



The Dialectic of Intellectual Compatibility and Conflict Between the Translator and the Author of the Original Text

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Abstract:

This article examines the dialectic of intellectual compatibility and conflict between the translator and the author of the original text. It explores the reasons behind the strength or weakness of translated works. The study reviews Hashem Saleh's translations of Muhammad Arkoun's works, and Sami Al-Droubi's translations of Dostoyevsky's literature. It also highlights the experience of Abu Al-Eid Doudou in translating German texts, particularly those of the orientalist Heinrich Maltzan. The article concludes with two successful translation experiences: Reda Mohammed Al-Daqiqi's translation of The History of the Qur'an by Theodor Nöldeke, and the translation of Robert Greene's books by Hisham Al-Hanawi and Munir Suleiman.

Keywords: Intellectual Compatibility – Intellectual Conflict – Translator

Résumé :

Cet article examine la dialectique entre la compatibilité intellectuelle et le conflit entre le traducteur et l'auteur du texte original. Il explore les raisons qui expliquent la qualité ou la faiblesse des œuvres traduites. L'étude passe en revue les traductions par Hashem Saleh des œuvres de Muhammad Arkoun, ainsi que celles de Sami Al-Droubi de l'œuvre littéraire de Dostoïevski. Elle met également en lumière l'expérience d'Abu Al-Eid Doudou dans la traduction de textes allemands, en particulier ceux de l'orientaliste Heinrich Maltzan. L'article se termine par deux exemples de traductions réussies : la traduction par Reda Mohammed Al-Daqiqi de L'Histoire du Coran de Theodor Nöldeke, et la traduction des livres de Robert Greene par Hisham Al-Hanawi et Munir Suleiman.

Mots-clés : Compatibilité intellectuelle – Conflit intellectuel – Traducteur

Introduction:

There is a consensus, or at least a near consensus, among linguists, cultural anthropologists, and translation specialists that mastering a language in terms of its vocabulary and grammar is not sufficient. This is because cultural background provides all the guidelines and conventions that facilitate linguistic action. Therefore, the translator must invoke their linguistic knowledge and experiences to produce the same effect on the reader of the translated text as was achieved with the reader of the original text. To achieve this, a set of factors, qualifications, and conditions must be met... Translation is, without a doubt, a cultural dialogue. It is an exchange of perspectives and viewpoints that shifts from one language to another, and from one linguistic realm to another. It is a fundamental element of the translational act, as the success or failure of a translation hinges on conveying the specific values of the target culture. This is where the deep concept of context and the temporal and spatial framework in which the original text emerged comes into play (1) (Said Hanseali, 2017).

In other words, "culture influences the reception process of every translational act" (2) (Z.Y. Schmidt, 1995, p. 170). The translator must be capable of not only reconciling differences between various languages but also of addressing the disparities between cultures, lifestyles, situations, and diverse environments (3) (Rune Ingo, 2000).

1. Hashim Saleh as a Translator and Critical Reader of Arkoun's Works

Hashim Saleh (b. 1950) is a Syrian writer, researcher, Enlightenment-oriented thinker, and translator. He is



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regarded as one of the most prominent Arab intellectuals advocating for religious reform and the critique of fundamentalism. His work addresses issues of modernity and postmodernity, and he writes regularly for the Saudi-owned international newspaper *Asharq Al-Awsat*. Saleh lived in Paris for thirty-three years starting in the 1980s, during which he produced numerous works reflecting his intellectual project. He currently resides in Morocco.

It appears that the long period he spent in France—specifically during the time when **Mohammed Arkoun** (1928–2010), a prominent Algerian philosopher and historian of Islamic thought, was publishing most of his key works—had a deep influence on Saleh. The two thinkers shared overlapping interests, particularly in matters of Islamic reform, and this intellectual proximity paved the way for a cultural and philosophical encounter before a translational one.

Over the years, Saleh translated thirteen of Arkoun's works, including four after Arkoun's death in 2010. In effect, Saleh served as the primary channel through which Arab readers were introduced to Arkoun's thought. His translations were more than linguistic transpositions; they often featured extensive footnotes and scholarly dialogue with Arkoun's ideas—a fact acknowledged by both thinkers on several occasions.

A telling example of this intellectual collaboration appears in the introduction to Arkoun's book *The Historicity of Islamic Thought*, which was translated by Saleh. There, Arkoun writes:

"I sincerely hope that readers will think well of both the author and the translator. They have collaborated like two

brothers in righteousness, truth, and the revival of *ijtihad* in contemporary Islamic thought. This thought has recently entered a new phase in its historical development, which brings with it new challenges and requires appropriate intellectual methods. While the attempts in this book may not suffice to resolve all the issues facing Islamic thought, they do open new horizons and propose actionable frameworks grounded in rigorous scholarly methods. That is why we chose the title: *The Historicity of Islamic Thought*." (Arkoun, 1996, from the Introduction).¹

Prior to this, Arkoun had expressed his desire to find a translator highly proficient in both Arabic and French, particularly someone familiar with the specialized vocabulary of the human and social sciences. He noted:

"I was always keen to find a translator skilled in both Arabic and French, well-versed in the terminologies of the human and social sciences, to faithfully transmit to the Arab audience what I regard as my most important works."

He also referred to previous translations by his friend Adel Al-Awwa, suggesting a degree of dissatisfaction, especially due to the lack of intellectual alignment between author and translator. Arkoun emphasized that language and thought are inseparable, implying the necessity of philosophical and conceptual harmony in the translation process.

Thus, Arkoun begins his book with this preface, marking it as a key component of his broader project to renew Islamic tradition in a way that responds to the demands of modernity. Along with his translator, they jointly articulated a project grounded in what Arkoun called "Applied Islamology" – an approach that advocates applying modern social sciences to the study of Islamic heritage. From this perspective, Arkoun controversially argued that the Qur'an is mythologically



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structured, that its narratives are essentially myths, and that extracting legal rulings from it is an impossible task. These views sparked widespread controversy, leading to accusations of heresy (*takfir*) by some religious scholars.

As Arkoun himself explained, the impetus for this bold project lay in the post-independence context of Algeria, where ideological forces attempted to impose rigid interpretations of Islam that clashed with the complexities of lived belief.

Caught between condemnation—including book bans across various Arab countries—and admiration from progressive circles, Arkoun continued to defend his ideas until his death in 2010. He passed away expressing a clear sense of frustration, often stating that he was never properly read or understood by his intended audience.

1.1. How Did Hashim Saleh Discover Arkoun?

Hashim Saleh recounts that he first met **Mohammed Arkoun** in France after attending the defense of Arkoun's doctoral thesis. Upon this encounter, Saleh discovered in him a luminous and bold Islamic intellectual project. He proposed translating Arkoun's works into Arabic, but Arkoun hesitated at first. He feared that translating his ideas into Arabic would provoke strong opposition from religious authorities. In fact, he expressed concern that he might suffer a fate similar to that of **Ibn Rushd (Averroes)**—the renowned Andalusian philosopher (1126–1198) who translated and interpreted Aristotle's works for the Almohad Caliph Abu Yusuf Yaqub al-Mansur, only to later face persecution and exile.

Yet, as Saleh recounts, Arkoun deeply loved Islam and took pride in its heritage. After Saleh persuaded him to

approve the translations, Arkoun was surprised to find that he had become a trendsetter across the Arab intellectual world.

This testimony was delivered by Saleh in a lecture at the **Riyadh Literary Club** on June 1, 2010, just two months and fourteen days before Arkoun's passing. The occasion marked the release of Saleh's own book *From Modernity to Globalization*, during which he reflected on his relationship with Arkoun and described Arkoun's intellectual project as one that would illuminate the Arab-Islamic heritage (Saleh, 2010).

In a separate interview, when asked the well-known question, "*Who are you?*"—so readers could understand who he was—Saleh responded philosophically. He began by citing **Socrates**, who famously urged, "Know thyself," and **Descartes**, who after a lifetime of thought decided to destroy all his previous ideas and begin anew. Then he answered:

"I am someone searching for truth within the field of Islamic heritage. And nothing attests to that more than the fact that I spent the bulk of my life translating Arkoun's works." (Saleh, 2020)

He added something deeply significant:

"I want to know whether it is possible for a new interpretation of Islam to emerge—different from the inherited and dominant readings across all sects and schools, whether majority or minority. I want to uncover the essential, original Islamic truth in its early clarity and freshness. Arkoun helped me a great deal in this endeavor, and for that I am indebted to him."

This is precisely the kind of **intellectual compatibility** we speak of between the translator and the author. The interview mentioned above is especially revealing in understanding the



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profound nature of the relationship between Saleh and Arkoun. I strongly encourage readers to explore it (available online via the previously cited link).

In general, one might confidently argue that such intellectual compatibility is essential between the translator and the author. A telling example of this is the case of *Deliverance from Error* (*al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*) by the classical Islamic thinker **Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī** (1058–1111). This work was initially translated into English by German orientalist **Franz August Schmölders** (1809–1880), who also authored studies on Arab philosophical traditions—including *Philosophical Writings by al-Farabi and Ibn Sina* (1836) and *On the Schools of Arab Philosophy, Especially that of al-Ghazali* (1842).

Yet in the Arabic edition of *al-Munqidh*, the editors and translators **Muhammad Muhammad Abu Layla** and **Nourshef Abd al-Rahim Rifaat** drew a distinction between Orientalist translations and their own approach. They stated:

“Our English translation is by a Muslim translator who is spiritually and intellectually aligned with Imam al-Ghazali. Thus, we claim that our version is closer to the soul of the text and to al-Ghazali’s ideas and methodology. This is precisely what motivated us to produce a new translation of the book.” (Al-Ghazali, 2001, p. 3)

This statement perfectly illustrates the importance of **intellectual, scholarly, and even spiritual alignment** between a translator and the original author.

2. Sami al-Droubi's Experience with Translating Dostoevsky

The question posed by the Palestinian writer and translator **Imad Hilmi al-Atili** is of great relevance to the issue under discussion – namely, the importance of cultural fidelity when transferring content from the original text into another language.

He asks provocatively:

“Should we stop reading **Sami al-Droubi**'s translations of Dostoevsky's works? And can we say that those who have only read the Arabic versions have not actually read the ‘real’ Dostoevsky?”

This is a genuine dilemma. Translation inevitably results in some loss of the original text's depth and nuance, and this is especially true when the translation passes through multiple linguistic stages. In the case of **Sami al-Droubi** (1921–1976) – a prominent Syrian diplomat, philosopher, and translator – his translations of Dostoevsky were not made directly from Russian but from **French**, a language he mastered. As **al-Atili** points out, this intermediary step may have significantly diluted the original literary force and philosophical depth of Dostoevsky's texts.

This raises an uncomfortable question: Can we really claim that those who have read Dostoevsky in Arabic through al-Droubi's translations have truly encountered the Russian author's authentic voice? Al-Atili illustrates this concern by comparing different translations of *Memoirs from the House of the Dead*, a well-known autobiographical novel by Dostoevsky. He cites, for example, the work of **Sadiq al-Ta'i**, who conducted a study highlighting translation errors in al-Droubi's version, as well as the translation by Moroccan poet **Idris al-Milyani**, noting discrepancies in both.



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Such analysis compels us to critically re-evaluate al-Droubi's legacy as a translator. Al-Atili also raises another important issue: the **critical authority of reading the original versus the translated text**. He asserts that the interpretive and analytical power of someone engaging with the original far surpasses that of someone relying solely on a translated version. He then asks:

“Can one truly critique a translated text after it has drifted so far from the original?”

The implied answer is a firm “no” – or very close to it. As scholars and critics, we recognize the **intellectual integrity and methodological rigor** that comes from direct engagement with the original source, particularly when it comes to critical analysis (al-Atili, 2017).

3. The Translation Experience of Abu al-Eid Dudu from German

The translation career of **Abu al-Eid Dudu** (1934–2004) began under the influence of German literature and language, which he studied at university. After earning his doctorate from the University of Austria in 1961, with a dissertation on **Ibn Nadhif al-Hamawi**, he then taught at the University of Kiel in Germany as well as his alma mater in Austria. Later, Dudu joined the students' mission of the National Liberation Front and enrolled at the University of Vienna to study Arabic literature. He first mastered the German language to native-like fluency. As confirmed by Abu al-Qasim Saadallah:

“Dudu mastered the language to the extent that he translated directly from German without consulting dictionaries or notes” (Mouloud Ouaimer, 2021).

Dudu later specialized in translating works of the German orientalist **Heinrich von Maltzan** (1826–1874). Among his translations are Maltzan’s trilogy about Algeria in the 19th century, including *The First Story* (the first part of the trilogy), *The Hashish Smoker in Algeria*, and *Three Years in Northwest Africa*.

Abu al-Eid Dudu highlighted the significant difference between Maltzan’s writings and those of other German travelers to Algeria during the early colonial period, such as **Georg Wilhelm Schimper** (1804–1878) and **Moritz Wagner** (1813–1887). While Wagner was a natural scientist, Maltzan was a poet and novelist who described Algeria with emotional depth and poetic imagery. Dudu emphasized that Maltzan’s knowledge of Arabic and Algerian dialects—acquired from two Algerian teachers before his travels—was a crucial distinction that gave Maltzan a unique insight unavailable to other travelers.

Dudu’s critical reading of *Three Years in Northwest Africa* reflects his profound understanding of the culture and the complex role Maltzan played as a mediator between the colonizer and the indigenous Algerians. Importantly, Dudu noted in his introduction:

“I do not claim that everything Maltzan wrote is 100% accurate; certainly, historians are better suited for verification. However, I must add that Maltzan is remarkably candid” (Dudu, cited in Mouloud Ouaimer, 2021).

This statement reveals two things: first, Dudu’s respect for his professional responsibility as a translator, refraining from overstepping into historical critique despite his deep linguistic and cultural knowledge; second, the intellectual harmony between translator and author, evident in Dudu’s praise of Maltzan’s frankness.



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Additionally, Dudu translated into Arabic the first novel in human history, *The Golden Ass* by **Lucius Apuleius of Madaurus** (modern Souk Ahras, Algeria). His translation was masterful, framed by a sophisticated introduction written in elevated classical Arabic to immerse readers in the ancient era and align stylistically with the novel's magical and divine themes.

Mouloud Ouaimer praised Dudu's translation style:

"While reading these books, I did not feel they were translated from another language. Dr. Dudu's style was beautiful, smooth, and clear. An eminent historian and translator once said: 'Dudu's mastery of both Arabic and German made the reader unaware that the text was a translation. He writes in beautiful, fluent Arabic with a consistent style that avoids confusion or awkwardness, making the translation appear as if it were an original text'" (Ouaimer, 2021).

This description underscores the crucial importance of the translator's linguistic ability to elevate the target language to the level of the original text through interaction, harmony, and resonance.

As **Mohammad Yahya al-Kharrat** (2000) asserts:

"The worst a translator can do is offer a cold imitation of the original's words. Translating style means preserving the spirit, purposes, and emotional impact of the text. If the translator extinguishes that glow, they commit a grave failure in fulfilling their task" (pp. 30-31).

Faithfulness to the target language does not imply losing the original text; rather, the translation process must respect a reasonable distance between self and other to balance the interaction between the two cultures.

4. Reda Muhammad Al-Duqaiqi's Experience in Translating The History of the Qur'an by Theodor Nöldeke:

Reda Muhammad Al-Duqaiqi (an Egyptian born in 1967) earned his PhD in Fundamentals of Religion from both the Department of Creed and Philosophy, Faculty of Fundamentals of Religion, Al-Azhar University in Tanta, and the Department of Arabic Studies, Faculty of Philosophy, Georg-August University in Göttingen, Germany (2003), graduating *with first-class honors and a recommendation to publish and circulate the thesis among universities*. His thesis was supervised by Mahmoud Hamdi Zaqzouq, former Minister of Awqaf in Egypt and a specialist in Oriental studies, with additional supervision by the German Orientalist Nagel Tillmann. He benefited from a scholarship to study German in its homeland to complete his doctoral thesis on *The History of the Qur'an* by Theodor Nöldeke in German (1836–1930), who is considered the dean of German and European Orientalists. One of Nöldeke's most famous students was Carl Brockelmann (1868–1956). After mastering German, Al-Duqaiqi translated *The History of the Qur'an* and prepared an extensive analytical and critical study in three volumes, which constituted his PhD thesis. The work was well-received, especially in Egypt and Arab-Islamic circles (Al-Duqaiqi, 2009, pp. 35–36).

The Lebanese translator George Tamer had produced an earlier translation of *The History of the Qur'an*, but it did not reach the scholarly level achieved by Al-Duqaiqi. What is significant in Al-Duqaiqi's translation is his scientific diligence and objective treatment of the material, despite the prominence of the original author in German and global Orientalism (Al-Duqaiqi, 2009, p. 36). Al-Duqaiqi traced the



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publication history of the book from Nöldeke's original doctoral dissertation in 1856 (he was twenty years old at the time), through its development by his students Otto Pretzel and Friedrich Schwally, particularly after Nöldeke suffered an eye disease that forced him to rely on his students for research advancement. He examined all editions up to the third edition, supervised by Nöldeke himself until his death. This work demonstrates Al-Duqaiqi's remarkable scholarly expertise, comparable to major textual critics (Al-Duqaiqi, 2009).

Al-Duqaiqi discussed the importance of his study in relation to Orientalist scholarship, which is among the main sources of Western ideas about Islam and Islamic civilization. Throughout his work, he critically and conscientiously addressed these Orientalist perspectives (Al-Duqaiqi, 2009). His introduction to the first volume of his book has become an important academic resource for specialists tracking the impact of Orientalist studies in the Arab world, evidenced by its detailed footnotes, references, and previous studies cited (Al-Duqaiqi, 2009).

Regarding his translation methodology and purpose, Al-Duqaiqi aimed to produce a style familiar to the Arabic reader, without imposing his own interpretation or rushing the understanding of Nöldeke's original text. He emphasized utmost scholarly integrity, placing the original text in its intellectual context without exaggeration or distortion, extracting Nöldeke's meaning faithfully and honestly, as his religious commitment required. He avoided reading into the text anything not actually stated by Nöldeke (Al-Duqaiqi, 2009, pp. 57, 62).

In the preface, Al-Duqaiqi also addresses the difficulty of translating from German into Arabic, due to Nöldeke's numerous footnotes and the challenge of locating Arabic and Islamic references cited in the original. Additionally, the Qur'anic verses and chapter numbers cited by Nöldeke do not correspond to the standard Ottoman codex (Mushaf Uthmani), but rather to Gustav Leberecht Flügel's edition (1802–1870), which arranges the Qur'an thematically rather than in the traditional order by revelation (Al-Duqaiqi, 2009).

As a cultural intermediary between two civilizations, the translator must possess wisdom and insight to transfer the source culture's meanings into the target culture within the framework of world literature, which emphasizes the human dimension, tolerance, mutual understanding, and respect for the other—even if the peoples differ in customs, traditions, principles, or religious heritage. This view is shared by Katarina Momzen, who wrote the introduction to Goethe's *West-Eastern Divan* in its Arabic translation, noting the translator's significant role in this task (Momzen, 1978).

Momzen further points to a paradox regarding the profound influence of Arabic literature on the German poet Goethe, including ancient Arab poets like Imru' al-Qais, Antarah ibn Shaddad, Amr ibn Kulthum, and even Abbasid poets like Al-Mutanabbi. Remarkably, all Goethe's references to Arabic poets were through European languages or translations, raising the question of how such influence could have been so deep if Goethe had not accessed original Arabic sources (Momzen, 1978, p. 13). This observation directly relates to the intellectual affinity Goethe had with Arabic poetry and the Arabic language in general.



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5. The Consequences of Delayed Translation on Keeping Up with Cultural Action:

5.1 The First Model:

Perhaps the introduction written by Faisal Darraj for Claude Lévi-Strauss's book *Tristes tropiques* (Sad Tropics), authored in 1955 and translated by Muhammad Subh with an excellent foreword by Faisal Darraj – a Palestinian writer, researcher, and critic who graduated from the Sorbonne with a PhD in philosophy titled "Alienation Between Marx and Hegel" in 1974 – offers us a broad window to understand the importance of the intellectual harmony and critical and theoretical convictions that usually develop between the translator and the original author. Darraj built and absorbed these convictions at the Sorbonne and wrote, criticized, and researched based on them.

Claude Lévi-Strauss, the famous French structuralist almost synonymous with structuralism due to his extensive work applying this methodology – particularly in anthropology – wrote this book, which focuses specifically on anthropology. However, the author himself described it as more akin to a novel, a description that Darraj finds more accurate and enjoyable, saying:

"The nature of the book, placing it within specialized and other fields, prompted non-specialists to celebrate it upon its release in 1955, including Georges Bataille, Maurice Blanchot, and Raymond Aron, which even made the Goncourt Academy wish the book were a novel to award it their famous prize..." (19) (Lévi-Strauss, 2000, p.5).

In the introduction, Darraj pointedly refers to the importance of cultural transmission and sharing between peoples contained in the book, stating:

"The absence of human bridges prevents knowledge" (20) (Lévi-Strauss, 2000, p.6).

These human bridges are certainly embodied in works such as this, both in their original form and in translation. Darraj adds in the same context: "*The condition of universal human culture is like that of the cultures within it – flourishing through plurality and diversity, and lacking in the singularity that antagonizes others...*" (21) (Lévi-Strauss, 2000, p.7).

The translation of the book was delayed for nearly fifty years. Should the Arab reader therefore wait this long to discover many hidden aspects of the peoples inhabiting the southern hemisphere and to read this book in translation? The book gives a precise description of the lives of South American peoples specifically, such as those in Brazil, the Amazon, Argentina, Puerto Rico, and others. Translator Muhammad Subh notes: "*Most of the content of the book comprises the author's exploratory journeys between 1934 and 1939, as well as some about his trip to India in the early 1950s...*" (22) (Lévi-Strauss, 2000, p.17).

5.2 The Second Model:

Translator Hisham Kamal al-Din al-Hannawi translated the book *The 48 Laws of Power* by the American author Robert Greene, one of the world's best-selling books. Al-Hannawi worked in over eighty jobs, including as a construction worker, translator, magazine editor-in-chief, and Hollywood screenwriter (23) (ar.wikipedia.org/wiki). The book marked a turning point in his life, and his proficiency in five languages helped him craft this rich content within the book's chapters.



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Hisham al-Hannawi, a graduate of Ain Shams University in zoology and chemistry, later joined the police academy graduating in forensic science (1978–2000), shares the interests of Greene, whose book builds the self and personality in their relationships with the professional environment and generally with others. In the original English text, Greene used symbolic images for each of the 48 laws, but al-Hannawi removed many footnotes and annotations he deemed unnecessary.

For example, he replaced the symbol of the cross and the sun, which is sensitive for Muslims, with a general symbol acceptable to all and expressing the true essence of eternal power, which is "*Ilaf al-Hikmah*" (The Covenant of Wisdom) (24) (Greene, 2020, p.21).

The translator interacts very positively with the book and conveys it to the Arab Muslim and Christian readers alike, hoping it will be received by both after overcoming certain elements in it: "*I hope everyone, Christians and Muslims alike, will accept it...*" (25) (Greene, 2020, pp. 21-22). This hope paves the way for the reception of the incoming culture, and without it, such interaction would not have occurred.

The second translator is Munir Suleiman, the Syrian translator (26) (diffah.alaraby.co.uk), who translated Robert Greene's second book *The Art of Seduction*, which has been translated into more than twenty-one languages and achieved the highest sales rates in the Arab world, as evidenced by the cover of its third Arabic edition. This translator addressed his readers by saying he wanted to spread knowledge that carries salvation throughout the Arab world, while he struggled against the spiteful and envious who beset every beautiful thing in his community. He told his Arab readers:

"I want them to embrace knowledge and make it their goal, leaving aside all trivial matters. And they should know that not everything that pains inspires, that the publisher is not Samson, the translator is not Hercules, nor is the author one of the gods of Olympus..." (27) (Greene, 2019, pp. 13-14).

Conclusion:

The summary of the experiences we have discussed can be outlined as follows: The results discussed by Thaer Ali Dheeb in his translation experience, and through his critical observations of some Arabic translations, are nearly the same as those we have addressed in the examples we presented. Therefore, we have conveyed his experience due to his specialization and long career in translation.

Thaer Ali Dheeb (the Syrian writer, translator, and physician dedicated fully to translation and cultural work) speaks about the poor translation of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (published in 1978), the work that brought Said (a Palestinian-American, 1935–2003) global recognition. Dheeb criticizes the translation by Kamal Abu Dheeb (1981), who also translated *Culture and Imperialism* in 1997, citing the Egyptian writer and critic Radwa Ashour (1946–2014), who expressed her dissatisfaction with Abu Dheeb's translation, saying:

"It is confused, obscure, and suffers from several problems, the clearest of which is the transformation of a brilliant and enjoyable book into a dense text loaded with obscure terminology." (28) (Radwa Ashour, 2003, p.14).

Thaer Ali Dheeb discusses the enormous negative impact on Edward Said's intellectual legacy, stemming from the



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translator's verbose style, confusing terminology, and neglect of many aspects of the original intellectual message (referring to the poor translation)... (29) (Thaer Ali Dheeb, 2008, pp.35-36).

Dheeb then describes the original text as much more beautiful, enjoyable, fluent, and precise compared to Abu Dheeb's translation despite his extensive introduction. He adds that Abu Dheeb fails to adhere to the rules he set for his own translation and criticizes his methodology as significantly flawed. Dheeb emphasizes that the target language, Arabic, is by no means backward but fully capable of assimilating other cultures regardless of their nature. The translator's poor work contributes to marginalizing Arabic both for its native speakers and beyond, which is a highly important outcome. (30) (Thaer Ali Dheeb, 2008, pp.36-37).

Poor and unsuccessful translation greatly affects the original text and harms the reputation of both the author and the translator alike.

In his discussion of the poor translation by Kamal Abu Dheeb, Thaer Ali Dheeb enumerates the losses incurred by the Arab reader relying on this poor translation, with the greatest loss being the cultural knowledge and ideas that were not conveyed as hoped.

The conclusion Thaer Ali Dheeb reaches from following Edward Said's works, directly related to our topic, is: "The most significant absence in the Arab reception of Edward Said, unlike other regions, is the exploration of the applied fields of knowledge his thought opened or changed perspectives on..." (31) (Thaer Ali Dheeb, 2008, p.29).

Of course, the "Arab reception" here refers to Said's ideas about the reality of Orientalism. It is worth recalling that Said

is one of the pioneers of postcolonial studies and a pillar of this theory (the Palestinian Edward Said, the Indian Homi Bhabha – author of *The Location of Culture*, translated by Thaer Ali Dheeb – and the American critic Gayatri Spivak of Bengali origin form a trio dubbed the “holy trinity” of postcolonial theory). (32) (Thaer Ali Dheeb, 2008, p.28).

The introduction that Dheeb wrote for Homi Bhabha’s book is important for Arab readers of Bhabha’s thought, which intersects with Said’s ideas to a great extent. In it, Dheeb explains Bhabha’s method of practicing this theory and does not overlook the translation problems Bhabha’s thought has encountered from other translators. (33) (Thaer Ali Dheeb, 2008, p.29).

Reading Dheeb’s introduction to Bhabha’s *Location of Culture* reveals the intellectual harmony we refer to between translator and original author—a harmony amounting to veneration by virtue of sharing, disseminating, and valuing these ideas. Otherwise, how do we explain the testimonial Dheeb included in his introduction regarding this postcolonial theory trio: “...a scientific formation possibly the best available on earth.” (34) (Homi K. Bhabha, 2004, p.10) referring to the aforementioned trio.

Dheeb explains Bhabha’s thought simply, covering concepts of postcolonialism, modernity and beyond, identity, cultural difference and cultural pluralism (noting a clear distinction between difference and pluralism), and the place of culture in all this. Dheeb places himself as an intermediary between the Arab reader and Bhabha, acting as a clarifying and simplifying mediator—not a directive one—as if explaining the theory through the pen of a knowledgeable, critical examiner.



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Regarding Gayatri Spivak, her most famous translated work into Arabic is *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, translated by Khaled Hafifi (a Tunisian translator). (35) (Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 2020). The title's rhetorical question clearly classifies it under postcolonial studies.

Spivak makes a clear distinction between "speaking to" and "speaking about," key terms in this theory.

Thaer Ali Dheeb did not critique the translator's work since the book was translated after Dheeb's study and follow-up.

However, the introduction the translator wrote shows considerable effort, having thoroughly read, examined, and tracked all of Spivak's publications, most criticisms, comments on her work, and the studies based on her writings. Notably, we observe positive engagement by the translator with the original material. The translator openly discusses the late translation of the book (over 30 years after its 1988 publication), which deprives the Arab reader of the desired cultural contemporaneity.

The translator expresses this interaction—sometimes painful yet pleasurable—saying: "This was the experience of translating this article, a unique blend oscillating between pain and pleasure. The author and I shared the intended slippage between margin and center. I have tried to remain faithful to the original text as much as Arabic language context allows..." (36) (Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 2020, p.10).

In the final analysis, we can say that the intellectual harmony between the translator and the original author is nearly a decisive factor in the success of translation, which aims to spread culture between two different environments

to achieve the cognitive and intellectual objectives of translation.

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