of the target cultures.

3.2 What is representation?

In order to understand translation as a representational activity, it is important to understand what is meant by representation. Bearing in mind the relationship between translation and culture as discussed in the previous chapter, Tymoczko (2007)
identifies the elements of defining representation that are relevant to translation as a cross-cultural concept:
a. an image, likeness, or reproduction is some manner of a thing;
b. clearly conceived idea or concept; and
c. the action or fact of exhibiting in some visible images or form. (ibid, p.112)

These elements suggest that one of the roles of translation is to exemplify images, ideas, and thoughts into the target language. But does this entail that all translations are representations? According to Tymoczko, ‘any consideration of the nature of translation must include representation, if only in a cursory manner, for almost all translation are representations’ (ibid, p.111).

The representations found in translation can express points of view of the writer about other cultures or about own culture. The question is whether these representations are carefully transferred through translation without any manipulation. Is the ST that is translated, a reflection of the true image of a given culture? Specifically, we focus here on the representations of Arabs and how images of Arab culture are often manipulated in translation in order to serve ideological goals of the target cultures.

Tymoczko explores how representation can be used as a frame of reference for translation to make it ‘a powerful act’ (ibid, p. 112). This powerful act includes powerful ideologies to form what is called an “ideological representation” that is claimed to be a primary goal of translation. Along similar lines, Venuti (1998, p. 97) explains how translation has the power of ‘constructing representation of foreign cultures.’ To this end, source texts are carefully selected to match existing ideologies and preconceptions of the target culture about the source culture. We can thus see that translation is not a mere transfer of linguistic units or words from one language to another, but involves a lot of manipulation techniques and strategies. According to Bassnett & Trivedi “translation is not innocent, transparent activity but is highly charged with signification at every stage,” and it is a “highly manipulative activity” (1999, p.2) that does not happen in isolation, but is always part of a process. An example of this “highly manipulative activity” is the translation of The Arabian Nights into English, which

… has undeniably been the main source of Western representation of Arab culture and, by extension, Islam, as a cultural ensemble, in both extremely
negative (violence, barbarisms, etc.) and positive but inherently negative (exoticism and sensualism). (Faiq, 2004, p.12).

These manipulative actions often take place in the so-called superior cultures, in this case Western cultures, whereby, “Members of “superior” cultures tend to look down on members of “inferior” cultures and treat cavalierly the literature of those cultures” (Lefevere, 1992, p.119). When translators from a “superior” culture transfer the work of an “inferior” culture with manipulative techniques, they often grant themselves certain liberties to change the original text, based on the empowerment provided by their “superior” culture, “by necessity translation involves manipulation and subversion” of cultures and literary works especially those stemming from the “so-called third world” (Faiq, 2005, p.57). For example, when Edward FitzGerald translated The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, he took liberties claiming that ‘they need a little art to shape them’ (Bassnett, 1998, p. 78). Lefevere (1992) explains how FitzGerald ‘would have never taken such liberties with classical Greek or Roman authors as they are considered superior cultures” (p.120). In other words, it seems perfectly fine to manipulate a text from or about inferior cultures, in our case, the Arab and Islamic cultures, as these manipulations maintain the image and preconceptions of the superior culture. Are these liberties acceptable in the same manner if they are to be utilized by Arab translators in representing the West?

These representations yield what is called a “master discourse” through which users establish hierarchies of meaning (chains of signs) with particular modes of representation. However, a master discourse does not necessarily reflect reality; instead, it makes use of language in such a way that a given reality is constructed (Faiq, 2004, p.37). In other words, this discourse reflects particular images and screens out what is not acceptable by the hierarchy of systems. These images are “projections of the West own fears and desires masqueraded as objective knowledge” (Faiq, 2007, p. 21). The projections of “the self” and “the other” are important elements of the master discourse of translation as they ensure that misrepresentations and stereotypes remain in force. As a result, the master discourse expects writers from other cultures to conform to its norms for their work to be accepted in the Western world. Abdul Rahman Munif, the Saudi novelist, was often criticized for his work by Western critics Such as John Updike who remarks that “It is unfortunate... that Mr. Munif...appears to be
…insufficiently Westernized to produce a narrative that feels much like what we call a novel” (ibid, p.16) when reviewing the translation into English of Munif’s *Cities of Salt*.

On the other hand, Najib Mahfouz, the Egyptian Novelist, was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1988. While this prize could be seen as an appreciation of Arabic literature, Van Leeuwen (2004) notes that the prize was considered a “Western aggression against Islam and presented distorted images of Egypt’s recent history” (p.22). In other words, Mahfouz’s works conform to the master discourse’s norms and therefore were appreciated by the prize-awarding West. Mahfouz’s works also maintain the distorted images and misrepresentations about Arabs and Islam that have been portrayed in the Western mind. Faiq (2004) laments the situation where ‘the Arab world and Islam are still translated or represented through monolingual eyes’ (p.8). The representations remain static, old, and their subject (Arab culture) is still seen through ‘the eyes of orientalism’ (Faiq, 2005, p.2).

### 3.3 Orientalism

Orientalism is not a new term, but its use gained new meaning after the publication of *Orientalism* by Edward Said in 1978. According to the *Merriam Webster Online Dictionary* (2015), as a term Orientalism is ‘something (as a style or manner) associated with or characteristic of Asia or Asians’. In the past, Orientalism meant the imitation or depiction of aspects of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and East Asian cultures (*Wikipedia*, 2015). But Said (2003) assigns new meaning to the term, offering its following definitions:

- “A way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient’s special place in European-Western experience” (p.1).
- “Is a style of thought based upon ontological and epistemological distinction made between “the Orient” and (most of the time) “the Occident” (p.2).
- ‘A Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient’ (p.3).

According to Said, Orientalism is a “systematic set of representation of the orient, which transferred the Arab world into a panorama of stereotypes and which replaced interest in the true nature of Arab societies and legitimized European dominance in the Arab world” (Ibid, p. 16). This definition indicates that power and dominance are part and parcel in the formation of stereotypes that reflect the self-image of the “dominant” in comparison to the image of the “dominated”.
Van Leeuwen (2004) compares and contrasts Orientalism from Said’s point of view and the notion of “cultural dialogism” by Bakhtin (1994) in the context of intercultural relations. Using examples from the interaction between Arab and European cultures and how this interaction led to the emergence of new genres in Arabic Literature, Van Leeuwen argues that although valuable as cultural exchange itself, this interaction has prevented the “emergence of an authentic discourse on Arab identity” (2004, p.16), which allowed orientalism more prominence, particularly that Arabs themselves have tried to conform to its norms in their translations.

Van Leeuwen criticizes the work of Said and describes it as wide-ranging, inconsistent, rigid and contradictory. A given example of its contradiction is in Said’s referral to images about the orient as “fixed” and then argument that these images are manipulated for political purposes. This may have some validity, but if we consider that this manipulation is effected to realize the “fixed” images, which the West expects to see in all translations, then the point about contradiction is no longer valid. If there is an image that does not satisfy the pre-existing stereotypes, it is inevitably manipulated through translation so that it conforms to the norms of the master discourse discussed earlier in this chapter. Van Leeuwen suggests the notion of “cultural dialogism” by Bakhtin as a more dynamic model of intercultural interaction in comparison to Said’s views. Bakhtin views formed images about a culture as a result of interaction, dialogue, and exchange that is “repeatedly adapted to include new events, observations, and texts” (Van Leeuwen, 2004, p.18). Bakhtin claims that texts are not expected to be interpreted in the way the source culture would prefer, but rather to be adapted to the needs of the receiving culture, and that “Translations are never meant to convey a full survey of another culture, but rather to provide elements, which somehow add to the images of a culture and as such provide material for self-definition” (Van Leeuwen, 2004, p.19).

If we were to adapt Bakhtin’s views on “cultural dialogism,” it would mean that the representations of Arabs in translations should change as a result of the interaction between the Arab and European cultures. Bearing in mind that these images have not changed for decades or even centuries, the distorted images may have evolved to take on another (distorted) misrepresentation. For instance, the image of barbarism may have taken on a new representation; that of terrorism. On the contrary, images about the West have generally evolved into positive representations due to the fact that the West enjoys
dominance over global exchange of information. There may be a “dialogue” between cultures, but can we call the flow of information in one direction an interaction between two cultures? By supporting the notion of tailoring source texts to the needs of the receiving culture, Bakhtin seems to suggest that it is perfectly fine to manipulate these texts in ways that serve the target culture. The question then is where is the role of translation in expressing and representing new ideas about other cultures then?

Another opposing camp to Said’s work is led by Edward Lewis, the British-American Historian. The intellectual battle between Said and Lewis lasted for more than two decades. Lewis claims to be an expert in the Arab world, although he never visited the Arab world. Lewis’ ideological remarks against Islam (as an element of culture) are clear in most of his works such as The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam (1967), The Roots of Muslim Rage (1990) and What Went Wrong: The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East (2002). Lewis claims that Said deliberately ignores the work of Western writers, who do not adapt his views about orientalism or simply mentions them in passing: ‘Mr. Said makes a remarkably arbitrary choice of works. His common practice is indeed is to omit their major contributions to scholarship and instead fasten on minor or occasional writings’ (Lewis, 1994, p.122).

Said, on the other hand, in an interview with Al Ahram Weekly in 2003, pointed out that Lewis was one of the so called experts advising the US administration on Middle Eastern affairs despite the fact that “Bernard Lewis hasn't set foot in the Middle East, in the Arab world, for at least 40 years. He knows something about Turkey, I'm told, but he knows nothing about the Arab world.”

Furthermore, in his article “Impossible Histories: Why the Many Islams Cannot be Simplified” (2002), Said points out that the work of Lewis ignores the advances of social theory and cultural studies. Lewis confirms in his work that “the Islamic tendency to violence, anger, anti-modernism, as well as Islam’s (and especially the Arabs’) closed- mindedness, its fondness for slavery, Muslims’ inability to be concerned with anything but themselves, and the like” (Said, 2002) . Interestingly, most of Lewis’ works have “been both bypassed and discredited” among many Middle East Experts as it does not reflect any advances in culture, especially when it comes to “forms of Islamic experience” (Ibid, 2002)

Moreover, Said demonstrates that his critique of Lewis is not only based on his biased ideas, but also on the logic and writing style, that might not be good enough to
be called logic. For example, Lewis writes how “wretched” Muslims failed to translate books from European languages, and he eloquently comments on this as “A translation requires a translator, and a translator has to know both languages, the language from which he is translating and the language into which he is translating.” Said describes this preamble by Lewis as “Brilliant” and questions if Lewis was awake “when he wrote this peculiarly acute tautology—or is it only a piercingly clever truism? (Said, 2002).

To conclude, when we look at the different notions of Orientalism, “cultural dialogism” and Lewis’ views, we notice that there is no objective truth in looking at the “Orient”. Every researcher and scholar looks at it from their own point of view, influenced by ideology, field of study, political orientation, and cultural background. For example, Bakhtin’s model of “cultural dialogism” offers a generic model of communication between cultures rather than a model that can be implemented in cultural translation. Bakhtin’s model may be dynamic but assumes that communication, and translation as communication, happens in a vacuum of power and politics.

Lewis focuses on criticizing ideas and attacking his opponents rather than defining the parameters of his claims. In an interview on April 16, 2002, the American linguist and philosopher, Chomsky described Lewis as “a vulgar propagandist and not a scholar” as he fails to address the political campaign against the Middle East to ensure control over its resources. Said’s views, on the other hand, are based on from extensive analysis and examples of how Orientalism was utilized to serve political agendas.

The real issue is whether indeed there can be a true representation of anything or whether indeed there can be a true representation of anything, or whether any and all representations because they are representations, are embedded first in the language and in the culture, institutions and political ambiance of the representors. (Said, 2003, p. 272).

3.4 Strategies of Cultural Translation

There are some common practices and strategies that are used in cultural translation, which can serve as theoretical frameworks for translators in the form of general guidelines that may assist in dealing with cultural aspects included in the source text. The strategies are usually based on several factors, including the type of text, ideology of the author and or translator, target culture expectations, and the forces and norms of the master discourse of the target culture. This section examines the strategies of alienating and familiarizing the source text. It is concluded that the use of some
cultural items and objects has a function that goes beyond adding local color to the target text. This function is part of manipulation and representation that occur in translation.

3.5 Strategies in Translating Cultural terms

Newmark (1988) identifies two opposite procedures when translating cultural words as either transference or componential analysis. Transference emphasizes target culture and ignores “the message”, which means that readers unfamiliar with the source culture may have difficulty understanding the meaning. Componential analysis, on the other hand, focuses on the message rather than the culture and may add explanations that make sense to the target reader. The decision about which procedure to use is up to the translator and usually depends on the readership, the type of text, and the level of the specialty of the text (1988, p. 96).

Akin to Newmark’s procedures, Lefevere (1992) suggests two strategies for translating cultural words or items. One strategy is to translate the words as if they are not foreign, which he calls “regulize”, and the other is to leave the foreign words as are and add explanations in the text or between brackets (1992, p. 29). Venuti (1995; 1998, cited in Faiq, 2004), sees “domestication” as “the negation of the spirit of the source language and culture in the target ones, and “foreignisation” as ‘the refusal of the dominant master discourse’ (2004, p. 9).

Similarly, Carbonell (2004) focuses on the opposite strategies of bringing the reader closer to the source culture or closer to the target culture. These strategies are respectively “foreignising” and “familiarizing”. The former means ‘importing alien elements to the target culture that belong to the source culture (for example, by means of loan words, calques, and discursive structure of the original)”, and the latter refers to “a process by which alien elements and their references, that may cause a strangle effect, are reduced to familiar references so that the information of the original is easily understood by the target culture” (Carbonell, 2004, p.27).

Despite the differences in identifying applicable strategies in translating foreign texts by many scholars, such as Newmark, Lefevere, Venuti, and Carbonell, they all support the idea of either keeping foreign words in the translation or replacing them with elements more familiar to the target culture. This may require a selective process on the part of the translator to decide which concepts to keep and which to omit, but ultimately the translator may not be able to “represent or transfer all the cultural
materials in a source text” (Tymoczko, 2007, p. 250). A translator can develop his/her own strategies in dealing with such texts in a way similar to the ones suggested by Newmark (1988, p. 251):

1- The cultural elements in question,
2- The purpose of the translation, and
3- The nature of the two cultures the translator is mediating between.

Translators need to develop their own set of strategies that can help them with aspects of cultural translation. A categorization of these cultural aspects can serve as a manual, rather than translating arbitrarily without referring to any model at all.

Newark (1988, p. 95) adopts Nida’s (1964) cultural categorization and organizes cultural aspects as follows:

1) Ecology:
- ‘pampas’, tabuleiros (low plateau), ‘plateau’, ‘savanna’, ‘paddy field’

2) Material culture (artefacts):
   (a) Food: ‘zabaglione’, ‘sake’, Kaiserschmarren
   (b) Clothes: ‘anorak’, kanga (Africa), sarong (South Seas), dhoti (India)
   (c) Houses and towns: kampong, bourg, bourgade, ‘chalet’, ‘low-rise’, ‘tower’

3) Social culture - work and leisure:
   ajaki amah, condottere, biwa, sitar, raga, ‘reggae’, ‘rock’

4) Organisations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts:
   (a) Political and administrative
   (b) Religious: dharma, karma, ‘temple’
   (c) Artistic

5) Gestures and habits ‘Cock a snook’, ‘spitting’.
To understand the above categorization better, it is important to define some of its elements and identify what they include.

3.6 Material Culture

According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary (2015), material culture refers to ‘the totality of physical objects made by a people for the satisfaction of their needs; especially: those articles requisite for the sustenance and perpetuation of life’. Food, as
an element of material culture, is defined by Newmark, as ‘the most sensitive and important expression of national culture; food terms are subject to the widest variety of translation procedures’ (1988, p. 114). Food is a cultural experiment for foreigners as it reflects the tastes of a particular culture or country and the available ingredients that may not be found or known to them. We notice that in most writings about culture, there must be a description of food ingredients and the tasting experience. The following examples are selected from works describing food in the Arab Culture:

- “The taaboon bread was amazing. The first time I tried it I couldn’t believe it; here in the desert.” (Geldermalsen, 2010, p. 1192)
- “Except for few festive occasion he gorges himself on the meat of slaughtered sheep or young camel, the Bedouin subsists on dates, sour camel’s milk and a mixture of flour and roasted corn.” (Patai, 1973, p. 76)
- “The most delicious food is Feast- Mansaf, which may be above the expectations of Japanese.” (Notahara, 2004, p. 76, my Translation from Arabic).

It is also important to note that some categories mentioned in Nida’s (1964) cultural categorization overlap, i.e., material cultural can overlap with social culture. For example, if we take clothing as an element of material culture, it is linked to social culture and religious practices: Muslim women dress in a certain way, different from those who belong to other religions. Also, food is related to religion when it comes to which products Muslims can eat and which are forbidden, such as pork.

The translator should bear in mind the importance and the function of material culture (or micro-culture) and social culture (or macro-culture) in the ST to be able to decide what strategies to use in translation. For example, if we consider the book Married to a Bedouin (2010) written by the Australian author Marguerite van Geldermalsen, who married a Bedouin and lived with him in Jordan, the strategy tends to include foreign words followed by descriptions if needed to refer to her experience with Bedouins. The book is filled with vivid examples of both micro and macro cultural elements. The following are mere examples:
The examples in table 1 show how the author refers to “cultural objects” by “foreignizing” them through transliteration. Adding a description of the terms is a strategy utilized to decrease their “foreignness” and to help the reader understand the objects cited in the text. This strategy is deployed only when the term appears for the first time in the text, and the transliterated term appears subsequently with no description. The subject matter of the book dictates what to domesticate and what to foreignize. For instance, if a cultural object is mentioned in passing in a novel that is not purely about a particular cultural experience, it may either be domesticated or kept as is without description. Consider the following excerpt from The Forty Rules of Love by Elif Shafak (2010) that deals with food:

ST

Once there were four travelers, a Greek, an Arab, a Persian, and a Turk. Upon reaching a small town, they decided to get something to eat. As they had limited money they had only one choice to make. Each said he had the best food in the world in mine. When asked what that was, the Persian answered “angoor,” the Greek said “staphalion,” the Arab asked for “aneb,” and the Turk demanded “üzüm.” Unable to understand one another’s language, they began to argue. (p. 204).

TT
ذات مرة كان يوجد أربعة مسافرين، يوناني وعربي وفارسي وتركي. وعندما وصلوا إلى بلدة صغيرة قرروا تناول شيء. ولمما لم يكن لديهم الكثير من النقود، لم يكن لديهم سوى خيار واحد. فقد قال كل واحد منهم إن طعامه هو أفضل طعام في العالم، وأنه يريد تناوله. ولما سئلوا عن به، أجاب الفارسي "أنغور" وقال اليوناني "سالفاليون" وقال العربي "عنب" وقال التركي "أوزوم". ولم يتمكن أحد فهم لغة الآخر، فأخذوا يتجادلون. (صفحة 329-قواعد العشق الأربعون،2012).

Here, the TT reflects the same strategy of the ST, which is foreignization. The writer intended to leave the cultural term unexplained and thus allowing a level of vagueness in translation. This example does not only illustrate a translation strategy, but also reflects how food, as an important material culture aspect, could be a point of interface between different cultures.

Despite the importance of the categorizations put forward by Newmark (1988) and Nida (1964), Hatim (2013) finds them rather ‘incomplete and certainly insufficient as a way of defining culture or accounting for the process of intercultural communication’ (p.131).

3.7 Hatim and Mason socio-textual features:

Hatim and Mason (1990) suggest an alternative model that enhances socio-cultural features. They argue that ‘cultural objects (artifacts)’ come ‘with socio-textual features (sociofacts and mentifacts), which subsume the form and the function of such macro-signs as discourse and genre’ (Hatim, 2013, p.131). In other words, we should understand the function of these objects that Hatim and Mason describe as “static” in context “when expressing an attitude or conveying a perspective or discourse” (ibid, p. 285). Based on the evaluation of functions of these objects, translators decide whether to reflect them or, perhaps, omit them if they do not add any significant value to the text. Furthermore, “cultural objects” are considered micro signs in comparison with macro signs such as genre (political speech, fairy tale, or press release), discourse (feminist, racism), and text (argument, counter-argument) (Ibid,p.285). Hatim (2013) defines these macro signs respectively as follows:

- Genre is “conventional forms of text associated with particular types of communicative events (e.g., the news report, the editorial, the cooking recipe)” (p. 287).
- Discourse is “the use of language in speech or writing to relay attitude and negotiate meaning in the light of social conventions. Discourses are mode of speaking and writing which involve participants in adopting a
particular attitude towards areas of language in social life (e.g., racist discourse, bureaucratese)” (p. 287).

3.7.1 **What are artifacts, sociofacts and mentifacts?**

According to the *Merriam Webster online dictionary* (2015), an artifact is a simple object (such as a tool or a weapon) that was made by people in the past. Something created by humans usually for a practical purpose; especially: an object remaining from a particular period as in caves containing prehistoric artifacts.

A sociofact is a construct that represents the social structure of a culture, such as tribes or families. Mentifact is the term used to describe how cultural traits, such as beliefs, values, ideas, take on a life of their own spanning over generations, and is conceivable as an object in itself (Hatim, 2013, p. 290).

Whilst adapting Hatim and Mason’s function of “Cultural Object”, one has the freedom to either foreignize or domesticate. In other words, if there is no function of the cultural objects, we domesticate and if there is a function, we foreignize. Hatim (2005) further provides an example of good domestication that can be “colorless and unemotive”. An example of a news report (genre) that is pro Turkish president’s policy is given to illustrate this point:

“The Turkish President Kenan Evren has adopted a balanced policy which involved tolerance towards the growing Islamicist movement in the country. For the first time since 1921, the “amaama” appeared in the Turkish Parliament” (Hatim, 2005, p.47)

Hatim suggests that “amaama” could be literally translated as “turban”, or a better domesticated translation as “A turbaned Muslim appeared in the Turkish Parliament” (ibid, p.48). In contrast to successful domestication, Hatim alerts us to the consequences of poorly chosen foreignization, which can backfire if it is a “blind literalism” (ibid, p.51). An example from the speech of Ayatollah Khomeini addressing the students and instructors of religious seminaries is given to explore this point: “Of course this does not mean that we should defend all clergymen. Dependent, pseudo and ossified clergy have not been, and are not, few in number” (ibid, p.51).

The speech is a through argument in its original language, Farsi, however when it is translated into English, it becomes a counter-argument as a result of foreignizing. “Of course” is usually followed by a “however” in English, while “of course” in Arabic and
Farsi is used to present a through-argument. As a result, the English reader is misled, as the true meaning of the text is not conveyed due to “blind literalism”.

Based on the above examples, we find Hatim’s model invaluable when dealing with both socio-cultural and socio-textural features in texts and through translation. The model helps the translator to understand wider implications of “cultural objects” beyond their static nature to convey ideology and attitude. It also invites the translator to think about cultures not only in terms of objects, but also in terms of text norms, what the target reader usually expects when reading a specific genre (a political speech or a news article), and how ideologies are presented in different discourses to reflect particular attitudes.

3.8 Acculturation/Transculturation

Using the terms acculturation and transculturation interchangeably, Tymoczko (2007, p. 120) defines transculturation as “the transmission of cultural characteristics from one group to another”. This definition suggests keeping alien characteristics of a text and carrying them over to the target culture despite the fact that a translator may well misunderstand what these characteristics mean in the source text.

In this regard, Lefevere (1992) uses the English translation of of Labid’s “qasidah” ‘one of the seven pre-Islamic canonized works of Arabic literature’ to show how the omission of the word “diman” (dung heap) because it is regarded “not poetic” (p.127). The German translator translated the word with a different connotation; prosperity of the farmer, while the real meaning in the ST is exactly the opposite. Lefevere suggests that these misunderstandings may lead to clashes between cultures.

Furthermore, Lefevere explains how some translators insist on keeping the exotic flavor of a text, particularly if it adds a special flavor ‘in their own universe of discourse’. However, keeping this exotic flavor depends on the ‘extent to which the foreign culture is seen central to the development of the target culture’ (ibid, p.127). Lefevere’s explanation is linked to the point discussed above about superior cultures, manipulation, and master discourses. It is a matter for the superior translating culture to decide if these exotic flavors are worth translating and whether they add any signification to its image and power.

Lefevere claims that the problem of acculturation seems to “solve itself” due to the contact between cultures in the modern times as borders between cultures become rather blurred. However, the process of acculturation may be slow, as it requires
explanation of the terms at early stages before they become familiar to the target culture. An example of this could be an introduction of food from one culture to another. For example, “pizza”, one day a newly introduced food and a foreign word, no longer requires an explanation or translation, as it underwent that familiarizing process. Tymoczko (2007) points out that as a result of transculturating Italian food in America whereby “pizza achieved its current popularity among Italian Americans in the United States earlier than in Italy itself” (p.121). If anything, pizza fans in China usually associate it with America, rather than Italy (Ibid.).

Despite the importance of transculturation in bringing cultural concepts closer, it is not the most appropriate tool to solve problems that occur during translation of cultural terms. The terms such as “Jihad” and “Jihadist” have been transculturated into English to the point where they are today always associated with negative connotations that do not infer their true and original meaning. According to Hatim, Jihad ‘has ceased to mean “holy war with swords and daggers and it continues to attract this misleading domestication’ (2005, p.54). This misleading domestication is not only a matter of strategy used for translation, but is rather a matter of manipulating a universe of discourse that goes beyond the question of foreignizing, domesticating, and transculturation.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the importance of translation as a valuable representational tool, and in most cases, as a misrepresentational and manipulative tool. Bearing in mind the intrinsic relationship between language, culture, and translation, culture and language are also representational. Strategies of cultural translation such as “domestication”, “foreignization”, and “transculturation” are discussed vis-à-vis the manner in which they are utilized by translators to conform to the norms of the master discourse of the target culture and to maintain superiority of one culture over another. Considering these findings allow for a better understanding of existing preconditions translators face when handling cultural translation. Whether to keep visible conceal or, simply, discard certain terms is, in fact, dictated by the master discourse. It could have been a simple issue if the translator was the sole party in making these decisions, but in reality, there is a network of underlying meanings, politics, ideologies and economies that makes translation a “powerful act”. The aim is to widen the perspective of looking
at cultural items as static objects, and look at what is the intention of using these items as a representation of a culture.

“Transculturation” should be encouraged to convey new concepts and images about cultures, as long as these images/terms are true representations and are not associated with negative connotations by the target culture such as the example of “Jihad”. Although “Transculturation” is a slow process, it can help in connecting the global village where different cultures could co-exist through translation while promoting and respecting the differences between them. Translation is instrumental in shaping domestic attitudes towards foreign countries, attaching esteem or stigma to specific ethnicities, races, and nationalities, and is able to foster respect for cultural difference or hatred based on ethnocentrism, racism, or patriotism” (Venuti, 1994, p. 201).

The next two chapters explore how some of the translation strategies discussed so far in this thesis and the use of language are influenced by the system of representation “a master discourse”. Examples used in the discussion are taken from the English translation of chapter 6 from Arabs from a Japanese Perspective by Notahara (2004, pp. 77-88). Chapter four presents the source and target texts and in chapter five the commentary is provided.
Chapter 4: Source Text and its Translation

In the previous chapter, translation is examined as a representational medium and how it is linked to a system of images (master discourse) that favors the portrayal of certain cultures in a particular way. A translator’s conformity to a master discourse can be detected in the set of strategies adapted and the overall approach of handling texts. This chapter provides a summary about the writer, the book, the publisher, and selected articles and book reviews about it. The chapter also includes the Arabic source text (chapter) and its English translation.

4.1 About the Author:

Nobuaki Notohara is a Japanese orientalist, a translator, and a teacher, who lived in different parts of the Arab world for forty years. He studied Arabic literature at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and later taught contemporary Arabic Literature at the same University.

His book *Arabs from a Japanese Perspective* presents his thoughts about Arabs based on his personal experiences, particularly in Egypt and Syria. The appendix of the book includes a number of interviews that the author conducted with several Arab media outlets. These interviews provide insights into his personal experience and what made him study Arabs and their culture. The author translated many books and novels from Arabic into Japanese such as:

- *Al Haram* and *Arkhas Al Lalily* by Yosif Idris (1959; 1956).
- *Six Days* by Halim Barakat (1961), which reflects the life of the Palestinians before the occupation.

Notohara comments that the number of Japanese studying Arabic at the University of Tokyo has increased, which indicates the realization of the importance of the Arab and Islamic culture in Japan. Banks and companies in Japan are competing to attract Japanese graduates who major in Arabic.

Notohara talks about his passion for Palestinian culture and translating Syrian and Egyptian literature into Japanese. Having lived in Egypt and Syria, he noticed that the governments in these countries follow and monitor closely the production of intellectuals. According to him, this situation is completely different in Japan, where
writers enjoy the freedom to say what they like without fear or threat. He is a member of a cultural group comprising five individuals that aims to introduce contemporary Arabic literature to the Japanese audience, but so far, the Japanese, in general, and publishers, in particular, have not been interested in this type of literature.

4.2 About the Book:

The Book *Arabs from a Japanese Perspective* was written in Arabic and has not been translated to other languages since its publication in 2004. In the book there is a constant comparison between Arab and Japanese cultures. The book discusses a number of issues in the Arab world, depicts various incidents, and experiences the author encountered such as:

- Rulers in the Arab World rule their entire life “immortality for leaders”. They address their nations as “brothers and sisters” to gain their trust and control them.
- “Democracy” in the Arab world is a word that is often used, but rarely applied. Self-criticism is essential in correcting mistakes. The Japanese experience with the United States particularly during WW2, is a case in point. Through self-criticism and hard work, Japan was able to overcome all the suffering caused by the war. Why don’t Arabs learn their lessons? Why Don't the Japanese Hate America (while Arabs do)?

Al-Rumayhi (2004, p.1) comments that whenever asked by his Arab friends why he does not hate the U.S. for dropping nuclear bombs on Japanese cities, Notohara answered: “We must admit our mistakes. We were imperialist; we conquered peoples and destroyed many lands – China, Korea, and Oceania. We must criticize ourselves and then correct our mistakes. As to feelings, this is a personal matter that does not build any future”.

- Vandalism in the Arab world, and how Arabs think they should damage public property as a revenge for the bad treatment they get from their governments.
- Bribery, oppression and lack of social justice in the Arab World. One of the telling passages in the book about oppression is:

القمع هو داء عُضال في المجتمع العربي، ولذلك فإن أي كاتب أو باحث يتحدث عن المجتمع العربي دون وعي هذه الحقيقة البسيطة الواضحة فإنه لا يعتبر حديثه هذا مفيدا وجديا إذ لابد من الإطلاق بداية من الإقرار بأن القمع — بكافة أشكاله— مترسخ في المجتمعات العربية. هل هناك فرد مستقل بفردية في المجتمع
“Oppression is an incurable disease in the Arab World. Any writer or researcher talking about the Arab World and does not address this simple and clear reality, is not considered in my opinion serious and his work is not useful. It should be admitted that oppression- in all kinds- is deeply rooted in the Arab societies. Is there an independent individual in the Arab World? The Arab society is busy with the idea of “the One” along similar lines to the one ruler, one value, and the only religion as so on” (my translation).

- Unlike in Japan, religion, politics and sex are taboo subjects in the Arab World.
- The hospitality and generosity of Arabs. In Japan, these values are only found in temples.
- Bedouins value and their special life and philosophy (this is the theme the chapter translated for this thesis focuses on).

4.3 The book and media coverage:

Since it was published in 2004, the book received coverage and reviews mostly in the Arab media, but very little in the Western media. The reason could be that it has not been translated into English, although it conforms to the Western images (master discourse) about Arabs.

In an interview on Al Jazeera TV channel, a discussion about the book was broadcast in 2005, as part of a TV show خير جليس (Khairu Jalees) about books. The guest speakers were Ali Muhsen Hamid, a Yemeni researcher and writer, and Rabi Al Madhoon, a Palestinian researcher and writer. Both guests agreed that the book offered a new image of Arabs removed from the common stereotypes. Ali Muhsen Hamid, finds Notahara’s views about Arabs and Badiya enlightening and unique compared to earlier views by orientalists that misrepresented Arabs, in general, and Bedouins, in particular. Hamid said:

ما كتب عن البادية هو أنا لم أقرأ كثيرا في الاستشراق لكنه كتب عن البادية العربية والبدو صورة جميلة، أشاد فيها بالبدو، أشاد فيها بالتقاليد والقيم العربية، أشاد فيها بالتوحد بين الإنسان والبيئة والصحراء، حتى وأنه أقرأ كتابه سميتة سيد كيوتو لأنه ينتقد التطور الحاصل في الدول العربية الذي سيؤدي إلى اندثار حياة البادية وحياة الصحراء، هو يرى الصحراء والبدو قيمة ثقافية متكاملة ويجب الحفاظ عليها ويبقى فيها حضارة أيضا،

(Khairu Jalees, 2005)
According to Ali Mohsin Humaid, “the little I have read of orientalism and what Notahara wrote about al badiya is simply beautiful. He praised the Bedouin, the Arab values and traditions. He also admired the union between humans, the environment and the desert. I even called him while reading the book “The master of Kyoto” as he criticizes the development of the Arab countries that leads to the extinction of life in both badiya and desert. Notahara sees the desert and the Bedouin as a comprehensive cultural value that should be maintained. Unlike other orientalists who misrepresented us badly, Notahara see Bedouin life as a civilization in its own right. (my translation)

Rabi Al Madhoon praises Notahara’s deep analysis of the reality of life in badiya. Notahara’s depiction is particularly interesting as it focuses on the intricacies of the Bedouin life and how it is viewed by a foreigner.

“(...)I believe that Notahara’s understanding of badiya is what is important, regardless of whether or not humans actually live there. His analysis is very deep, and this is the first time I read something like this. We all know the Bedouin life, but to read this detailed analysis of all its terms, traditions, how and why it evolved, extracting these relationships from nature, and the relationship of the Bedouin with nature was something entirely different and interesting” (my translation).

In a book review, Haiyan Khaiyat (2013) explains how as an expert in contemporary Arabic literature, Notahara utilized literature to understand the Arab way of life through two main components: the Palestinian cause and the Bedouin Life. Notahara considers Ghassan Kanafani, the Palestinian writer, his intellectual mentor when it comes to the Palestinian cause. And while he deeply sympathizes with the Palestinian people and what they went and are still going through under the Israeli occupation, he takes a neutral position that does not promote any hatred for the Jewish people, but attempts to find a solution for the current Palestinian problem.

(Khayat, 2013)
Furthermore, Notahara expresses his admiration of life in the badiya as he lived there for a long time. He attempts to change the stereotypical images created by the Western media about this special culture.

"وهو بكتابته عن البدو يحاول أن يغير الصورة النمطية التي كونها الإعلام الغربي عن هذه الثقافة الخاصة، ومصدره هو الاحتكاك المباشر بعالم البداوة أولاً، وما كتبه الأديب إبراهيم الكوني في وصف البداية ثانياً". (ibid, 2013)

4.4 About the Publisher:

Manshurat al-Jamal was established in 1983 in Beirut, Lebanon, by the Iraqi poet Khaled Al Maalyi. The headquarters is in the city of Koln (Cologne), Germany, and a branch was opened in Baghdad in 2005. It started as a small publishing house, but grew steadily through a careful selection of particular works in literature, philosophy and heritage. It became one of the best Arab publishing houses. Its aim is to explore old Arabic works that raise important questions about culture and society at a time when corruption and tyranny rule supreme in the Arab World.

Manshurat al-Jamal is also known for commissioning the translation of literature from foreign languages (German, Russian, French, English) into Arabic. Some of the most recently published works are:

- **When Nietzsche Wept** (عندما بكى نيتشه) by Irvin D. Yalom, translated by Khaled Al Jubaily, 2015
- **Prayers for the Stolen** (صلاة لأجل المفقودات) by Jennifer Clement, translated by Abeer Meri, 2015
4.5 The Source Text

ما تعلمت من ثقافة البدو

ذكرت منذ البداية أنني فقدت اهتمامي بثقافة المدينة وثقافة المستقرتين واتجهت إلى ثقافة البدو. لقد تعلمت من ثقافة البدو أشياء كثيرة كانت جديدة وفريدة بالنسبة لي لذلك لا بد أن أوضح موقف قليلاً: لم أذهب إلى الصحراء وادب الصحراء العربية بحثا عن الغرابة بل ذهببت باحثاً عن المعنى، ومن البداية حاولت أن أدخل إلى ثقافة البداوة بلا أفكار مضربة جاهزة. اذا أعرف كيف صور بعض المستشرقين الغربيين الحياة في البادية، وأعرف أيضا الصورة السطحية العدوانية التي تقدمها السينما العالمية عن العرب، ولذلك كنت حذراً من الأعلانات الدجالة التي يتناولها الناس عن الحياة العربية. لقد عرفت حياة الفلاحين في مصر، وعرفت الحياة في القاهرة لذلك اكتشفت في وقت مبكر مدى التضليل الذي مارسه الإعلام الغربي ضد العرب. ليست حياة البدو بالنسبة لي موضوعاً سياحياً ولا ترفاً. إن اهتمامي بثقافة المكان الصحراوي هو في صميمه بحث عن الجوهري أو بحث عن الحقيقة. نحن غارقو في ثقافة الاستقرار ومنغلقون تجاه الثقافات التي لا تشبه ثقافتنا ولذلك فنحن لا نعرف الآخر معرفة صحيحة هذه الحقيقة أراها في كل مكان في اليابان وأوروبا والبلدان العربية أيضاً. إن العالم المتقدم صناعياً ينظر بتعامل ثقافي إلى ثقافات الشعوب المتخلفة صناعياً. وحتى في البلدان العربية - بكل أسف - ينظر بعض المثقفين - إن لم أقل معظمهم - بتعامل إلى ثقافة البدو. المدينون عموماً يجهلون ما عدا ثقافة الاستقرار. ولذلك كله أقدم هنا بعضما مما تعلمته من البدو لعله يعد من يشاركني فيه ولو من بعيد.

من هم البدو؟

عندما أتكلم عن البدو فانني أبدا دائما - في عقلي- بالمقارنة مع حياة
اليابانيين وحياة الفلاحين في مصر بصورة خاصة. البدو كما هو شائع، أهل الوراء، أما المستقرون فهم أهل المدر. وحياة البدو تتم في البادية وهذا ما يدعى بداية، أي ان الفرد يعرض نفسه للطبيعة بلا غطاء! وكما هو معروف يسكن البدو في الخيمة والخيمة ليست حاجزا بينه وبين الطبيعة. والبدو ينتقد الفلاحين وسكان المدن ويسخر منهم ويعتبرهم جبناء – يحتمون بالجردان والأبواب المغلقة. أي يحتمون بالأشجار والخشب بينما البدو يحيا بلا حماية سوى شجاعته وصลาيته. فهؤلاء يستقر في مكان من جهة وهو يقف أمام الطبيعة وجها لوجه بلا حواجز. فانتقلت النقطتان جويريتان في حياة البدو. والطبيعة حيث يعيش البدو فيانية للغاية، لذلك هجرها معظم بني البشر لأنها غير مناسبة لحياء الإنسان المؤمن بالاستقرار والراحة. ولكن البدو اختاروا هذا المكان واصروا على الحياة فيه، وقدموا ويقدمون باستمرار التضحيات المتواصلة على هذا الاختيار.

من المعروف أن البدو يهجرون دائما بحثا عن الماء والعشب. فالعشب مهم جدا لانه مصدر الحياة بالنسبة للبدو. والمهم في ذلك فيما ارى – ان تلك الحياة رسخت عند البدو الشعور بعدم ضرورة الملكية. ان التنقل الدائم يفرض على الفرد أن يحتفظ بما هو ثمين واساسي لحياته وذلك فان شؤون الملكية ضعيف عند البدو، او فلا يبق بعدة اخرى ان البدو لا يبايعون تماما باي ملكوا. يقال ان الحاجة للانتقال موجودة في دم البدو. ولذلك كان لا بد ان يرسخ ذلك كله في حياتهم الروحية. لقد حصلوا على روحهم البداعية الخاصة من خلال تجربة الحياة في المكان الصحرائى.

حياة البدو مكتملة؟ لماذا لا يطور البدو حياتهم؟ لأنهم يعتقدون انها مكتملة لا ينقصها شيء. اضافة الى ذلك يمكنه تنازل أو انتقاص من حياتهم وسماوهم ذلك باختصار شديد.

الطعام عند البدو بسيط للغاية وكونه وسيلة لاستمرار الحياة. فليس فيه أي

78

38
مظاهر للترف، أو الاستمتاع أو الهدر. والطعام نوعان: اليومي العادي والوليمة. فالطعام العادي عبارة عن خياء الصباح، واللبس فقط، والعيش لا يأكله الإنسان مباشرة. إنه يتحول إلى لين. في هذه الحياة البسيطة حكمة عميقة حيث يحقق الإنسان كل ما يحتاجه. أما وليمة - المنصف فإنها لديها بشكل يفوق تصوير اليابانيين على الأقل.

لقد عرفت ذلك من مشاكلة البيوت في طعامهم. ومن المهم هنا أن نذكر طريقة البذري في تناول طعامه: إنه يأكل بصمت وبسرعة كبيرة ولا توقف. وما يجد الاستشارة إليه هو أن مكان تناول الطعام ليس مكاناً اجتماعياً للحديث والمسمارة كما هو الأمر في المدن اليابانية أو العربية. إن الأكلة عملية مقدسة للبذري - فيما اقترح- لأنه يضمن استمرار الحياة. المنصف لا يُقدم إلا في مناسبات: قدوم ضيف، أو الاحتفال بعيد أو مناسبات خاصة. ذلك أن المنصف نفسه يستهلك جزءاً من مال المضيف المحدد.

أما بالنسبة للملابس هناك العبارة المشهورة والعملية للغاية فيحياة كحياة البذري. في الشتاء يرتدي البذري الفروة تحت العباءة وكلاهما تحمي الإنسان من المروة عندما يُضرب لأن نام في عراء الصحراء حتى عندما يكون البرد في أعلى درجاته. ذلك اللباس العلوي البسيط ينطوي على ثقافة روحية عميقة وعلى رضا داخلي لا يضاهى.

يقال الخيمة بيت كبير والعباءة بيت صغير. في الشتاء يسكن البذري خيمة مصنوعة من الزور وله الصيف يسكن في خيمة مصنوعة من القطن. وتلك الخيمة الشتوية تحمي البذري من المروة والهواء بشكل كامل وحماية على ذلك فان شكلها البسيط جميل ومريح ولا يحتاج إلى أي ستر أو زينة، واخمن أن جمال الخيمة يكمن في الجانب العلوي منها وفي البساطة الرائعة أيضاً.

الحياة البذريه نمطية، ولذلك تُجرز وتتم على نحو بسيط وعملي ومشابه. فالناس جميعاً يرتدون الملابس نفسها ويأكلون الطعام نفسه ويسكنون الخيام.
ولا يوجد حتى لشخص واحد يُصرف بصورة تخلف السلوك العام للبذري.
تلك الحياة البسيطة في الطعام والسكن واللباس يعتبرها البدو حياة كاملة مكتملة لا تحتاج لأن يغيرها من قبل شعرة. من المدهش للمراقب المتمنين أن البدو لا يطلب الأدوات التي توفر له الراحة. ففي الحالة تعتبر الناس الذين لا يحاولون البحث عن التقدم والتطور في أساليب حياتهم تعتبرهم كسائل أو متخلفين، أي نعتهم بصفات سلبية ولكن الذي يحدث أحيانا أن الناس يبحثون عن الأشياء بلا حدود وأو لكن الذين يبحثون وراء الحاجات الاستهلاكية يفقدون القدرة على رؤية المعنى الحقيقي والفعال للأشياء نفسها، ولكن ذلك لا يعنينا ذلك النوع بما يملكون رغم ضخامتهم. وعندما نراقب ذلك بعناية لا يد ان ننساء، لقد أحدث الإنسان نفسه بالقوة أكثر مما هو ضروري، وأكثر مما ينبغي، لا يعني ذلك أن الإنسان يعاني في فهم جوهر العلاقة مع الأشياء، إن حياة البدو تبدو لنا في الغالب في الحياة الاستهلاكية وتفتح عيوننا على ضرورة مراجعة حياتنا وعلى ضرورة النظر بعقل نافذ متسائل في أساليب العيش التي تسيطر على مجتمعنا. أسارع فائق، لقد أضاف البدو في استخدامهم أدوات هم من خارج الحياة البدوية. وبصورة خاصة البندقية والسرعة، البندقية تحل مكان السيف والرمح والسيارة تغني عن الجميل. هل اختارها البدو كأداة عمل زمنية للحفاظ على الحياة؟ ربما كانت المسألة أبعد من مظهرها البسيط. ولكن لا أريد أن أتكلم كمجرد أو كبيولوجي. انتهى الحديث عن الثفقة كمنظمة في متكاملة.

وهذا بدوره يقودني إلى الحديث عن الشخصية البدوية.

الشخصية البدوية:

كتب الباحث الكبير جمال حمدان في كتابه الرائع "شخصية مصر البدوي" يختلف عن المستتر وراء الجدران والأبواب. فالبدو يواجه الطبيعة مباشرة ويتصور بها بلا انقطاع. من هذه المواجهة وهذا الاتصال تكونت شخصيته الفريدة. لقد استيقظت حساس البدو، كان لا بد أن يكون حساس البدو صلبا وقويا. بالإضافة إلى الاحساس القوي، احتاج البدو إلى الصبر. ولكن الصبر
الذي يحتاجه هو غير الذي نعرفه نحن المستقرين. إنه صبر يتجاوز حدود صبرنا ونعتنا، صبر تجاه الطبيعة وهو مع ذلك - غير منطقى. من تجربتي المتواضعة في الحياة مع البدو عرفت أنني - أنا الذي تربيت في حضارة الاستقرار - لا أملك قوة الصبر مثل البدو. كمثال بسيط للغاية فانا لا أستطيع أن أجلس في الخيمة نهارا وأنتظر غروب الشمس كي تبرد الأرض بعد ساعات ويبث الشمس المنعشة ولكن البدو يستطيعون. أن مثالاً بسيطاً كهذا يقودنا على القوس إلى الثقافة والصناعة بصورة خاصة، فالصناعة قدمت لنا منتجات تجمنا من الطبيعة ومبتعدنا بعيداً عن الأشياء المزعجة وذلك عندما نتكلم عن الاحساس في اليابان مثلًا فاننا نتحدث عن رقة الاحساس ولكن أفرز المكان الصحرائي تدور رقة الاحساس هذه عند الإنسان.

في الجزء الأول من خمسة أدنى الفلك يثبت لنا عبد الرحمن منيف شخيصية فريدة هي متعاب الهدار الذي يمثل البدوي النموذجي: متعاب الهدار يتمتع بصبر رائع ولكن يتوسل إلى الله لكي يعطيه أكثر. عندنن تطبيق أن يحصل على مكان حيث يتقبل الحياة وحيداً بعيداً عن تدخل الآخرين.

كما يختلف مفهوم الصبر عند البدو عن مفهوماً فان مفهوم الخير أيضاً يختلف. فالخير عند البدو يعني المطر، فالمطر هو الأمية القرصية للبدو لأنه يعيد وفرة الأعشاب. نحن نفهم أن يعتمد البشر على إرادة الله فيما يخص المطر ولكن لماذا يطلب البشر من الله أن يمنحهم مزيداً من الصبر؟ هذه النقطة بدأ من يختلف جداً عن تفكيرنا نحن اليونانيين أو الشروتيني في اليابان. فالمسولون بهذا المعنى يطلبون من الله الصبر لكي يحققوا أقصى نتائج الجهد، بهذه الطريقة يمكننا أن نفهم الاعتقاد الإسلامي التي تختلف عن أفكارنا في اليابان على سبيل المثال.

هناك مسألتان مهمتان لمن يعيش في الصحراوات الأولى هي الصبر، والثانية هي الحيلة. الحيلة مهمة للغاية في ظروف حياة كهذه. والحيلة هنا معناها الترتيب والتدبير والتطبيق. مرة أخرى ساحر مثالاً بسيطاً للغاية: البدوي ليس العقلي.
لكي يثبت الكوفية على رأسه، ولكنه يستخدمه في ظروف تفرض عليه لاغراض أخرى، فالبدو قد يربط الجيل بالعقال، وقد يستخدمه حيلا طويلا لرفع الماء من البئر حين لا يوجد حيلا والحياة بالنسبة للبدو هي ان يتدير القليل الذي يتوفر له لمواجهة مشاكله الطارئة، أما نحن اليابانيين فعلي العكس من ذلك نجد الكثير من المؤسسات الخاصة التي تستخدم خبراء ليقدموا لنا "الجيلة" عندما نحتاج بدلا من أن نتدربها بانفسنا.

ما تعلمت من البدو الذين يضطرون او يختارون العيش في ظروف جغرافية حيث تكون الموارد المتوقعة قليلة، وحيث ينفقون حاجات كبيرة، اولئك لا بد ان يختاروا أساليب حياة تناسب مع ظروفهم تلك. وعلى العكس من ذلك فان المستقرنين يبحثون دائما عن بدائل جديدة وهم يبحثون حقيقة عن الترف. لقد أكد عدد من المفكرين والكتاب العرب على أن البدو يعتمدون بالحاجات الأساسية الضرورية، ونحن نعرف جميعا نظرية "أبن خلدون" في دورة حياة الدولة، ونعرف أراءه العميقة في البداوة.

في أعمال إبراهيم الكوني نجد صورا واقعية متنوعة عن شئف الحياة في الصحراء. فعندما يستمر الملح (الجفاف بضع سنوات فان الاكتمام - على سبيل المثال - تأكل مرة ثانية البذور التي طرحتها في سنوات سابقة عندما كانت الاعشاب متوقعة، وفي مثال آخر يقدمه الكوني نرى صحراء يشوي حذاءه وياكله وحادة كهذه ليست نادرة في الصحراة خاصة في سنوات الملح. والامر من ذلك ان سيدن من الطرائق في قمة الجوع يجمعون رؤوس الغنم ويفسله وياخذن الحروب غير المهدومة لكي يجددوا من جديد ياكلها البشرا; هكذا تهدى الصحراة ساكنيها بالجوع النهائي. ولكن الإنسان تحت ضغط الحاجة القاتلة يكتشفمعنى الجودي للاضائع والمفعول الحقيقي للبقاء. يكتشف قيمة فنجان ماء او قطعة خبز لحفظة على الحياة يوما آخر، انهم بدلا وليسوا مستقرين.
ليمكوا دائماً فائضًا يحتفظون به. ومن السخريّة أن الذين يملكون ما يزيد عن حاجاتهم يبحثون عن الفائض أكثر وافتكرون، ويتركون مساحة بينهم وبين الآخرين الذي ينافسونهم في تكديس الثروات. وهكذا تصبح الروابط اضعف فاضع وينخفض حجم الصلات الإنسانية فيما بينهم. ولكن البدوي في حالة الفاقة القصوى يقترب من المعنى الجوهري للأشياء دون أن يضر نفسه، ودون أن يفقد روابطه بالآخرين مثل المستقرين.

المستقرون يبحثون عن الكمية والبدوي يبحثون عن الكيفية. البدوي سائل كيف? والمستقر يسأل كم؟ وبناء على طبيعة السؤال الاهتمام مختلف الأهداف والغايات.

في القرآن الكريم تنص الآية "وجعلنا من الماء كل شيء حي"، أي كل شيء فيه. حياة يولد من الماء، والبدو هو أكثر من بدرك هذه الحقيقة ادراكًا حقيقية عميقًا.

ورغم شفط العيش، وشع الماء، فإن البدوي يقدم الضيافة لمن يحتاج، أي أنه يرحّب باقتراب الآخرين منه على العكس من المستقر الذي يبعد نفسه عن الآخرين والبدوي يهمه جدا ويرضيه ان يصب الآخرون بالكرم. فالكرم بهذا المعنى دعوة مفتوحة للعلاقات الصحيحة مع الآخر، وترحب صار بالتواصل فيه الآخر، وبهذا المعنى ليس أثانية على العكس من المستقر الذي يحرص استعمال ثروته بنفسه فقط، وهو لذلك يبعد عن الآخرين.

عندما نسأل البدوي: ماذا تفعل عندما تفقد كل شيء؟ فإنه يقوم جوايا صريحة واضحة: اعتمد على الصبر. نحن نجد مفهوم الكرامة عن العرب بعامة. ولكننا نراه في اشكال متعددة وعملية عند البدوي، نراه في هموم الشرف، واخلق البدوي في الضيافة والفكر وحب الأهالي ذات إشراف الشجاعة وفي تجنب العزلة وغيرها من مظاهر الاخلال البدوية، لذلك ليس عند البدوي اسرار ليكتهما، ويضيفها على البدوي الأخرين فكل شيء معروف من قبل الجميع واكاد أجزم ان البدو ليس عندهم اهتمام جدي بالخصوصية السرية.

استمرد قليلا واضيف من تجريبي في البادية السورية. في العلاقة مع الآخر
يبدو الكرم أكثر أهمية وتصبح الضيافة دعوة مفتوحة للتواصل. منذ عشر سنوات، أنا أعرف أبا عبد الله من بني خالد، ولقد اكتشفت عبر هذه المعاشرة الطويلة أن البشر لا يختارون ضيوفهم مثلنا نحن المستقلين. البدر يستقبل الجميع بلا تمييز، أي أنهم يقدمون الضيافة من أجل الضيافة ليحققوها في الممارسة روح الضيافة. لقد وجدت في كلمة "الكرم" معنى; العطاء والبنية، فالكرم نبيل أيضا. لكي يكون البدر كريما فان عليه أن يتصرف بتساقطا، من الصعب على البدر أن يمنع نفسه عن ممارسة الكرم. وفهمت أيضا الكرم نقيض البخل. في اليابان نستخدم كلمة البخل بين الاصدقاء بصورة عادية وأحيانا إيجابية، أي بمعنى اقتصادي تحديدًا، ولا تجعلها معنى سلبيا، أما عند البدر فإن البخل ليس فيه أي معنى إيجابي على الإطلاق.

لقد اكتشفت أن لدي البدر ميولاً لكي يواجه قضايا أكبر منه. فعلى سبيل المثال، الفلاحون في مصر يحافظون على حياتهم. لا يضحوون بانفسهم إلا في حالات شديدة الخصوصية وهي يثقون أنهم إذا حافظوا على حياتهم فأنهم سيحصلون على أفضل النتائج. لقد اكتشفت أن البدر يتحذى ما هو فوق قدرته ويعرض حياته للخطر ويضحي في سبيل ما يعتقد أن المثل الآلى بكلمات أخرى البدر لا يصير على حماية حياته عندما يواجه خطرًا والسبب في ذلك شعوره ومبادئه وذلك يقدر البدر هذه السلوك تقديراً كبيراً ومن لا يندفع في مواجهة الخطر يحكم عليه البدر بأنه جبان ويختبئ بختم جبان والبدر يخشي دائمًا أن ينعت بصفة جبان.

من الظريف أننا نجد أحيانا في المدينة بدوا، اعني أفراداً اخلاقهم كما لاحظ البدر يتباهون بالشجاعة وينفرون من الجبن كأنهم طاعون قاتل وبالطبع نجد بين البدر من اخلاقه كأخلاق أهل المدن. أذكر هنا على سبيل الدعابة الغريبة حادثة صغيرة مع الكاتب المغربي المعروف "محمد شكري" أني أقدره واحترمه واجبه وهو يعرف ذلك جيداً. محمد شكري يعيش في طنجة وكان يحب سيدة اتكليزية تدير مطعمها، وكتنا دائمًا نزور ذلك المطعم وفي كل مرة كان يحمل باقية من الورد
لتلك السيدة دون أن يصرح لها مباشرة بانه يحبها. اذكر كنا نجلس في مقهى
باريس نتحدث عن حبه هذا وعلقت مازحا انت لا تصالحها لأنك جبان. انتفض
محمد شكري كمن أصابه بركان وقف في فجأة وقال لي: إن ضباب ما بعد غضب: انا
جبان؟ لقد صعقني رده فعله لاتني لم اتوقع ان تجرحه الكلمة الى هذا الحد. كان
يرتجف كلا لقد تغيرت ملامحه وظهر بريق غريب في عينيه وندت رحت أوضع له
قصدي بهدؤ ولفظي لقد احتته نصف ساعة تماما لاحتبس ان الأمر بكامله دعاية
والطبع لم تظهر تلك الحادثة الصغيرة على صداقتنا. محمد شكري بهذا المعنى
الأخلاقي كان بدوره ينفر من صفته جبان.

من تجربتي في البادية عرفت معاناة الضجر والملل. وعرفت مرارة مورر
الوقت الفارغ الا من الجوسيو والانتظار. البدو عندهم واعي خاص بهم لمجرى
الوقت، إنه مفهوم مختلف عن الساعة اليومية السريعة وهكذا، إنه سيضيعون في
ديومهم وقتهم الخاص حيث تنمو الأفكار وترعرع الأخلاق. عندما يقيم مدني مع
البدو وهو يحمل معه وبسطته للزمان فانه سيجد نفسه فقلا وسبيطاعف قلبه مع
مرور الوقت. البدو يجبر القهوة او الشاي ويتمتع بالحديث دون ان يشعر
مثلنا بالقلق بسبب مرور الوقت البطيء. وتلك الحبكة تتكرر بانتظام دون أي تغيير
نذكر من الخارج. ولكن الغريب في ذلك بالنسبة لي هو أن البدو يعيش كل يوم
كيوم جديد ولكني نفهم هذه النقطة، علينا ان نفهم دور الطبيعة أولا لكي ندرك هذا
السر في حياة البدو. نحن المدنيين عندما نزور البادية تحكم عليها من الخارج
حسب وجهات نظرنا الخاصة من حيث هو زيارة. أو غير مربية ولكننا لن
نستطيع أن نفهم البدو على هذا الاساس. البدو يعتبرون ارض البادية ضمانته
لحياتهم بصورة أساسية ونهائية. نحن نعرف الطبيعة الصحراوية تعرض البدو
للعجاج والجفاف والصهيد والبرد القاس. ولكنهم اختاروا البادية بلا اكراه،
فلاد أن يكون لديهم شيء خاص يدفعهم ليواجهوا الطبيعة، ويتحدثوا ويتحملوا
ظروفها في كل الأوقات. ولان البدو يتحدثون قسوة الطبيعة باستمرار فانهم لا
ينحرعون أخلاقيا بل يحافظون بقوة على قيمهم ومبادئهم. تبدو حياة البدو من
الخارج رتبة مستقرة ولكن البدوي مستنزف دائمًا، إنه في حالة الحراسة المستمرة كجند لا يتوقف المعركة ولكن معركة البدوي الأساسية مع الطبيعة.
 البدو متورطون في جميع الأحوال رغم أن حياتهم تستمر أياً بل ا本领وود ولكنهم روحياً لا يرسلون من التوتر النفسي، ولا يبحثون عن وسائل للسلبية للقتل الوقت. نحن في المدينة نحت ذا لئا عن السلبية المؤقتة لنهب من الضجر، ورغم كل جهودنا فانيا لا نستطيع التخلص من الضجر والملل. في هذه النقطة تتشابه حياتنا مع حياة البدو الرتبة، فالراحة التي تشكل صفة أساسية لحياة المستقرين تؤدي إلى التراث والكل ومن التراث يتولد الحياة الرخوة، أن هذه المسئالية ستكون واضحة بالمقارنة مع الحياة البدوية.

المستقر والبدوي ظلمان: المستقر سلم نفسه للآخرين لحمايته، ورضي أن يعيش تحت حماية سلطة الشرطة وسلطة الدولة لذلك فهو مخلوط من السلطة ومن قوة السلطة أما البدوي فقد حرر نفسه من السلطة البشرية ولكنه قبل أن يتطلبه الطبيعة. فعندما نزور البادية في سنوات المحل نعرف إلى أي الدرجات وصلت قوة الطبيعة، ووصل ظلم الطبيعة. وعندما يستمر المخل في سنوات فان البدو ينفرعون واحيانا يترك بعضهم حياة البداوة ويهبطون إلى المدينة لمواجهة نتائج سئية لأنه لا يملك القدرة التي يتكييف مع حياة الاستقرار، ولكن البدو عموماً يتحملون تلك الظروف القاسية ويعدون انفسهم روحياً ويتمكرون بعقولهم أكثر وأكثر، ولذلك يقال: الصحراء علمت البدو الترجم. إن قسوة الطبيعة توقظ العقيدة في نفس البدو، لقد رأيت صديقي إباه عبد الله يصلى الأوقات الخمسة كل يوم بعد سنوات من الجفاف والمحل من ذلك وكلهم فهم أن الطبيعة يمكن أن تدمر الإنسان ماديا ولكنها لا تستطيع أن تحتضن اخلاءه! إذا كان بدورنا حقيقة.

إذا أردنا ان نصف الصحراء، بكلمة واحدة تميزها قلنا: المطلق. لذلك البدو لا يعرف التسوية أو الوسطية فلا بد أن يكون مرتباً في تحمل وفي صبره وفي اخلائه. لا بد أن يكون اختياراً أن يمارس وجوده حتى النهاية أو ينسحب نهائياً ولا وسط في الاختيار. البدو يحترون القوة ولكن القوة هنا هي قوة الله أولا ثم قوة
البدوي نفسه. البدوي يفخري بقوته وحياته نفسها هي إعلان عن قوته. وفي الوقت نفسه فإن الشعر بالانتماء للعشيرة قوي كما هو معروف. لقد اختفى الغزو من البادية لأسباب كثيرة لست في مجال مناقشتنا، ولقد اختفى القسم الأكبر من مظاهر الفروسية ولكن المواجهة مع الطبيعة ما زالت هي.

البدوي في خي mexhe عليه وأحيانًا: استقبال الضيوف باردته ورد الأعداء، والذي لا يستطيع أن يرد عليه ويهجم على خيمه. يعتبر مبتذلا عند البدو ويفقد صفته كرب أسرة، وصاحب بيت. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك لدى البدو مفهوم الدخالة والجوار، أي قبول من يدخل تحت حماية البدوي واستقبال الآخر كجار مسؤول عن جبهته، هنا يكون الاختيار واضحًا باردادة صاحب الخيمة. وفي هذه النقطة بالذات نتعلم من شئين مهما وفريدًا من ثقافات أخرى مختلفة عن ثقافتنا.

البدو هم مطلومون ولكنهم اختاروا الصحراء، وتحتوا الطبيعة فازدهاد قوتهم روحيًا وجسديًا. الهجرة الدائمة في دمائهم ولكنهم تعلموا من الصحراء كم الإنسان صغير وضعيف وتعلموا منها أيضًا الاعتقاد بقوة وطاقة فوق قوة البشر. عقائدهم ببساطة ثقة وحماسية. لا يسعون وراء الخذلان ولا ينمون فيهم في المملكةة. فقد علمهم الجفاف أن المملكةة قضية فارغة وتعلموا من الطبيعة أيضاً لا يهتموا بالحاجات، عندهم الباهت والعش والدار ملكية عامة لأنها ملك الله، تلك جزئية منتشرة في البادية والمهم هو حق الاستخدام وليس الملكية: من يستخدم ومتى يستخدم؟ متى يستخدم بالحاجات ضرورية ولا يدخرون أشياء كثيرة. وعندما يواجهون الحاجة الملحمة يتغلبون عليها بالصبر. يردون العدوان ويستقبلون الضيوف هم خشون وبريون وانفعاليون. دائماً يفكون بالمثل الأعلى ويستجيبون للجواب ويضمنون أنفسهم عندما يدعومهم داعي المثل الأعلى. قبلاً نزلة المثالية، ويراعون حرمة الجار. يحترمون شجرة النسب ويميزون أنفسهم بالانتماء إلى أسرهم. وليس معنا الانتهاك عندهم مسافة تاريخية، يحترون الأعمال البدوية والحرف العملية كالزراعة مثلاً ولكنهم...
يقدرون التجارة ويمارسونها في قوافل. لهم كبرياً، وهم يقدرونها كصفة إيجابية يستجيبون ثقائياً لموح ما يعتبرونه عاراً. وعي الشرف عقيدة عنهم ولكنهم قابلون بحياتهم وبيئتهم ومبادئهم قبولاً كاملاً مكتملاً. إنهم البدو ثقافة أخرى فريدة وعالية.
What I learned from Bedouin Culture

I mentioned earlier in this book that I lost interest in city life and the culture of settled people. Instead, I became interested in Bedouin culture. I learnt many interesting things from this culture. But first I wish to clarify my position: I did not set out to explore the Arabian desert and its literature for exotic purposes, but to search for meaning.

In the desert, I tried to understand Bedouin culture without any preconceptions or stereotypes. I know how some Western orientalists represented life in the badiya, and I know the aggressive and superficial images depicted in contemporary cinema about Arabs. So, I was cautious not to fall in the trap of these false images that Westerners have about Arabs.

I got to know the life of peasants in the Egyptian countryside and in Cairo, and discovered quickly how misleading the Western media is regarding to Arabs.

For me, Bedouin life is not for tourism or luxury. My interest in the culture of the desert is, at its core, a search for the essence or for the truth of the matter.

We are deeply immersed in our own stable culture and are close-minded towards other cultures that do not resemble ours. So, we do not know or correctly understand other cultures. This is a fact that I find everywhere in Japan, Europe and in the Arab countries as well.

The advanced industrial world looks with cultural superiority at cultures of nations that are industrially undeveloped. Even in the Arab countries, unfortunately, some of the intellectuals or most of them look with superiority over the Bedouin culture.

In general, people who live in the city are ignorant of all else except for the culture of their city. I present here some of what I learned from the Bedouins, hoping that somebody will likewise have an interest in it.

Who are the Bedouins?

When I think of the Bedouins, I often compare them with the peasants in Japan and specifically in Egypt.

The Bedouins are people who live in tents made of animal skin, whereas settled people are those who live in houses. Bedouins live in the badiya, also known as badawa, which means that the individual is fully exposed to nature and its elements. A Bedouin
lives in a tent, and as such there is no barrier between him and nature. The Bedouin criticizes peasants and city dwellers, mocks them and considers them cowards because they seek shelter behind walls and locked doors. While they hide behind trees and wood, the Bedouin lives without protection, except for his courage and tenacity. He never settles down and chooses to face nature with no barriers at all. These are the two crucial points about Bedouin life.

The environment where the Bedouins live is extremely harsh. It was abandoned by most human beings, as it is not suitable for those who believe in stability and comfort. Bedouins chose this harsh environment and insisted on living there. They sacrificed a great deal and continue to sacrifice to preserve their life style.

Bedouins are constantly on the move in search for water and pasture. Pasture is very important; it is the source of life for Bedouins. I believe this type of life instilled in Bedouins the sense of non-posssession.

Moving continuously from one place to another, Bedouins are forced to keep only what is precious, basic, and essential for their life. Hence, the idea of possession is weak for the Bedouins. Bedouins do not care to own. It is said that the need to constantly move is in their genes. This must have been deeply rooted in their spiritual life; they owe their spiritual creativity to living in the desert.

**Bedouins life is complete and comprehensive**

Why don’t Bedouins improve their life?

Bedouins believe that their life is complete and that any addition would be a distortion. I will explain this briefly. The food of Bedouins is very simple; it is a means to sustain life. It does not reflect any luxury or boastfulness. Bedouins have two kinds of food: the ordinary daily food and the feast. Ordinary food consists of homemade bread and yogurt. Bedouins would eat herbs mixed with yogurt. There is a deep wisdom in this simple life where humans only need to fulfill their needs. The most delicious food is the feast – mansaf\(^1\), which may be above all expectations of the Japanese.

I learnt this from sharing food with Bedouins and it is important to mention how a Bedouin eats. He eats quietly and quickly. The place where Bedouins eat is not a place for socializing and chatting, as in Japanese or Arab cities.

\(^1\) Meat, rice, and bread with yogurt
Eating for Bedouins is a holy or sacred process, as I see it, because it ensures continuation of life. Since preparing mansaf consumes a significant part of a host’s limited money, feasts are only offered during special occasions, such as receiving visitors, or celebrating Eid.

As for clothes, the abaya\(^2\) is the famous and practical dress for Bedouins. In winter, the Bedouin puts on fur underneath the abaya to protect him from freezing to death during the desert-freezing temperatures.

This kind of practical and simple clothing signals a deeply spiritual culture and an inimitable inner satisfaction (or peace of mind). It is said that the tent is a big house and the abaya is a small house. In the wintertime, the Bedouin lives in a tent made of animal skin, while in the summer, he lives in a cotton tent. The former offers complete protection from the wind and rain. In addition, its simple shape is beautiful, neat, and does not need any ornaments or decoration. I believe that the beauty of the tent lies in its practicality and in its wonderful simplicity.

The nomadic life is typical. It is accomplished in a simple, practical and repeated manner. All Bedouins wear the same clothing, eat the same food, live in tents, and no one opposes the general behavior of Bedouins.

Bedouins consider this simple life of eating, living and clothing complete and compressive; a life that does not require any change, not even the slightest.

It is astonishing for the civilized observer to realize that the Bedouin does not ask for any means of comfort. Usually, we consider people who do not seek modernity and development in their lifestyle to be lazy or backward, and we may even attach negative attributes to them. But the reality is that sometimes people seek to obtain things without limits, and that those seeking consumable goods, lose the ability of realizing the true meaning of these consumables. So, these people are never content with what they have despite owning quite a lot of worldly goods. When can thus make the following observation: Humans tend to want more than what they require or actually need. Does not this mean that humans have lost the meaning of the essence of their relationship with nature? The Bedouins' life warns us, those who are buried in their consumer-centered life to open our eyes to the necessity of revising critically our ways and the need to consider our means of living which controls our societies.

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\(^2\) Cloak
The Bedouins used additional tools, which were unfamiliar in the traditional Bedouins’ life, especially the rifle and the car. The gun replaced the sword and spear, and the car replaced the camel. Did the Bedouins choose these practical tools to maintain life?

Perhaps, this is not as simple as it may appear to be. But I do not wish to speak as a historian nor as an anthropologist. I am talking about culture as an integrated and comprehensive system of values. This, in turn, leads me to talk about the character of the Bedouin.

**The Character of the Bedouin**

Jamal Hamdan, the renowned researcher, wrote in his wonderful book, The Character of Egypt:

“The Bedouin is different from the individual who hides behind walls and doors. The Bedouin is directly continuously confronted with nature. The Bedouin’s unique character emerged from this confrontation and contact.

His feelings were awakened. It was inevitable for the Bedouin to possess a strong and tough character accompanied by patience. But the patience he needs is different from what we, “the dwellers”, call patience.

It is a patience that goes beyond the limits of our ability; it is a patience with nature. It is, however, illogical.

Throughout my humble experience with Bedouins, I realized that I, who was brought up in the civilization of stability, do not have the power of patience the Bedouins have. An example of this would simply be that I cannot be in the tent for a whole day waiting for sunset for the ground to become cold and for fresh breeze. But, Bedouins can. This simple example leads us directly to the issues of culture and industry, in particular. Industry provided us with products that protect us from nature and products that keep us away from annoying objects. When we talk about sense in Japan, for example, we mean tenderness, but the harsh circumstances in the desert destroy this sense of tenderness.

In the first chapter of the novel Cities of Salt, Abdul Rahman Moneef introduces a unique character called “Moteb Al hazal”, who represents a typical Bedouin. He has patience, but he begs God to give him more. Only then, he would be able to live in a place where he can live alone and away from any interference.
Just as the Bedouins' concept of patience is different from ours, the concept of goodness is also different. Goodness to Bedouins means rain. Rain is the utmost wish for the Bedouin because it brings abundant greenery.

We understand that human beings depend on the will of God when it comes to rain. But why do they ask God to give them more patience? This point in particular is very different from how we, the Buddhist and Shinto in Japan, think. Muslims, in this sense, ask God to grant them more patience in order to achieve the maximum results. This way we may be able to understand Islamic ideas, which are different from ours in Japan.

There are two important issues for those who live in the desert. The first is patience and the second is “trick”. Trick is very important in such circumstances. Trick here means arrangement, management and application.

Once again, I will give a simple example: the Bedouin wears “Iqal”\(^3\) to fix the “Kufiya”\(^4\) on his head, but he also uses it for other purposes such as tying the Iqal with a rope to lengthen it and uses it in lifting water from the well.

For the Bedouin, life is utilization of the little things he has in order to face his urgent problems. On the contrary, in Japan we look for private institutions that employ experts to provide us with the “trick” when we need it, instead of managing matters ourselves.

**What I learned from Bedouins:**

Those who are either forced or choose to live in conditions where resources are scarce should find ways and a lifestyle that match their living conditions. The city dwellers always look for new alternatives, for luxury.

Many Arab intellectuals and writers have stressed that Bedouins are content with their life of basic needs. We know the theory of Ibn Khaldoun about the life cycle of the city and we know his thorough analysis of nomadism.

In the works of Ibrahim Al Kawni, we find a variety of realistic images about the hardships of life in the desert. When the drought lasts for a few years for example, the sheep eat the seeds left behind in previous years when there was grass. Al Kawni gives another example: a Bedouin would grill and eat his shoes. Such an incident is not

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\(^3\) An accessory for men consisting of black cord, worn doubled

\(^4\) traditional headdress fashioned from a square scarf
rare in the desert especially in the years of severe drought. Moreover, the starving Twareq women collect sheep droppings, and the indigestible grains to clean, cook and eat them. This is how the desert threatens its inhabitants with hunger.

Faced with death, a human being discovers the meaning of essential needs and survival. He discovers the value of a cup of water or a piece of bread to sustain life for another day.

Unlike the city dwellers, Bedouins do not always possess surplus to keep. It is ironic that those who have more than what they need always look for more and avoid those who compete with them in accumulating wealth. Thus, as the ties among city dwellers become weaker and weaker, there will be a decrease in human interaction. In contrast and unlike city dwellers, the Bedouin faces extreme poverty, understands the essential meaning of things without hurting himself and without losing his ties with others. City dwellers look for quantity, while Bedouins look for quality. The Bedouin asks ‘how’, but the city dweller asks ‘how much’? Based on the nature of the question, the goals and objectives will differ.

In the holy Quran, the verse says: "we made everything from water" meaning that water is the essence of all creation. The Bedouins are the people most aware of this fact; a fact deeply rooted in their consciousness. Despite the harsh living conditions and shortage of water, the Bedouin offers hospitality for those in need. He welcomes others with open arms, while the city dweller keeps himself away from others. It means a lot for a Bedouin to be associated with generosity. Generosity is an open invitation for healthy relations and a welcoming communication style with others. He proves to be unselfish and different from the city dweller, who restricts the use of his fortune to himself with the exclusion of all others.

When we ask the Bedouin: what would you do if you lose everything? Without hesitation, he replies: I rely on patience.

The concept of dignity for Arabs, in general, is different from that for Bedouins. Dignity for the Bedouin is practical and is expressed in different ways. We can see it in his concept of honor, his ethics, hospitality, pride, the love to show off, courage, the desire to avoid isolation, and other aspects of the ethics associated with Bedouins. Therefore, the Bedouin has no secret to hide from other Bedouins. Everything is known to everyone. And I can assure you that Bedouins have no real interest in privacy or secrets.
I would like now to talk about my experience in the Syrian Desert.

In relationships with others, generosity seems most important and hospitality is an open invitation to communication. I have known the father of Abdullah from the Bani Khalid tribe for ten years and I discovered through this relationship that Bedouins do not choose their guests as we, city dwellers, do. The Bedouins welcome all without discrimination. They offer hospitality for the sake of hospitality and in such a practice; they fulfill the spirit of hospitality.

I found two meanings for the word generosity: giving and nobility. A generous person is also a noble person. To be generous, a Bedouin has to act spontaneously. It is difficult for him not to be generous. I also understand that generosity is the opposite of parsimony or stinginess. In Japan, we normally use the word stinginess between friends, and often use it in a positive manner, particularly when referring to a person who tends to economize; conveying thus a positive meaning in Japan. For the Bedouin, the word has no positive meaning at all.

I discovered that the Bedouin has a tendency to deal with matters that are beyond his abilities. The peasants in Egypt, for instance, protect their lives and do not sacrifice themselves, except in severe special cases, trusting that only if they protect their lives, they will be able to protect others around them.

It was a surprise for me to discover that the Bedouin challenges himself beyond his capacity, endangers his life, and ready to sacrifice all for the sake of what he considers to be right. In other words, given his beliefs and principles, the Bedouin does not insist on protecting his life in the face of danger. Such a behavior is highly appreciated by Bedouins, and the one who does not rush to face any potential danger is sentenced and branded a coward. The Bedouin always fears the label coward.

It is interesting that sometimes we find Bedouins in the city. By this I mean individuals who have the values of Bedouins: they exhibit their courage and dislike cowardness as the deadly plague. Likewise, we also find Bedouins who have the same values as city dwellers. It is interesting to mention here an incident that happened with the well-known Moroccan writer Mohammad Shoukri whom I greatly respect. He lived in Tanja (Tangiers) and was in love with a British lady who managed a restaurant. Whenever we visited that restaurant, he offered a bouquet of flowers to the lady without declaring his love.
I remember we were sitting in a coffee shop in Paris talking about his love for this woman and I jokingly commented: you are not frank with her because you are a coward.

Mohammad Shoukri reacted angrily, stood up, and told me in an angry voice: Did you say I am a coward?

I was shocked by his reaction and did not expect him to be insulted to this extent. He was shaking, his features changed and a weird glitter appeared in his eyes. I explained my intention quietly and sincerely. I spent half an hour trying to convince him that I was joking. Still, this incident never affected our friendship. In this sense, Mohammad Shoukri was a Bedouin, who hated to be described by the adjective “coward”.

From my experience in the desert, I came to know the pain of boredom and the bitterness of sitting and waiting to pass time. Bedouins have their own awareness of time. It is a different concept from the hour, the day, the week and so on. They live a sustainable time frame of their own - when the grass grows and the sheep graze, that is time. When a city dweller, with his understanding of time, lives with Bedouins, he will become anxious, and his anxiety will double as times passes by. The Bedouin drinks coffee or tea and enjoys chatting without any feeling of anxiety; simply because time passes slowly. This kind of life is repeated with an established routine, with no change be it external or internal.

The strange thing for me is that the Bedouin lives each day as a new day.

To understand this point, we should first understand the role of nature in the life of Bedouins.

When we, the city dweller, visit the desert, we judge as outsiders from our particular point of view and we evaluate it as comfortable or otherwise accordingly. But we cannot understand the Bedouins based on this kind of evaluation.

The Bedouins consider the desert as the one and only guarantor of their lifestyle. We know that the desert exposes the Bedouin to sand storms, drought and extreme cold. Nevertheless, they still choose the desert. There must be some kind of an incentive that attracts them to accept and cope with the elements in the desert. This constant challenge is what makes them stick to their values and principles.

From an outsider’s point of view, the life of Bedouins seems stagnant, boring and monotonous. The Bedouin however is always alert. He is in a state of constant
guard as a soldier waiting for battle; in this case the enemy is mother nature. Although days may pass without any incidents, the Bedouin is tense at all times, but he is never spiritually bored. Unlike city dwellers, he does not seek any entertainment to pass or kill time.

In the city, we always seek temporary entertainment to escape boredom, and despite all our efforts, we cannot escape it. In this context, our life resembles the monotonous Bedouin life. Comfort, which is a basic characteristic of life in the city, leads to complacency and laziness, which in turn generate a lazy, lenient life. This is a clear difference from nomadic life.

Both the city dweller and the Bedouin are oppressed. The city dweller expects others to protect him and is pleased to live under the protection of the police and state authority. Therefore, he is oppressed by authority and its power. Although the Bedouin has freed himself from the oppression city dwellers find themselves under, he has nonetheless accepted to be oppressed by nature.

When we visit the desert in the years of draught, we know the extent of the power of nature and its oppression. When the draught lasts for years, Bedouins migrate and sometimes leave the nomadic life and move to the city only to face severe consequences because of their inability to adapt to a settled life in the city.

In general, the Bedouins tolerate tough circumstances and conditions. They become steadfast and stick to their values. It is said that the desert taught the Bedouins monotheism.

The harsh nature of the desert awakens the doctrine in the psyche of the Bedouin. I have seen my friend, the father of Abdullah, still pray five times every day despite years of draught. I understood that nature may physically destroy a human being, but it cannot decrease his belief; this is the real Bedouin.

If we were to describe the desert in one word, we would say: the absolute. This is exactly why the Bedouin does not know compromise or moderation; he must be an absolutist in his tolerance, patience, and ethics. He has to choose between living or permanent withdrawal. He cannot exercise moderation with choices. Bedouins respect power: the power of God first and the power of the Bedouin himself second.

The Bedouin is proud of his strength. His life itself is an announcement of strength. At the same time, his feelings of belonging to the tribe (or clan) are very strong and are well documented. The invasion of the desert has disappeared for many reasons
now -not part of our discussion here- and most of the equestrian activities have also disappeared, but confrontation with nature remains the same.

In his tent, the Bedouin has always had two duties: to welcome guests, with his consent of course, and to repel enemies. Anyone who assaults him or attacks his tent is considered a coward and loses the status of “paterfamilias”.

Bedouins also adhere to the concept of protecting others and their neighborhood. They accept any one under their protection and respect the rules of neighborhood. The choice here is made by the owner of the tent. With this concept, in particular, we learn something unique and important from the other culture, which is different from ours.

Bedouins are oppressed by the desert and its challenging habitat, which, in turn, increase their spiritual and physical strength. Permanent migration is in their genes; they have learned from the desert how small and weak human beings are. They have also learned to believe in the strength and the energy that exist outside the strength of humans. Their doctrine is simple, pure and direct. They do not seek goods, nor do they have a desire to own.

Draught has taught them that the matter of ownership is meaningless. They have learnt from nature not to indulge in satisfying their basic needs. For them, water, pasture and fire are public properties, as they are ultimately owned by God. This doctrine is widely spread in the desert: what is important is the right to use, not own, and who uses and when?

Bedouins are satisfied with their essential needs and do not keep many possessions. When they face an urgent need, they overcome it by patience. They face external attacks and at the same time welcome guests. They are coarse, wild and declamatory. They always seek the ideal, respond to requests and sacrifice themselves when guided by their idealism. They accept those who seek their protection and are aware of the sanctity of the neighbor.

They respect genealogy, distinguish themselves by belonging to their own, and do not regard awareness of such belonging as historically distant.

They despise craftsmanship and practical crafts such as agriculture, but appreciate trade and practice it in trade convoys.

They have pride, which they consider a positive trait, and act spontaneously to rectify (erase) what they consider to be a disgrace (or shame).
For them, to honor is an element of their doctrine. They are utterly satisfied and content with their life, environment and principles.

These are the Bedouins and their unique and valuable culture.
Chapter 5: Commentary

The discussion in chapter 3 of representation, orientalism, and the notion of the master discourse is crucial for the commentary reported in this chapter. For this purpose, chapter 6 from *Arabs from a Japanese Perspective* (2004) was translated. The chapter (text) contains concepts and ideas from the Japanese culture (of the author) that are used to examine comparatively aspects of the Arab culture. This comparison is in itself a representation before translating the text into English. At the same time, identifying similarities and differences, accepting or resisting them are the ways a master discourse evolves (Faiq, 2008, p. 37). The basis of analyzing a culture, in this case the Arab culture, is characterized by objects, experiences and concepts that the writer finds unique and new. In our case and despite the interesting insights that the Japanese writer offers in the translated chapter about Bedouin life and what he learnt from its culture, his selection of this experience itself conforms to a particular master discourse that promotes images of Arabs as Bedouins living in tents. We do not wish here to deny the origins of Arabs as inhabitants of the desert, but the point is why are Arabs constantly looked at from this very same angle? This argument is in cahoots with Said’s views about orientalism as discussed in the previous chapter. The aim of the commentary in this chapter is to show the role of the translator in transferring images about Arabs using cultural strategies. These strategies make the target readers familiar with the cultural concepts rather than foreignizing them and thus causing the target reader to wonder what significance they carry, and why they are unique in texts describing a foreigner’s experiences of Arab Culture. At the same time, the role of translators can be biased depending on their background, ideologies and the power of the publisher and translation commissioner, making translation a highly manipulative act (see chapter 3 in this thesis).

Given the discussion in chapter two of relevant theories in translation studies, this commentary examines the English translation in the light of functional and cultural approaches, and how they account for a culture of a text rather than the simple linguistic units to be carried from one language into another. The examples analyzed include cultural references such as food, clothing, and environment/habitat. These examples were compared with similar texts written by foreigners about Arab culture in English. This comparison is useful as it highlights the author’s point of view when describing
his experience of Arab culture, seen from the prism of the master discourse of his culture. The role of the translator here is also important in analyzing the functions of cultural terms and whether they are used in a justified manner or just to add a local color. At the same time, the translators’ ideology can be visible, if they do not show similar conformity with the master discourse of the ST. Translation strategies such as foreignization and domestication are used in the translation to present a balanced approach that aims to give a representation of the source text and at the same time enhance the TT by explaining foreign cultural concepts/terms. Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Arabic into English are my translation.

5.1 Cultural Elements and translation

5.1.1 Food in translation

Food is an important aspect and expression of micro culture. Food does not only reflect a cultural identity, but also involves group membership, behaviors and religious practices. According to Kittler & Sucher (2008) “What one eats defines who one is, culturally speaking, and, conversely, who one is not” (p. 4). Food can be linked to religious beliefs through eating certain kinds of food and refraining from eating others. Muslims, for example, do not eat pork as it is forbidden in Islam. In addition, Muslims say “in the name of Allah the most of Compassionate and the most Merciful” at the beginning of every meal, as Esposito writes, “Following Islamic dietary rules and restrictions ... serve as acts of worship that help to unify the Islamic community” (2004, p.161). As a result, food cannot be looked at in isolation from other cultural elements and behaviors. Furthermore, food is a reflection of the environment and availability of resources: food that is available in cold areas is certainly not available in hot ones.

In translation and depending on the type of text, the translator makes the decision to domesticate or foreignize food items. The evaluation of the importance of food items mentioned in the original text indicates whether to transfer these items in the translation or domesticate them. The following examples illustrate this point.
Table 2: Food in translation (Notahara, 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>والطعام نوعان، اليومي العادي والوليمة. فالطعام العادي عبارة عن خبز الصاج، واللبن فقط. أما الوليمة، فإنها لذيذةً بشكل يفوق تصور اليابانيين على الأقل (نوتوهارا، صفحة 79).</td>
<td>Bedouins have two kinds of food: the ordinary daily food and the feast. Ordinary food consists of homemade bread and yogurt. The most delicious food is the feast – mansaf(^5), which may be above all expectations of the Japanese. (My translation, Arabs from a Japanese Perspective)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>المنسف لا يقدم إلا في مناسبات، قدوم ضيف، أو الاحتفال بعيد أو مناسبات خاصة. ذلك أن المنسف نفسه يستهلك جزءًا من المال 한ضيف المحدود (نوتوهارا، صفحة 79).</td>
<td>Since preparing mansaf consumes a significant part of a host’s limited money, feasts are only offered during special occasions, such as receiving visitors, or celebrating Eid. (My translation, Arabs from a Japanese Perspective)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the above examples, the author refers to “Mansaf” as a typical Bedouin delicious meal. The ST does not refer to the ingredients of this meal, as it assumes that Arab readers are familiar with it. However, the translation does not follow the same strategy for target readers, who are alien to Arab culture. So, “Mansaf” without a definition or description of the ingredients does not carry any significant meaning. Therefore, the translator added ingredients in a footnote. Lefevere offers a solution for introducing these foreign words in a text by suggesting to leave the foreign words untranslated and appending the translation between brackets “or even insert a translation into the body of the text a little later” (1992, p. 29). This strategy does not only give the target reader a better understanding of what is being referred to, but also reflect the scarcity of resources in the desert that makes preparing a meal like “Mansaf” a special occasion for Bedouins. Depending on the importance of the food item referred to in a text, the description of the ingredients and preparation method could be detailed or summarized.

Now, consider the following example from *Married to a Bedouin* by Geldermalsen (2010):

\(^5\) Meat, rice, and bread with yogurt
Table 3: Food in translation (Geldermalsen, 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By the time, we got across to the bride’s tent the next morning the groom’s party had already arrived and the mensef was being served. Mensef is the traditional Bedouin feast made from freshly slaughtered and butchered goats or sheep. The meat is boiled in goat’s or sheep’s yoghurt, laban, and served on a bed of shraak bread and steamy white rice. (Geldermalsen, 2010, p. 401-403).</td>
<td>عندما وصلنا إلى خيمة العروس في الصباح المقبل كان العريس والمرافقون قد وصلوا، وكان (المنسف) قيد التحضير. المنسف هو الأكل البدوي الذي يقدم في المناسبات وهو عبارة عن لحم خروف أو ماعز يذبح في اليوم نفسه ويسلق لحمه مع لبن الماعز ويقدم على طبق مغطى بخبز الشراك والأرز الأبيض. (P. 41)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The process of preparing the “Mansaf” is explained in the source text and the translation, as it describes the author’s experience with food. However, this detailed explanation of ingredients is not required in Notohara’s chapter as the translation aims only at giving an indication to the target reader about the kind of food referred to in the ST. In other texts, the author may decide not to refer to the name of food items so as to either not confuse readers of the target text, or if names of food are considered unimportant in the text. Consider the following example.

Table 4: Food in translation (Patai, 1973)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Except for few festive occasions when he gorges himself on the meat of slaughtered sheep or young camel, the Bedouin subsists on dates, sour camel’s milk, and a mixture of flour and roasted corn. (Patai, 1973, p. 76)</td>
<td>وفيما عدا المناسبات الاحتفالية التي يتخم نفسه فيها بلحم خروف أو ماعز يقتصر البدوي في طعامه على التمر ولبن الجمل الخالتر ومزيج من الطحين والذرة المشوية. (Patai, 2010, p. 5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this example, Patai may have decided that mentioning the name “Mansaf” is unimportant to what he is referring to, and thus provides a summary of what “Mansaf” consists of.
There is no right or wrong as to whether a translator chooses to foreignize or domesticate food items as the final decision may be based on a personal evaluation of the importance of these terms in context and whether they carry any significant meaning or function in the text. It is however recommended that translators follow the general tendency of the source text in maintaining the foreign spirit or domesticate culturally sensitive aspects.

5.1.2 Clothes in translation

Like food, clothes form an important cultural expression. One’s culture may be reflected in what one wears, and clothing can be different from one area to another and even within the same area (country). In the first chapters of his book, Notahara (2004, p. 47) defines clothing as “the language through which every society expresses a matrix of ethical and social values” (my translation from Arabic). For him, clothes become languages, “men and women clothing language and clothing language of seasons, festivities and others (p. 47)”. Furthermore, in an attempt to analyze clothing in the Arab world, he discards what some may see as religious (Islam) constraints in the way Arabs dress. Perhaps Notahara thinks that Islam is much more tolerant, and instead relates the way Arabs dress to the environment and the degree of development of society. An example is presented to show how religion in Japan does not influence clothing, i.e., religion does not constrain people to dress in a certain way or shape, which, according to the writer, is a development outside the boundaries of oppression. Furthermore, the writer sees the Bedouin clothing as a “language that helps in gaining freedom” as it grants Bedouin a degree of practicality to deal with the harsh circumstances of the desert: “Kufiya or Abaya and other clothing are not only a social language, but also a practical language that facilitates adaptation with the harsh nature” (p. 48; my translation from Arabic). As a result, Notahara finds Bedouins more free than other categories of Arabs, “It is a culture different from ours as it expects all men to be similar in the way they dress, look, live and believe, which makes this unified picture a power that enhances cohesion in society” (p. 49: my translation from Arabic). In other words, appearance and clothing reflect the group’s conformity to the values of a culture, and are therefore important to represent in different contexts, especially through translation.

In support of Notahara’s views about clothing and whether it is influenced by religion or the environment and culture of the society, we can say that clothing is
influenced by all. Clothing can also be influenced by ideology and political affiliations. For example, besides wearing the Kufiya in the desert traditional societies, today, the Kufiya is worn by men and even women to show support for the Palestinian cause and for expression of national identity. Similarly, in Turkey men used to wear the Fez (Tarbush) during the period of the Ottoman Empire and later Turkish men were forced to abandon the Fez to promote the image modern European style of Turkey (“The Islamic world: Past and Present”, www.oxfordislamicstudies.com).

Moreover, it is inevitable that religion influences the clothing of its followers. For example, Islam urges Muslim women to dress conservatively, and so cover their hair and neck by wearing long, loose dresses to the ankle. Other religions such as Christianity and Judaism encourage women to wear head covers and veils inside temples as part of rituals. The adaptation of religious directions for clothing makes both religion and clothing interrelated in a cultural context. These ideas may seem irrelevant in the context of translation, but if a translator does not understand the role these factors play in a culture, the target text may be produced in a vague and incomprehensible manner. It is the mix of all these unique ingredients that makes a translation an enlightening cultural work.

Domesticating and foreignizing aside, Newmark (1988) suggests a strategy for translating terms that refers to clothing by adding a generic noun or classifier, “e.g., Lshintigin trousers* or 'basque skirt', or again, if the particular item is of no interest, the generic word can simply replace it. However, it has to be borne in mind that the function of the generic terms is approximately constant, indicating the part of the body that is covered, but the description varies depending on climate and material used” (p. 97). Keeping Newmark’s strategy in mind, consider the following examples from the translation of Notahara’s book (2004).
Table 5: Clothes in translation (Notahara, 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example 1</th>
<th>Example 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As for clothes, the abaya⁶ is the famous and practical dress for Bedouins. In winter, the Bedouin puts on fur underneath the abaya to protect him from freezing to death during the desert-freezing temperatures. (My translation)</td>
<td>Once again, I will give a simple example: the Bedouin wears “Iqal”⁷ to fix the “Kufiya”⁸ on his head, but he also uses it for other purposes such as tying the Iqal with a rope to lengthen it and uses it in lifting water from the well. (My translation).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In example 1, Abaya is defined by the writer as a “practical dress” in the ST and the translation reflects that definition through a footnote “cloak”. Although utilizing Newmark’s strategy could be sufficient, but the strategy adapted in the translation here is to constantly guide the target reader as to what is being referred to. Reading texts about other cultures could become rather confusing and unexciting if the target reader has a problem understanding the objects/topics referred to. Moreover, omitting “Abaya” and referring to it as merely a “cloak” may not be a good strategy as it diminishes the foreign element of the cultural item. Adding “paratextual materials (footnotes, introductions)” is utilized to fill “cultural knowledge presupposed by the subject and the audience” (Tymoczko, 2007, p. 229)

On the other hand, when referring to cultural material objects, some authors and translators may choose to leave the readers unguided either because audience should be able to understand the material on the basis of general knowledge” or to invite the readers to “do the homework necessary to fill in the cultural background for

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⁶ Cloak  
⁷ An accessory for men consisting of black cord, worn doubled  
⁸ traditional headdress fashioned from a square scarf
themselves” (Tymoczko, 2007, p. 229). In these cases, words are borrowed from one language into another without adding any explanation. Consider the following example from Geldermalsen (2010, p. 25):

“Her dark eyes were exaggerated by the kohl; a pure white chiffon scarf set off her white teeth and the gold-trim of her black aba picked out her gold one”. In this example, “aba” is understood from the context as a clothing element, but is not so clear and does not specify which part of the body it relates to (covers). This vagueness may be intended so as not to disturb the flow of the description in the sentence through a footnote or a bracketed description.

In example 2, Table 5, “Kufiya” and “Iqal” are borrowed from Arabic to reflect the use of these clothing items for practical purposes in Bedouins life. “Kufiya” and “Iqal” do not only form part of a Bedouin outfit, but are also part of the activities that a Bedouin performs in his daily life. If we consider other uses of these items, we can see that they are not about accessorizing an outfit, as Bedouins do not seek any showing off in their living and clothing. Instead, “Kufiya”, for example, has a practical function of shielding “the head and the neck from wind and sand” (Esposito, 2004, p.104).

Similarly, Patai (1973) adopts the same strategy of guiding the reader by borrowing a cultural term and then describing it, as in the following two examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His long belted shirt (<em>thawb</em>) is covered by an equally long cloak (<em>‘aba</em>), which gives him an uncommonly dignified and aristocratic appearance (Patai, 1973, p. 76)</td>
<td>ولباس البدوي &quot;ثوبأ&quot; طويلاً يتوسطه حزام وتحيط بهذا الثوب &quot;عباءة&quot; مما يمنحه مظهراً مميزاً وأرستقراطياً. (Patai, 2010, p. 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His head is covered by a shawl (Kufiya) held in place by a crown of thick cord (<em>‘iqal</em>). Trousers are not worn and footwear is rare. (Ibid, p. 76)</td>
<td>وغطي البدوي رأسه &quot;بالكوفية&quot; التي يثبتها باستخدام &quot;العقلاء&quot;. ولا يلبس شيئاً في قدميه إلا نادرًا. (Ibid, p. 5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, there is no ideal approach for translating cultural words that refer to clothing, food and others. It depends on the writers or translators and their view about
the target (receiving) culture (audience). When translating a text rich with cultural examples, it is hard to ignore these examples or domesticate them as this will kill the soul of the original text. At the same time, if a text refers to cultural examples in passing and with no clear function of these references, translators can chose to either delete these references or foreignize them without adding any description. Needless to say, the translators’ decision and evaluation of the function of cultural reference is influenced by their ideology and background. What one translator sees functional in a text may be seen as worthless by another.

Another important consideration for translators is that “audiences themselves have the capacity to receive translation and to translate the translations for their own uses” (Tymoczko, 2007, p. 231). A smart cultural translation strategy aims at motivating these audiences to learn new ideas and concepts about other cultures and experience differences because “all human beings are latent translators” and have the ability to learn and explore knowledge in different ways (Ibid).  

5.1.3 Habitat and environment in translation

“Badiya is a unique place that has no matching in Japan or Europe” (Notahara, 2004, p.17). Similar to food and clothing, habitat, environment, and housing, as cultural aspects are significant in defining cultures and representing them. These aspects vary from one culture to another and even within the same culture, depending on factors such as geography, weather, and social class. A good example of these differences is found in Notahara’s chapter 6 that talks about Bedouins and compares their way of living to the settled dwellers of the cities in the Arab world. Though they belong to the same culture, the living environment reflects the adaptation of each group to environmental conditions that shape the way they live. What makes Bedouins live in tents? What stops city people from living in tents? These questions do not only relate with environmental conditions, but also with the nature of societies and the membership of small groups that make a particular society a complex mix of differences, even within the same culture.

The reflection of housing and habitat as cultural aspects in translation helps in creating the image of the source culture in the target language. An audience with little or no experience of other cultures will demand details and descriptions to construct images about a given culture. Consider the following example from Notahara’s translated chapter
Table 7: Habitat and environment in translation (Notahara, 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>البدو كما هو شائع، أهل الوبر، أما المستقرون فهم أهل المدر. وحياة البدو تتم في البادية وهذا ما يدعى ببداوة، أي أن الفرد يعرض نفسه للطبيعة بلا غطاء. (Notahara, p. 78)</td>
<td>The Bedouins are people who live in tents made of animal skin, whereas settled people are those who live in houses. Bedouins live in the Badiya, also known as badawa, which means that the individual is fully exposed to nature and its elements. (My translation from Arabic).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To analyze the above example appropriately, it is important to understand the linguistic difference between الصحراء و البادية. According to Al Maany online Arabic dictionary (2015) desert الصحراء is الصحراء: أرض فضاء واسعة فقيرة الماء
Desert is an open space with scarce water resources.
And, Al Badiya is defined as
بادية: أرض في الصحراء فيها المسكن والممرع والماء
Badiya is a land in the desert where water, grazing and housing are available.

Based on the above linguistic differences between the meanings of desert and badiya, and in order not to confuse target readers, the translation may introduce the term “badiya” with a brief description. This is important since Noathara often refers to badiya, not the desert. Moreover, the introduction of the term “badiya” is linked to other concepts such as badawa and badwi, which are both derived from “badiya”. The example given in table 8 from Patai (1973 / 2010) explains this derivation.
Table 8: Habitat and environment in translation (Patai, 1973)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The environment is that of the Arabian Desert, and the society that</td>
<td>تلك البيئة هي الصحراء العربية، وتلك البنية</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the desert people, the nomads. Desert is badw or</td>
<td>الاجتماعية هي سكانها من البدو الرحل. تدعى</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>badiya in Arabic, from which is derived the name of badwi or</td>
<td>الصحراء في اللغة العربية بالبدو أو البنانية</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>badawi, or “Bedouin” in the customary English form, meaning</td>
<td>والبنانية إليها بَدْوي أو بَدَوي. وبالمناسبة ثمة معنى</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inhabitant of deserts. Incidentally, another meaning of the noun</td>
<td>آخر كلمة &quot;البدو&quot; وهو (البداية) مما يسمح</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>badw is “beginning” which permits the inference that to the old</td>
<td>بالاستدلال على أن الصحراء كانت بداية العالم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabs the desert was the beginning of the world as water to the</td>
<td>بالنسبة للغرب القدام كما هو حال الماء بالنسبة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the above explanation is valid, it does not illustrate the distinction illustrated earlier between desert and badiya and therefore creates confusion in the text. Consequently, the translation reflects the same misunderstanding. To avoid making the same mistake, we suggest adding the definition of Badiya as a footnote to help the reader understand the aim of introducing badiya as a term in the target language.

Another point in the above example is Notahara’s choice of language in referring to Bedouin and settled people as البدو كما هو شائع، أهل الوبَر، أما المستقرون فهم أهل المَدَر. According to Al Maany online Arabic dictionary أهل الوبَر وهم البدو سكان الخيم (2015). The level of language formality is higher compared to that used in other instances throughout the book. Although this way is often used to refer to Bedouins and dwellers, the writer could have simply said البدو هم من يسكنون الخيم و المستقرون هم من يسكنون البيوت المبنية. But, this choice may make the meaning explicit when the aim of the writer was perhaps to keep it implicit. Another reason could be that the writer aims to refer to Bedouins and dwellers in the way the native Arabic text refers to them. Consider the following example from The Muqaddimah of the famous Muslim historian Ibn Khaldun in 1377/1967 where the same point is illustrated.

70
Table 9: Habitat and environment in translation (Ibn Khaldun, 1377)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>visited the inhabitants of the desert adopt the natural manner of making a living, namely, agriculture and animal husbandry. They restrict themselves to the necessary in food, clothing, and mode of dwelling, and to the other necessary conditions and customs. They do not possess conveniences and luxuries beyond (these bare necessities). They use tents of hair and wool, or houses of wood, or of clay and stone, which are not furnished (elaborately). The purpose is to have shade and shelter, and nothing beyond that. They also take shelter in caverns and caves. The food they take is either little prepared or not prepared at all, save that it may have been touched by fire. For those who make their living through the cultivation of grain and through agriculture, it is better to be stationary than to travel around. Such, therefore, are the inhabitants of small communities, villages, and mountain regions. These people make up the large mass of the Berbers and non-Arabs. (Rosenthal, 1967, p. 162)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Bedouins, as it is known, are people of fur while the settled are people of houses. The inhabitants of small communities, villages, and mountain regions. These people make up the large mass of the Berbers and non-Arabs. (Rosenthal, 1967, p. 162)

In the above example, بالوبر is translated as “hair and wool”, and سكان المدر as “inhabitants of small communities”. Although “small communities” may not be the fitting choice for المدر, the meaning in the target text is clear and does not require any further explanation. If we were to adapt a similar strategy in translating Notahara’s sentence, we would opt for a sense that is less literal to explain the meaning, i.e., instead of translating literally: “The Bedouins, as it is known, are people of fur while the settled are people of houses”. A more explicit translation strategy is suggested to reflect effectively the meaning, hence: “The Bedouins are people who live in tents made of animal skin, whereas settled people are those who live in houses”. This translation does not only maintain the meaning, but it also shows the difference between the housing of Bedouins and dwellers, which is the primary aim in the source text. One could argue
that the suggested translation does not maintain the economy of expression found in the ST, but the point is not only about economy of expression; it is about conveying the meaning and avoiding awkward sentence structures that emanate from faithfulness to the original.

5.2 Other considerations when translating the book

5.2.1 Translation of proverbs

Although translating and analyzing proverbs is beyond the scope of this thesis, proverbs are integral to any culture. Language learners try to strengthen their knowledge by learning proverbs and how to use them appropriately. As an Arabic language learner and cultural mediator between Arabic and Japanese, Notahara compares Arabic and Japanese proverbs. So, when someone is not able to express his/her opinion, Arabs say تحتم لساني جمرة الحرير and the Japanese say عندما أفتح فمي فإن هواء الخريف ينقل البرد إلى شفتي [When I speak, my lips feel cold - The autumn wind.] (Retrieved on July 12, http://www.egreenway.com/months/autumn.htm). The writer sees the situation of expressing one’s opinion in the Arab world as a burning coal that cannot be expressed by “cold” as in the Japanese proverb.

5.2.2 Cultural concepts and values

Notahara praises the spirit of hospitality and generosity of the Bedouin culture. He also explains the difference between Arab and Japanese cultures in the way they consider stinginess. While being stingy can be a positive attribute in Japanese society, it is a negative attribute in Arab society, especially among the Bedouins. The example given in table 10 below illustrates this cultural difference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10: Cultural concepts and values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ST</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>وفهمت أيضًا أن الكرم نقيض البخل في اليابان نستخدم كلمة البخل بين الأصدقاء بصورة عادية وأحياناً إيجابية، أي يعني اقتصادي تحديداً، ولا نحملها معنى سلبياً، أما عند البدو فإن البخل ليس فيه أي معنى إيجابي على الإطلاق</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(p.84)
5.2.3 Word connotations

Since the writer is not a native speaker of Arabic, his language choices are often far from perfect; something the translator should bear in mind. It is not the job of a translator to correct such mistakes in the ST, but rather to transfer the meaning in a way that overcomes the obstacles found in the ST. Furthermore, this particular source text is itself a translation from Japanese. The writer may have learnt Arabic and lived with Arabs, but his views cannot be fully separated from his mother Japanese culture.

For example, although the general feel of the translated chapter is that the writer is keen on knowing more about the Bedouins and their way of life, Notahara refers to the patience of the Bedouins as “illogical”:

Table 11: Word connotations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>إنه صبر يتجاوز حدود صبرنا وقدرتنا، صبر تجاه الطبيعة وهو مع ذلك غير منطقي. من تجربتي المتواضعة في الحياة مع البدو عرفت أنني -أنى -أنا الذي تربيت في حضارة الاستقرار- لا أملك قوة الصبر مثل البدو. (p. 81)</td>
<td>It is a patience that goes beyond the limits of our ability; it is a patience with nature. It is, however, illogical. Throughout my humble experience with Bedouins, I realized that I, who was brought up in the civilization of stability, do not have the power of patience the Bedouins have(My translation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of “illogical” here confuses the reader who becomes unsure whether the writer is admiring the patience of the Bedouins or condemning it.

5.2.4 Contradicting ideas

In the chapter, as in example 1, Table 12 below, Notahara talks about how Bedouins see their life as complete and not requiring any change, which gives the reader the idea of a static way of living. At the same time and as example 2, Table 12, indicates, Notahara refers to the way Bedouins have adopted new elements that are alien to their life such as the use of cars instead of camels.
Table 12: Contradicting ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>تلك الحياة البسيطة في الطعام والسكن واللباس يعتبرها البدو حياة كاملة مكتملة لا تحتاج لأن يغيروا منها قيد شعرة (صفحة 80)</td>
<td>The Bedouins consider this simple life of eating, living and clothing complete and comprehensive; a life that does not require any change, not even the slightest. (My translation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>أسارع قافول، لقد أضاف البدو في استعمالهم أدوات هي من خارج الحياة البدوية. وبصورة خاصة البنفيسية والسيارة. البنفيسية تحل محل السيف والرمح والسيارة تغني عن الجمل. (صفحة 80)</td>
<td>The Bedouins used additional tools, which were unfamiliar in the traditional Bedouins' life, especially the rifle and the car. The gun replaced the sword and spear, and the car replaced the camel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compared to that of city dwellers, the life of Bedouins has changed very little. But one cannot categorically claim that it is static because of a lack of holistic change. A Bedouin who lived in the badiya, or desert, a thousand years ago was different from today’s Bedouin. The technological advances impact Bedouins’ way of life even if they live far away from the city. It is rare even impossible today for a society to live in total isolation. The adoption of new necessities of life such as cars and rifles by Bedouins is a clear example of interaction and change over time.

5.3 Conclusion:

This chapter has explored elements of micro culture, their relationship with macro culture and how this relationship is reflected in translation. A cultural term that may seem simple or unimportant could carry underlying meanings, ideologies, and cultural sensitivities. The sensitivity of translators to these issues is required, and translators should be trained to develop strategies that consider cultural concepts beyond their linguistic realizations. Original texts refer to cultural aspects for a reason. A target text that reflects these elements can be said to adopt a strategy that maintains the spirit and foreignness of the original. It is the translator’s task to develop a strategy that solves the problems encountered in the process of translating cultural aspects. As Lefevere notes, “translators first develop a strategy of translating a whole text; on the basis of that strategy they develop tactical solutions for problems in various chunks of that text.” (1992, p. 97). Needless to say, these choices are not only a matter of personal
preference, but rather a reflection of what the master discourse, ideology, power and agency dictate to the translator (see chapter 3 in this thesis for a discussion of this issue).
Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations

This thesis has examined Arab culture and how it is viewed and translated within an established system (master discourse) of images. Despite the important role translation plays in bridging differences between cultures, we find that images of the Arab culture have changed very little over the past decades, if they have changed at all. This conclusion is based on the assessment of strategies used in the English translation of a chapter 6 from Notahara’s book Arabs from a Japanese Perspective (2004). To date, the book does not have a published English translation, despite the fact it overall exhibits conformity of established images about Arabs (master discourse), albeit written in Arabic. Even if it is not seen as a significant addition to the existing cultural images of the Arabs, the book represents positive aspects of the life of Bedouins. This positive representation was maintained and even enhanced in the English translation of chapter 6 from the book. This was achieved by implementing cultural strategies that maintain foreign elements of the source text as a way of making the target reader gain more information about the Arab (other) culture.

A counter-argument may be that even if we adopt an approach that attempts to bring out the uniqueness of the original text and its culture, it will be viewed as also conforming to a particular master discourse. But again, translation cannot be carried out without change and manipulation of the source text, which could be seen as forming or deforming a given culture.

For the Arab World, perhaps publishers could support projects of creative and original Arabic works that invite new aspects and images about the Arabs. If these works do not get translated to other languages, views about Arabs will most probably remain as are. Until such a time when Arabs and Muslims are not simply portrayed as Bedouins, terrorists and barbaric translators will be forced to conform to existing images of Arabs in their cultures. Given all the technological advances and the forces of globalization, a translation movement supported by a group of Arab translators/intellectuals may change the static images that have been planted in the minds of Western readers for decades. Like all other cultures, the Arab culture has its strengths and weaknesses, but there must be a way for these strengths to overcome the weaknesses. Translators may be experts in cultural mediation, but sadly they find themselves having to comply with the power of a master discourse. Alone, translators
cannot be agents of change; they must be supported by publishers and translation commissioners, who consider the cultural and intellectual value of a translation project that reflects creative Arab literary works before profit.

A translation project that challenges conformity to the master discourse may be the way to overcome enforced boundaries, but this is easier said than done. The current images about the Arab culture have changed very little, and the glory of a great language and culture is rarely mentioned. Arabs do not want to live in memories, but rather work on a future that defines their culture as a unique human experience worth reading about, exploring, and translating. The Turkish writer Elif Shafak suggests embracing new nations and cultural knowledge because

If we have no connection whatsoever with the worlds beyond the one we take for granted, then we run the risk of dying up inside. Our imagination might shrink; our hearts may dwindle, and our humanness might wither if we stay too long inside our cultural cocoons” (2010, July).

The uniqueness of every culture comes from the differences it exhibits vis-à-vis other cultures. It is an art to accept these differences and respect diversity in all aspects of life as this broadens one’s horizons and thoughts. Translation can facilitate this exchange of ideas, views, and concepts, but it needs to be supported by a tendency of presenting and representing reality, rather than constructing a reality that misrepresents cultures. A Japanese view of Arabs in their language is an interesting example of acceptance, but at the same time, it does not bring out a true representation of Arabs since it unfortunately confirms to pre-existing stereotypes and images. The journey of exploring the self also requires knowledge about the other; in others, we see our reflection, our strengths and weaknesses. The beauty of this exploration journey lies in embracing similarities and differences across cultures.
References


Khairu Jalees. Al Jazeera Online (2005), retrieved on July 12, 2015 from http://www.aljazeera.net/programs/a-book-is-the-best-companion/2005/3/15/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A9-%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%B1-%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9


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