

CULTURAL DISLOCATION THROUGH TRANSLATION

Said Faiq
American University of Sharjah

Introduction

Translation, in its academic, professional and anthropological meanings, remains one of the main means through which texts of one culture are made available in another. It should, in theory, be the site of a potentially fruitful clash of different cultures and particularly vital in the case of translation from those supposedly weaker and subordinate cultures into dominant ones, as in the case of translation from Arabic into English and French, for example (cf. Faiq, 2004). This notion of translating not only covers the traditional definition of translation, transfer of texts from one language to another, but also, and more importantly, texts written in one language but which originate in or concern cultures other than that of the language in which they are written.

Over the last two decades or so, many translation scholars have stressed that translation, by necessity, involves manipulation and subversion of linguistic and cultural traditions, particularly those emanating from the so-called third world. Of course, within translation studies this shift of focus, from issues of fidelity and equivalence still shocks traditionalists who persist in their belief in value-free translation, as well as in the fact that translation cannot but refer to the transfer of texts from one language to another, rather than subsuming representation of others without any actual transfer of texts. This is more ideologically relevant particularly to post-colonial contexts. Referring to Venuti's (1995) notions of transparency, invisibility and fluency, Susan Bassnett (1998) appropriately argues that such a translation project always favours the target readers, so much so that the source text, its culture and readers become insignificant. In the case of translation from Arabic, the target readers are mainly Anglo-Americans, but also French, Spanish, and other Europeans (cf. Carbonell, 1996). Yet, such a translation project is not entirely new. It is noted in the history of relations between East and West. Bassnett (1998:78) writes:

This tendency in English began to develop in the nineteenth century and accelerated with the translation of texts from non-European languages, from literatures that, as Edward Fitzgerald remarked in his infamous comment on the liberties he had allowed himself to take with his version of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayam*, ‘really need a little art to shape them’. Currently, reaction in the post-colonial world to the colonizing impact of translation is so strongly felt that there are those who argue that western cultures, particularly English speaking ones, should NOT translate other literatures at all. (emphasis in the original)

Bassnett hastens to point out that this is not a position with which she agrees, but one with which she sympathizes. Others, particularly Venuti (1995; 1998), have set out to redress the balance by embarking on their own translation projects whereby the target language, American English in particular, is manipulated to ensure the original text and its culture survive the translating act. But any translation is carried out under constraints, which include manipulation of power relations of dominated and dominating, and ultimately lead to the construction of images of the translated cultures in ways that preserve and/or expand the hegemony of the translating culture (cf. Lefevere, 1990). In translating from Arabic or writing about its culture, the images construct the other, all non-Western, that are recognizable to the self, all Western, as authentic within the framework of a particular poetics and ideology. The late Andre Lefevere (1995:465) succinctly wrote:

A literature ... can be described as a system, embedded in the environment of a civilization/culture/society, call it what you will. The system is not primarily demarcated by a language, or an ethnic group, or a nation, but by a poetics, a collection of devices available for use by writers at a certain moment in time. ... The environment exerts control over the system, by means of patronage. Patronage combines both an ideological and an economic component. It tries to harmonize the system with other systems it has to co-exist with in the wider environment – or simply imposes a kind of harmony.

In the case of translation from and representations of it, Lefevere’s last argument applies wholesale. For centuries, Arabic has been made to conform to the prevailing systems at work in the West. (Beaugrande 2005, in this volume) Moreover, and interestingly, the system, despite the rapid changes

Western societies have witnessed, not least in terms of tolerance of others, multiculturalism and multilingualism which underpin translation from Arabic and writings in Western languages about the Arabs and Islam, has remained prisoner of the same discursive, poetic and ideological framework; reminiscent of Fitzgerald's comments. The Arab world and Islam are still translated/represented through monolingual eyes, as Dallal (1998:8) comments:

One of the ironies about multiculturalism is how parochial it is. Despite ever-increasing globalism, multiculturalism remains largely monolingual and limited to American culture: consider the absence of interest in Arabic literature and culture in Western Europe and the United States, despite the enormous and persistent attention paid to the Arab world and to Islam.

Arab culture and Islam, distanced by time, space and language(s), are usually carried over into a western tradition as an originary moment and imagined within a master narrative (master discourse of translation, cf. Faiq, 2003) of western discourse that is full of ready-made stereotypes and clichés (cf. Said, 1997; Layoun, 1995). This situation persisted although the Arab world is a melting pot of nations, languages, dialects, constituencies, religious practices, and ideologies; a world that has also seen most forms of appropriation and subversion, including physical violence through many wars through history (note all the wars during the first five years of this century alone).

It can perhaps be argued that such attitudes of the West towards the Arab world, through translation and representation, can be rationalized on the basis that two different cultures with two separate pasts have clashed, and continue to do so. The Europeans colonized the Arab lands for decades, and the post-colonial situation is different only in terms of the fact that after the Second World War, the United States became in many ways the guardian and custodian of the Arab world. Given such a premise, one can argue that manipulatory and subversive cultural representations of one side to the other may be taken as part of the scheme of history. After all, without such clashes, manipulations and subversions, history would not be history. The same discursive strategies still prevail, however. The representations of Arabs and Islam by and/or for the West are not just accounts of different places, cultures and societies, but more importantly, they are projections of the West's own fears and desires masqueraded as objective knowledge: consider the issue of

the *Hijaab* (head scarf) of Muslim school girls in France, and the bearded Arab-looking man in Europe or the United States. Arabic literature, for example, and as Said (1995: 97) remarked

... remains relatively unknown and unread in the West, for reasons that are unique, even remarkable, at a time when tastes here for the non-European are more developed than ever before and, even more compelling, contemporary Arabic literature is at a particularly interesting juncture.

Such attitudes stem from one-sided cultural views, steeped in old yet new stereotypes and based on universalism, unitarism, and the homogeneity of human nature *à la* Western. These views marginalize and exclude the distinctive and unique characteristics of post-colonial societies and their discursive traditions. Within studies for translation, the political, historical, and discursive consequences of these complex questions only started to be brought to the fore and examined effectively in the late 1980s.

For all post-colonial communities, and particularly the Arabs, the drive in literature, politics, and translation towards national identity has centered on language mainly because, as During (1995:125) argues, within the context of post-modernity identity is barely available elsewhere. So, in the post-colonial Arab world, the return to Arabic is still a political, cultural, and literary question, because the choice of the language, in the material sense at least, is a choice of identity. To continue using French, English, or Spanish calls forth a problem of identity, which is then thrown into mimicry and ambivalence (cf. Bhabha, 1994; Faiq, 2000a, b).

The project of most post-colonial Arab writers has been, and is still, to interrogate both western and indigenous discourses, by exploding and confounding different symbolic worlds and separate systems, through translation and other forms of writing. However, there are a number of Arabs, to whom I refer here as *native foreigners* after Beaugrande (2005, in this volume), who can easily be categorized as belonging to those westerners labeled by Edward Said as orientalist. The difference between the two groups is that, while Said's orientalist can be accommodated as belonging to a particular culture that is not Arab/Islamic, our *native foreigners* come from the indigenous Arab/ Islamic environment, and yet adopt the same translation (representation) as that developed and sustained by Said's orientalist.

Translation and cultural dislocation

Translation and cultural representation

The examination of the link between translation and cultural representation, including writings about non-dominant cultures into dominant, hegemonic ones, is not entirely new. Referring to translation into German, Rudolf Pannwitz (cited in Dingwaney 1995:7) pointed out the basic flaws of translation and translators:

Our translations, even the best ones, proceed from the wrong premise. They want to turn Hindi, Greek, English into German, instead of turning German into Hindi, Greek, English. Our translators have a far greater reverence for their language than for the spirit of the foreign languages. ... The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue. ... He must expand and deepen his language by means of the foreign language. It is not generally realized to what extent this is possible, to what extent any language can be transformed.

This is the argument that Venuti (1995; 1998) tries to expand and for which he tries to provide solutions. Venuti's notions of domestication (the negation of the spirit of the source language and culture in the target ones) and foreignization (the refusal of the dominant master discourse and resort to marginal linguistic and literary values at home, i.e., target language and literary values) refer to Bassnett's (1991) view that the authoritarian relationships between translators and what they deem inferior source cultures were compatible with the rise and spread of colonialism. But though colonialism, in its conventional sense at least, is no more, the authoritarian relationships still persist.

Although the issues of representation and translation of the other by the hegemonic West have appeared in sporadic writings, it was not until Edward Said's seminal work *Orientalism* that they gained prominence. It is also an historical coincidence that around the same time as the publication of *Orientalism*, scholars of translation, literary and cultural studies, particularly in Israel, Africa, and Latin America, promoted their challenging views about polysystems and norms in the evolution of literary traditions, and powerfully redirected studies in and for translation.

The special tools of Orientalism, in translation, representation and interpretation of Arabs and Islam, led to what Said (1997:163) calls cultural antipathy:

Today Islam is defined negatively as that with which the West is radically at odds, and this tension establishes a framework radically limiting knowledge of Islam. So long as this framework stands, Islam, as a vitally lived experience for Muslims, cannot be known.

The outcome of this cultural antipathy towards the Arabs and Islam is manifest in the minuscule translations from Arabic except, of course, for those texts that further reinforce the privileged representations that have acquired the status of facts (cf. Carbonell 1996; Guardi; Salama-Carr; Suleiman, this volume). The discursive strategies and transparencies, in translating all that is Arab and Islamic, tend to refer to static and timeless societies and peoples, which are turned into naturalized and dehistoricized images within the master western narrative. As Spivak (1985:253-54) puts it:

No perspective *critical* of imperialism can turn the Other into a self, because the project of imperialism has always already historically refracted what might have been the absolutely Other into a domesticated Other that consolidates the imperialist fracture or discontinuity, covered over by an alien legal system masquerading as Law as such, an alien ideology established as only truth, as a set of human sciences busy establishing the native 'as self-consolidating Other.' (emphasis in the original)

Translation from Arabic, even of pragmatic texts as defined by Lefevere (1996), still makes immediate use of the fixed structures and vocabulary that have persisted for many centuries, with the addition, in the last few years, of the imagine Arab/Islam=fundamentalism (cf. Hatim, this volume). The Arabs and Islam are not only normally translated into established discursive strategies, and a range of allusiveness for the target language readers, but also into the very norms of choosing what to translate, ways of publishing and reviewing. In this respect Venuti (1996:196) draws attention to

... the power of translation to (re)constitute and cheapen foreign texts, to trivialize and exclude foreign cultures, and thus potentially to figure in racial discrimination and ethnic violence, international political confrontations, terrorism, war.

What Venuti lists applies to the translation and representation of the Arabs and Islam. Hatim (in this volume) shows how the semiotic mishandling, most certainly intended, of simple words in Arabic or Farsi triggers the images of violence, terrorism and fundamentalism; labels among many that are pre-texts but serve as pretexts reserved for the Arabs and Islam (cf. Zlateva 1990 for a discussion of the notions of pre-text and pretext in translation). The choice of what to translate from Arabic, even with a Nobel Prize in Literature, is still prisoner of the old/new ideology of ethnocentric domestication of a familiar yet foreign culture. Peter Clark (1997:109) recounts his own experience with publishing translations of Arabic contemporary literature into English:

A few years ago I went to work in Syria and I wanted, during my stay there, to translate a volume of contemporary Syrian literature. I read around and thought the work of ‘Abd al-Salam al-‘Ujaili was very good and well worth putting into English. ‘Ujaili is a doctor in his seventies who has written poetry, criticism, novels and short stories. In particular his short stories are outstanding. Many are located in the Euphrates valley and depict the tensions of individuals coping with the politicization and the omnipotent state. Volumes of his work have been translated into French, Russian and other languages. Two or three short stories have appeared in English anthologies or magazines. I proposed to my British publisher a volume of ‘Ujaili’s short stories. The editor said, “There are three things wrong with the idea. He’s male. He’s old and he writes short stories. Can you find a young female novelist?” Well, I looked into women’s literature and did translate a novel by a woman writer even though she is in her eighties.

Clark’s experience fits the network in which Arabs and Islam are fashioned within a Western culture with its webs of endless stereotypes, donations and connotations of sex, sensuality of Arab women, terrorism, *harem*, violence, etc (cf. Carbonell 1996; Attar; Saleh, this volume). That is, the representation, including translation, is systematically carried out within

constructs that the translators, and those doing representations, have been brought up to use.

The obvious reaction of Arabs and Islam is manifest in the continuous calls for a return to tradition and a glorious past that colonialism has tried to negate for decades. For a world that feels ignored and restricted from joining the modernity ‘train,’ turns backwards, and Arabs who live in the West turn East, to a time of glory.

Appeals to the past are among the commonest of strategies in interpretations of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty about whether the past really is past, over and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms, perhaps. This problem animates all sorts of discussions – about influence, about blame and judgment, about present actualities and future priorities. (Said 1993:1)

Given the premise of western representations and translations of the Arabs and Islam, it is only reasonable to expect that post-colonial Arabs would embark on an interrogation of the discourse of fluency, transparency, and orientalism; to establish instead their own discourses that would give a balanced view of their culture and, therefore, assist in ‘better’ intercultural encounters with others. But, although the majority of colonial and post-colonial Arab writers have sought to do just this, a number of Arabs, our *native foreigners*, have chosen to adopt western discursive and ideological systems (orientalism) in their own writings, usually in the colonial languages. The use of the colonial languages is not the issue, the issue is rather the ways and means adopted in the writings of these *native foreigners* whose works tend to be readily translated into mainstream western languages when written in Arabic, or find their way back into the Arab world through translation when written in the western languages; and this translation is normally carried out under the patronage of publishers subsidized by the main publishers of the source (target) texts in the West (cf. Guardi, this volume).

Native foreigners or cultural dislocation

It is anticipated that post-colonial literary and translation projects in the Arab world would aim at valorizing and enriching the native culture in order to improve its production, reception and circulation systems. Fanon

(1961:37-8) summarizes the natural process native intellectuals would normally go through to the post-colonial via the colonial phase:

The colonialist bourgeoisie had in fact deeply implanted in the minds of the colonized intellectual that the essential qualities remain eternal in spite of all the blunders men may make: the essential qualities of the West, of course. The native intellectual accepted the cogency of these ideas and deep down in his brain you could find a vigilant sentinel ready to defend the Greco-Latin pedestal. Now it so happens that during the struggle for liberation, at the moment that the native intellectual comes into touch again with his people, this artificial sentinel is turned into dust. All the Mediterranean values, - the triumph of the human individual of clarity and beauty – become lifeless, colourless knick-knacks. All those speeches seem like collections of dead words; those values which seemed to uplift the soul are revealed as worthless, simply because they have nothing to do with the concrete conflict in which the people is engaged.

Fanon's arguments are appropriate enough where the return to pre-colonial language(s), traditions and ideology are seen as resistance tools for the refusal of all that is colonial. But, as During (1995) argues, post-colonial communities usually suffer from a deep sense of defeat by the former colonial powers, and that freedom is often seen as the enemy's gift, regardless of how its achievement is portrayed by the post-colonial ideologies of the new native order. Post-colonial literary and translation projects need to come into their own, not only in terms of how many great works are imitated or translated, but in terms of establishing a whole apparatus capable of supporting the projects: a publishing industry, including magazines, journals, and critics; a critical use of language(s), and understanding of norms and values; a particularized context of myths about the past and the present; a determination for continuity; and above all, a readership (cf. Gray, 1984).

The case of the Arab world, however, leaves a lot to be desired. Particularly in the Maghreb, the existence of elites educated mainly in the colonial languages and their humanist, universalist culture(s), has never assisted in the shift from colonization into decolonization, as argued by Fanon (1961). Literary and translation projects in the post-colonial Arab world should emphasize the problematics of interculturalism, bilingualism, and identity. They also should engage in readings, interpretations, and rewritings of spaces in-between the West, on the one hand, and the Arab world with its

language, dialects, religion, and ethnic diversity, on the other, as well as between its past and tradition, and its present and modernity.

In general terms, the great majority of Arab intellectuals writing either in the native language, Arabic, or in the colonial languages, French or English, has produced works, and translated texts, that aim to be used as sites for liberation and resistance. Such works show alterations of discourses which reflect on each other in the interrogation, modification, and/or negation of certain moments in history, as well as the deconstruction and reconstruction of new/old awareness of their present with their problematics for the definition of identity and nation. They also attempt to act as sites for the critique of economic, political and social problems in the Arab world. Figures like Djébar, Khatibi, Kilito, Chraïbi, Munif, Said, and others can easily be included in this category. Their texts are very much closer to standard French or English, but include considerable references, including names, to standard Arabic and its spoken varieties, Berber and Islamic signs, and tend to exhibit anti-imperialist discursive techniques. But this is the expectation, and reality shows a different picture. Discussing the translation of French literature into Arabic in Egypt, Jacquemond (1992:144) refers to the “Thousand Books project”,

launched in 1955 with the explicit purpose of allowing the Egyptian audience to read the most essential books of modern world culture in cheap, subsidized paperback editions.

But this was an immediate action of a new ruling order, which soon gave way to other translation projects, as Jacquemond (146) further writes,

... more than half of the translations from French published in 1980s concern Egyptology, Orientalism, or Arab, Islamic, and Third World affairs. In this case translation can no longer be seen as springing from the urge to have access to Western intellectual production, but rather as a way for the national culture to examine and reassure itself in the other’s mirror.

Though translation is a valid strategy to know what others write about one’s culture, relegating its purpose to bring in new impetus to a dwindling national post-colonial literary and cultural project cannot be said to aid national identity formation and/or (re)construction.

What further complicates translation in the Arab world is the existence of Arab writers who write in Arabic but for translation, and their intended audience is not Arab at all. These works are often translated into European languages, particularly English and French, and it is translation that gains the authors prominence among their native readers, albeit limited groups of ‘native foreigners or quasi-foreigners’ intellectuals. Many “famous” Arab authors can be subsumed under this category: Hanan al-Shaykh, Mohamed Heikal, Nawal al-Saadawi, Elias Khoury, Salim Barakat, Alaa Tahir, to name but a few. In most cases, and as Dallal (1998) explains, the works of such Arab authors that find their way into the West through translation are deemed to reconfirm two dominant concepts: Arab women and Islamic fundamentalism.

The pride of place, however, goes to Tahar Ben Jelloun, who can easily be given the title of the doyen of the *native foreigners*. In all his writings, since *Harrouda* (1971), Ben Jelloun has played the role of reinforcer of the old/new orientalist stereotypes and clichés about everything Arab and Islamic.

Because they are either published in or written specifically for the West, the problem for the texts of our *native foreigners* is whether the dominant culture will accept and interact equitably with them, or whether it will try and force them to assimilate to its value systems. Such texts have received attention from Western academic and journalistic critics, as well as the general readership, even though only a few writers maintain noticeable presence in the literary arena. This is because, as Jacquemond (1997) argues, for such texts to achieve a status comparable with that achieved by Tahar Ben Jelloun’s *La Nuit Sacrée* (1987), in particular, these *native foreigners* need to conform to: a) dominant Western representations of Arab culture and society, and b) dominant Western ideological, moral, and aesthetic values.

Ben Jelloun, the *native foreigner* from Morocco, seems to have opted to conform to both conditions. In his *La Nuit Sacrée*, for which he was awarded the Prix Goncourt in 1987 and, which is said to have sold almost two million copies, and in his other writings (all published in France), he has inhabited the space of the *delire*, *fantasmes*, and *fabulation*, and his obsession with sex and sexual organs has become his trademark. *La Nuit Sacrée* tells the story (stories, nights) of a female given the Arabic name of Zahra after almost twenty years living as a boy by the name of Ahmed. Zahra-Ahmed, son-daughter of a wealthy father in Morocco, is brought up as a boy to safeguard the honour and fortune of the father and to conform to the dominant patriarchal system in society. What Ben Jelloun does in his prize winning text

is to give a number of accounts of fantasy, sex, irrationality and mental diseases; the very accounts used in orientalist texts to describe the Arabs and Islam. Hiding behind certain concepts of Islamic mysticism, albeit ignoring their historical contexts, Ben Jelloun produces an essentially Western text.

La Nuit Sacrée was translated into Arabic in 1987, the same year the French text was published and the same year Ben Jelloun was awarded the Prix Goncourt for it. The translation appeared in a series called *`awdatu n-naS* (Lit. the return of the text), a series that aims to translate bestselling texts of Maghrebi French literature into Arabic, and whose main sponsor is the French publisher Editions du Seuil. Translating texts like Ben Jelloun's back into Arabic does not seem to serve any return of any kind because it does not stimulate any cultural innovation or positively assess indigenous traditions and identities. Such translations are mainly addressed to an elite of bilingual native readers, not the wider constituencies of readers (cf. Venuti 1998 for a discussion of the role of translation as a hybridizer of hegemonic cultural values).

The Arabic translation of *La Nuit Sacrée* follows the same manipulative strategies so as to camouflage Ben Jelloun's initial invisibility and auto-orientalism. The language is highly formal, often archaic, and Islamic references are used in ways that most certainly aim to pacify the 'small deplorable' Arab readers. Ben Jelloun's overt faithfulness to his target audience – metropolitan France – his enthusiasm for the extremes of exotica and his ways of representing Moroccan, and by extension Arab locales as godforsaken places, devastate any proper appreciation of his work in Arabic. For example, for the main title of the French text Ben Jelloun opts for *La Nuit Sacrée* (The Sacred/Holy Night) which, to the French language readers, intertextualizes with *Mille et une nuits* (A Thousand and One Nights); a strategy that keeps his choices and the narrative in line with what Jacquemond (1997) calls '*l'exotisation et la naturalisation*' (exoticization and naturalization). For the Arabic translation, the translator chooses *laylatu l-qadr* (The Night of Destiny or fate or preordination). Regarding this translational choice, Mehrez (1992:128) notes:

This Arabic translation is not a literal translation of the French words which remain alien to the cultural referent provided by the Arabic sign. The bilingual reader, however, is bound to make these necessary translations as soon as he or she begins to read the French text. If anything, therefore, the French title (of the original) fails to translate the Arabic subtext in which the entire work is grounded. ...

Consequently, the French title is decentered and deterritorialized by the Arabic sign which the bilingual reader is expected to read/translate into the French text.

Though I tend to agree with the intentions underscoring Mehrez's argument, I have nonetheless two misgivings: 1) borrowing from the *Qur'an*, a highly sensitive text, to translate the main title of the French seems to be a calculated ploy to put some distance between the Arabic text and its receiving constituencies; and 2) any translation is first and foremost intended for monolinguals, not Mehrez's bilingual readers.

The Arabic translation overflows with uncommon and strange linguistic forms that reveal the translator's hand: a systematic use of archaisms on the lexical level that points to the desire to elevate, through the translation discourse, the tenor to a formality that makes the language lofty and highbrow. By their difficulty, such forms attract attention from and disturb the effects of the language that surrounds them. This is in complete contrast with the unidiomatic lexis and style of the French text (cf. Faiq 2000b). For instance, in the French text, what is common usage in French: *sans rien dire, sans rien repondre, je ne dis rien* (Lit. without saying anything), all become in Arabic *lam yanbus bibinti shafa* (Lit. not utter/speak/say the daughter of a lip), an archaic collocation that requires extra processing efforts to decipher, unless of course the reader is one of Mehrez's bilinguals. The translator could have opted for what, like the French structures, is common usage is Modern Arabic: *sakata* (kept silent) or *lam yaqul shay'an* (did not say anything).

In *La Nuit Sacrée*, there are also implications that Islam condones rape and torture, as well as sorcery and charlatanism. The text is also full of nights with and images of the dead and ghosts, precisely what mainstream orientalist discourses maintain in their depiction of the Arabs and Islam.

Ghosts are the remains of the dead. They are echoes of former times and former lives: those who have died but still remain, hovering between erasure of the past and the indelibility of the present – creatures out of time. Muslims too, it seems, are often thought to be out of time: throwbacks to medieval civilizations who are caught in the grind and glow of 'our' modern culture. It is sometimes said that Muslims belong to cultures and societies that are moribund and have no vitality – no life of their own. Like ghosts they remain with us, haunting the present. (Sayyed, 1997:1)

In line with orientalist's representations of the Arabs and Islam, Ben Jelloun describes the Moroccan society, a description that is certainly taken to represent all Arabs and Islam for his Western readers, as being irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, raging, dark, angry and different, thus the existence of another that is rational, virtuous, mature and normal. Knowing that sex and Arab women, mysticism and religion would appeal to his French readers, Ben Jelloun sets out to depict Arab-Islamic societies as a contrast to Christendom, the West and modernity; and Islam is almost always identified with negative and antithetical terms. Straddling two cultures, one of which is attached to specific and diverse locales and histories in the Third World, Ben Jelloun, the alien but familiar writer from Morocco, addresses his text primarily to readers in the West whose tastes he shares. This is exactly the point Dallal (1998:8) makes:

.. the parody of sexual, cultural and religious traditions is, of course, not new to Arabic literature, and has a long and illustrious history, from Abu Nuwas (the celebrated wine poet of the Abassid era) to Nizar Qabbani (the most popular contemporary poet in the Arab world). Indeed, satire and lampoon have always been and still are enormously popular, even if repressed by various Arab regimes. But such forms are most popular when artfully composed or performed, and when they are internally directed, or meant for Arab audiences. Indeed, in the case of Rushdie, it is not the perception that Islam is parodied *per se*, but the perception that Islam is parodied for the sake of Western audiences that pushed everything over the edge.

Another example of our *native foreigners*, this time from Egypt, is Mohamed Heikal, particularly his *Autumn of Fury* (1983), which was written in English and translated into Arabic by the author himself; he insisted on carrying out the translation process. *Autumn of Fury* gives an exciting account of the life of the late Egyptian president Anwar Sadat, who was assassinated in October 1981 by members of his own army. The focus of the book is on Sadat's policies which, according to the author, have had disastrous ramifications for Egypt and the rest of the Arab World.

The appropriation of the text and the manipulation of readers of both texts (English and Arabic) begin at the front covers. The front cover of the English text shows the main title *Autumn of Fury* followed by the subtitle *The Assassination of Sadat*. Though Heikal keeps the main title of his book intact

on the front cover of the Arabic translation (1988), the subtitle, however, changes into *The story of the beginning and end of Anwar Sadat's era*. This subtitle is the first indication of Heikal's intention to appropriate the text and manipulate Arab readers' reactions and the ways he wants them to interpret his text. His manipulation of the subtitle is a case of the highest levels of manipulation and rewriting. On the one hand, the front cover of the Arabic text does not mention at all that it is a translation, but gives the impression that it is originally written in Arabic. On the other hand, Heikal's appropriation is manifested by his use of what is semiotically familiar, thus unchallenging, to Arab readers. The words *story*, *beginning and end* and *era* all form part of the way Arabs generally perceive history and progress and hit at the very heart of their religious belief system: it is easy for an Arab reader to accept the idea of beginning and end of an era as these are part of the divine will. The word *assassination* would have not triggered the same reaction in the readers of the Arabic text, but to an English Language reader, *assassination* sums up that mysterious, violent, fundamentalist, autocratic, exotic, and blood-thirsty Arab World. Here, like others before him, Heikal gives Western readers what is familiar to them: an Arab World where peace makers are assassinated.

The back cover of the English text lists excerpts from reviews: *Compulsively readable; a formidable indictment of the Sadat's years; a riveting account; a brilliant sense of history, devastating ... eloquent power*, which clearly indicate that the book was generously received by the English language reading world, because it stays within the familiar, exotic and yet foreign parameters, at the same time. The excerpts also give readers the chance to locate the text within the general publishing world, or how the text was received by critics. This is denied to readers of the Arabic text: the back cover carries a paragraph written by none other than Heikal himself, further telling the Arab readers how to judge the text.

The problem for Heikal and Ben Jelloun, as for other *native foreigners*, is that what they make familiar and natural for the English and French languages reading worlds, and which, according to them, was not meant for the Arab readers anyway, wants to be born again Arab. The issue, however, is how can one refamiliarize and renaturalize something Arab that was forcibly shaped for a particular audience? Heikal's and Ben Jelloun's (and the latter's translator) cunning strategy was to turn the Anglo-American and French attitude of invisibility, subversion and appropriation around. This they did through a sustained and systematic appropriation of the text and the manipulation of the reading position and ultimately of the readers.

Conclusion

Mastering the alien language of the colonizer was, and still is, what the colonized, including Arabs, can use to reclaim some personal power within an unequal context of domination and power. Many Arab and Muslim authors have used the politics of the novel, the genre that accompanied the rise of the empire, to engage in political confrontation both within and without the boundaries of their native communities. They have used the oppressor's language(s) and literary forms to drive their own agenda home (cf. Guardi, this volume).

Certainly, in the Arab World and the so called Third World there are problems with publishing, censorship (cf. Attar, this volume), and other aspects of freedom in general, but this should not mean the submission to the ex-colonizers in order to join the league of world culture and literature.

We black Africans have been blandly invited to submit ourselves to a second epoch of colonialism – this time by a universal-humanoid abstraction defined and conducted by individuals whose theories and prescriptions are derived from the apprehension of *their* world and *their* history, *their* social neuroses and *their* value system. (Soyinka 1976:x)

Authors from the Arab world, like Ben Jelloun and Mohamed Heikal, have opted to walk into the straitjacket the West had cut for them. They have tied themselves to a particular ideology associated with a particular culture of domination, and a particular poetics that sees the native lands and peoples of these authors as unequal and as a dark spot in history and world culture and literature. Their writings, particularly in English and French, are taken by western cities as evidence that the stereotypes and clichés used to represent/translate Arabs and Islam, as explained by Said (1997), were and still are true, and that the *native foreigners* only further confirm them, particularly as Jacquemond (1997:157) aptly writes:

These documents are well received because they simultaneously confirm the alterity of the other culture (backward, authoritarian ...), and the representation the French culture bestows upon itself (modern, democratic ..); a confirmation, emanating from the other, *is utterly gratifying*. (emphasis added; my translation from French).

Native foreigners manage superbly to do the job for the orientalists as Edward Said sees them. They use subversion and transformation of Arab realities and Islam to reinforce what Lefevere (1996) called “the dominant poetics, the dominant ideology” of the western culture of representing the Arab and Muslim Other. Even though not representative of the Arab world as a whole or of Islam, the *native foreigners* are taken by their masters in metropolitan centers as metonymically representatives of all Arabs and Islam. Their representations of their native culture(s) fit the images, imagined and/or constructed by orientalists; and their writings also complicate the situation of translation into and out of Arabic Supported by the westernized middle-classes in the Arab world and by the subsidies of their publishers in the metropolitan centers, they are usually immediately translated back into Arabic for a limited audience that share their tastes. This translation project hinders the purpose of translation as a tool for intercultural contacts, innovation and progress (cf. Saleh, this volume).

The case of the *native foreigners* demonstrates that language is not, and will never be; that translation is not, and will never be, the problem. The problem resides in the ideology that sustains language, the poetics and discourses of translation and representation of others within a master discourse that has not changed for centuries, and which welcomes members from the ex-colonies on the proviso that they adhere to its politics of translation and representation, creating thus more causes of *non-intercultural* communication.

References

- Bassnett, S. (1998). Translating across cultures. In S. Hunston (Ed.), *Language at Work* [British Studies in Applied Linguistics 13], 72-85. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Bassnett, S. (1991). *Translation Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Beaugrande, R. de (2005). *Geopolitics, Geolinguistics, and Translation*. In S. Faiq (Ed.) *Of Identity and Representation in Intercultural Communication*. Intercultural Communication Studies XIV-4, pp. 5-18.
- Ben Jelloun, T. (1971). *Harrouda*. Paris: Denoël.

- Ben Jelloun, T. (1987). *La Nuit Sacrée*. Paris: Editions du Seuil.
- Ben Jelloun, T. (1987). *Laylatu l-qadr* [The Night of Destiny] (trans. Mohammed Sharghi). Casablanca: Toubqal and Le Seuil.
- Bhabha, H. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Carbonell, O. (1996). The exotic space of cultural translation. In R. Álvarez & M. Carmen-África Vidal (Eds.), *Translation, Power, Subversion*, (79-98). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Clark, P. (1997). Contemporary Arabic literature in English. Why is so little translated? Do Arabs prefer it this way? *The Linguist* 36(4): 108-110.
- Gray, S. (1984). A sense of place in new literatures, particularly South African English. *World Literature Written in English* 24(2): 224-231.
- Dallal, J. A. (1998). The perils of occidentalism. *The Times Literary Supplement*, 24 April: 8-9.
- Dingwaney, A. (1995). Introduction: translating "Third World" cultures. In A. Dingwaney & C. Maier (Eds.), *Between languages and cultures*, 3-15. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- During, S. (1995). Postmodernism or post-colonialism. In B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths & H. Tiffin (Eds.), *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 125-129. London: Routledge.
- Faiq, S. (2004). The cultural encounter in translating from Arabic. In S. Faiq (Ed.), *Cultural Encounters in Arabic Translation*, 1-13. Clevedon & New York: Multilingual Matters.
- Faiq, S. (2003). Your culture, my language: representation and the master discourse of translation. In *Interaction Entre Culture et Traduction*. Tangier: L'Ecole Supérieure Roi Fahd de Traduction.
- Faiq, S. (2000a). Arabic translation: a glorious past but a meek present. In Gaddis-Rose, M. (Ed.), *Translation Perspectives XI: Beyond Western Tradition*, 83-99. Binghamton: State University of New York at Binghamton.
- Faiq, S. (2000b). Back to the original: translating Maghrebi French literature into Arabic. In M. Salama-Carr (Ed.), *Translating French Film and Literature II*, 201-17. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Fanon, F. (1961). *The Wretched of the Earth* (Les damnés de la terre, trans. C. Farrington, 1965). London: MacGibbon & Kee.
- Heikal, M. (1983). *Autumn of Fury*. London: Corgi Books [reprinted 1984 and 1986].
- Heikal, M. (1988). *Khariif al-ghaDab* [Autumn of (the) Fury]. Cairo: Al-Ahraam Centre for Translation and publication.

- Jacquemond, R. (1992). Translation and cultural hegemony: the case of French-Arabic translation. In L. Venuti (Ed.), *Rethinking Translation*, 139-158. London: Routledge.
- Jacquemond, J. (1997) Pour une économie et une poétique de la traduction de et vers l'arabe. In M. H. de Larramendi & G. Fernández Parrilla (eds.) *Pensamiento y circulación de las ideas en el Mediterráneo: el papel de la traducción* (pp. 149-162). Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha.
- Layoun, M. (1995). Translation, cultural transgression and tribute, and leaden feet. In A. Dingwaney & C. Maier (Eds.), *Between languages and cultures*, 267-289. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Lefevere, A. (1990). Translation: its genealogy in the West. In S. Bassnett & A. Lefevere (Eds.), *Translation, History & Culture*, 14-28. London: Cassell.
- Lefevere, A. (1995). The historiography of African literature written in English. In B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths & H. Tiffin (Eds.), *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 465-470. London: Routledge.
- Lefevere, A. (1996). Translation: who is doing what for/against whom and why? In Gaddis-Rose, M. (Ed.), *Translation Horizons Beyond the Boundaries of Translation Spectrum [Translation Perspectives IX]*, 45-58. Binghamton: State University of New York at Binghamton.
- Mehrez, S. (1992). Translation and the postcolonial experience: the francophone North African text. In L. Venuti (Ed.), *Rethinking Translation*, 120-138. London: Routledge.
- Said, E. (1993). *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- Said, E. (1995). *Orientalism*. London: Penguin (first published by Routledge & Kegan Paul 1978).
- Said, E. (1997). *Covering Islam*. London: Vintage.(first published by Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981).
- Sayyed, B. (1997). *A Fundamental Fear*. London: Zed Books.
- Soyinka, W. (1976). *Myth, Literature and the African World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Spivak, G. C. (1985). Three women's texts and a critique of imperialism. *Critical Inquiry* 12(1): 43-61.
- Thomas, S. (1998). Translating as intercultural conflict. In S. Hunston (Ed.), *Language at Work [British Studies in Applied Linguistics 13]*, 98-108. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Venuti, L. (1995). *The Translator's Invisibility*. London: Routledge.

- Venuti, L. (1996). Translation as social practice: or, The violence of translation. In Gaddis-Rose, M. (Ed.), *Translation Horizons Beyond the Boundaries of Translation Spectrum* [Translation Perspectives IX], 195-214. Binghamton: State University of New York at Binghamton.
- Venuti, L. (1998). *The Scandals of Translation*. London: Routledge.
- Zleta, P. (1990). Translation: Text and Pre-Text: 'Adequacy' and 'Acceptability' in Crosscultural Communication. In S. Bassnet & A. Lefevere (Eds.) *Translation, History, and Culture*. London: Cassell.