

## **Manipulation and censorship in translated texts**

**Jamal AL-QUINAI**  
**Kuwait University**

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## MANIPULATION AND CENSORSHIP IN TRANSLATED TEXTS

**Jamal al-Qinai**  
**Kuwait University\***

### **Abstract**

The volume and accuracy of translated texts is not solely determined by the source text; censorship plays a key role in manipulating both the size and sense of the original under the rubrics of interventionism, mediation, adaptation or even domestication. This paper tackles the factors that lead to such a phenomenon, which may be summed up in the following:

- The influence of translation commissioners, proofreaders, editors and the expectations of target readers.
- The role of culture and tradition and pre-established translations in confining the translator's freedom
- Sociolinguistic constraints and the use of attenuation strategies.
- The significance of the translator's competence, ideological affiliation and working incentives.
- Non-cognitive constraints: political allegiance, media and governmental censorship.

The study will analyze the effect of the ensuing change of focus on both the quantitative and qualitative (i.e. stylistic) aspects of source texts in comparison with target renditions.

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## Introduction

Translation, as manipulation and appropriation of discourses, ideas myths, etc., is one of the main vehicles for the representation of foreign cultures in domestic environments. The concept of manipulation in translation has been the subject of debate under alternative rubrics ranging from 'mediation' to the less benign 'interventionism' and 'adaptation'. Despite the differences in the degree of alteration in the source text, manipulation has been "stigmatized as a form of (re)writing, discouraged by copyright law, depreciated by the academy, exploited by publishers and corporations, governments and religious organizations (Venuti 1998: 1, 31).

Translators are normally expected to keep their politics out of their work. Yet, deliberate interventions have often been made in rewritten texts in the name of some ideology. Translators who are already politicized may take offence at texts that are unpalatable or politically unacceptable. To this effect, Venuti provides an amusing deconstruction of Giovanni Guareschi's 1950 bestseller, *The Little World of Don Camillo*, in which the Italian author's Communist politics were methodically siphoned from the English translation (Venuti 1998: chapter 7).

Over the past decade, a number of women translators have assumed the right to query their source texts from a feminist perspective, to intervene and make changes when the texts depart from this perspective. A case in point is the East German translation of Christa Wolf's *Der Geteilte Himmel* (1963) where massive changes were made including the stream-of-consciousness narration by a young woman coming to terms with divided Germany which was turned instead into thin prose. The woman protagonist's (idiolectal) hesitations were largely deleted (Flotow: 25).

Peter Newmark (1991:46) argues that translators should 'correct' source material in the name of the "moral facts as known". This view is endorsed by Toury who describes a revision of the translations of Shakespeare's sonnets to the young man where the gender of the addressee is changed to female as the translations were written in the early twentieth century for a religious audience for whom "love between two men .... was simply out of bounds" (Toury 1995: 118). He describes the translator's decision as a compromise that involved voluntary censorship in order to achieve moral propriety (ibid).

Keith Harvey (1995: 66, 77, 88) propounds that translators may compensate for the loss of a feature in the foreign text by adding the same or a similar feature at the same time or

at another point in the domestic (SL) text. Thus the target text may include 'general' stylistic features that help to naturalize the text for the target reader and achieve a comparable number and quality of effects, without being tied to any specific instances of source text (ibid). In other words, the translator should be less interested in the volume adequacy of the TT as compared to the ST as shifts are bound to occur between them. The ultimate objective would rather be the achievement of a reasonable degree of domestic acceptability of the translation in the target culture.

### **Manipulation from a Pragmatic Perspective:**

The key assumption to a Gricean –oriented approach to translation is the assumption that the translator communicates the foreign text by cooperating with the domestic reader according to the maxims of "quantity", "quality" , 'relevance' and 'manner' (Grice 1989:26-27). Yet, Grice admits that language is much more than cooperative communication as the four maxims are violated to allow for a different kind of implicature such as irony (Grice:30-31).In the case of translation, implicature becomes a feature of the foreign text that reveals a gap between the foreign and domestic cultures for which the translator must compensate (Venuti: 21).The domestic linguistic forms that are added to the foreign text to make it coherent and sensible inevitably exceed the ST volume and so violate the maxim of quantity. To compensate for an implicature in the foreign text, a translator may add footnotes or incorporate the supplementary material in the body of the translation, but either choice flouts the maxims of quality and relevance as the academic convention of adding footnotes can narrow the domestic audience to a cultural elite.

In other words, Grice's cooperative principle assumes an ideal speech situation in which the interlocutors are on an equal footing, autonomous from cultural differences (op.cit:22). Working with stylistically innovative texts, be it fiction or otherwise, require the translator to be less cooperative and more challenging, not simply communicative but provocative as well.

In factual texts such as legal contracts, scientific, technical and commercial documents, birth or marriage certificates one deals with narrowly defined situations with conventional implicatures and standardized terminologies that escape continual variation. Yet even in such situations the Gricean maxims may be flouted. In translating advertisements, a

translator may find it useful to depart from cultural stereotypes in the ST so as to invest a product with a distinctively domestic charisma (Venuti 1992: 240). For example, the Arabic version of an English advertisement of a men's perfume that appeared in the Kuwaiti daily newspapers in March 1993 was rephrased to reflect the characteristics of masculinity and manhood. The ST which read "the essence of the *magical* man" was rendered (in back translation) as "the essence of the *modern* man" since the Arabic equivalent "ساحر" for the word "magical" was felt to be more of a feminine quality. Similarly, legal interpreting can involve violations of the maxim of truthfulness of quality. In court, a translator may correct grammatical errors, delete hesitations and verbal slips in order to increase domestic intelligibility and even sympathy (Morris: 25, 46).

### **Reinterpretation or subversion:**

A translated text becomes domesticated according to the norms of the TL. These 'semiotic' norms may be linguistic or literary with a diverse range of domestic values, beliefs and social ethics. It aims to address a different audience by answering to the constraints of a different language and culture. Nevertheless, translation may provoke the fear of distortion, abusive exploitation and even subversion of the ST under the banner of naturalization and adaptation to 'normal' shifts.

In his article, "The Exotic Space of Cultural Translation," Carbonell describes the translation of literary works of other cultures as a process of rewriting, representation, stereotyping and even subversion. There is always an element of untranslatability that allows the modification (of the original text) according to the structures of representation of the target language/culture. Translation implies in the end the reconstruction of a subverted text at all levels.

In his study of *Orientalism*, Said argues that the Orient is 'orientalized', pictured as it ought to be, rather as it actually is (p.67). The same argument applies to cultural translations of some classical masterpieces of the orient. Thus, for example, Fitzgerald's celebrated translation into English of *Ruba'iyyat al-Khayyam* brought fame to the Persian original owing to the veil of exoticism and quaintness he cast over the entire work. Similarly, Richard Burton's annotated translation of *The Arabian Nights* (1885-8) stands as a masterpiece of Arabic literature in translation although the Arabic original work was not received with the

same thrust of admiration before the introduction of the English translation. Ironically, the great Arabic classical poetry that contains thousands of words and phrases of great beauty has scarcely found its way into Western translation (Carbonell: 80-81).

Translations that were celebrated as masterpieces that created a domestic audience for a foreign text may be judged a few decades later as seriously flawed. The changing reception of the translation could be ascribed to the changing cultural values of the TL society and the review of critics who opt for linguistic correctness in the literal sense of the Gricean maxim of quantity. The translation by Lowe-Porter of Thomas Mann's fiction was praised as very competent in the fifties. Yet, she was criticized in 1970 as lacking linguistic correctness and precision as the translator flagrantly reinterprets the author's words (Luke 1970; Buck 1995: 17).

Whenever literary works cross the frontiers of continents and heterogeneous cultures, a translator may assume the role of an agent on behalf of the potential reader. He may try to decipher and interpret the meaning of the ST by intertextual insertions or by providing footnotes. For example, Andre Miquel's translation of Najeeb Mahfouz's novel *يوم قتل الزعيم* [The Day the Leader was Assassinated] includes 54 footnotes in the 77 pages of the novel. This feature is characteristic of Orientalist-translators who assume that the Arabic text is unfathomable without the translator's authoritative references. Therefore, what is implicit is made explicit, thus limiting possible readings and sometimes even misleading the reader. For example, in his translation of the poems by Bader Shaker al-Sayyab, Andre Miquel adds a footnote to the poem's title 'Iqbal et la nuit' to explain to his reader that 'Iqbal' is a name of a philosopher and an Indian poet, while 'Iqbal' is actually the name of Sayyab's wife. In such a case, the translator seems to have imposed on the text an implicit meaning of his own that reasserts his inevitable mediation (Jaquemond: 150).

The subversion of ST is not restricted to literary works. Hewson (1997: 51) mentions the example of the instructions delivered with a baby's stroller where one can read in the French original that the canvas material can be removed and washed at 40° centigrade "Ce hamac est lavable en machine (40° centigrades). At the behest of the initiator (perhaps to disclaim any liability), the English translation reads "Do not put seat into washing machine. Do not immerse in water".

A good example of maximal intervention (or subversion) is de Lotbinière-Harwood 1989 translation of *Lettres d'une autre* by Lise Gauvin, a collection of letters to a friend

abroad by a Persian woman visiting Quebec. The translator deliberately feminizes all inclusive and masculine references and explains in her preface that:

*This translation is a rewriting in the feminine of what I originally read in French.  
My translation is a political activity aimed at making language speak for women.  
(Lotbinière-Harwood 1989: 9)*

For example, she translates *Québécois*, the masculine plural adjective designating inclusively the population of Quebec, into English as *Québécois-e-s* by adding the feminine marker *e*. other changes include the disruption of normal English word order by using *her and his* and *women and men* to avoid male dominated structure (Flotow: 29).

Maximal intervention constitutes a move away from the classical 'invisible' translator whose involvement does not affect the ST or the TT. Attention has increasingly been focused on ideologically or politically motivated translators who are conscious of their influence on the text and may seek to impose it overtly. However, it is often considerably easier for a translator to proclaim political affiliation in prefaces and endnotes than to take action within the body of the translation and thus become a co-author.

### **Adaptation and Naturalization of Foreign Literary Production:**

In the late nineteenth century, translators in the Egyptian School of languages '*Madrasat al-  
Alsun*' and the Translation Bureau followed a technique of free transposition of the French narrative. Actually, the process was not called translation but rather 'adaptation' ('*iqtibas*) or 'Arabization' ('*ta'rib*) or even 'Egyptianization' ('*Tamsir*') (Jacquemond: 141). The French text was not treated as a whole which ought to be respected and fully rendered; rather, it was transformed into something familiar to the Arab ear in style form and content. Even the titles of the 'Arabicized' works were modified to catch the Arabic reader's attention by introducing rhymed titles and neglecting to make mention of the French author (so much for copyright!). Some of these adaptations were done so successfully that their author grew more famous than the original author. Thus the translations of Mustapha Manfaluti (1876-1924) were constantly reprinted throughout the Arab countries, while nobody, with the exception of a few intellectual elites, remember the names of the original authors (op. cit: 142).

The justification that may be given for this manipulation of French works is a politico-cultural one. Egyptian translators attempted to close the intellectual and technical gap that existed between Egypt and Europe in the aftermath of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. But they were also keen to achieve cultural independence from Western colonialism. The 'naturalization' approach continued during the first half of the twentieth century. More accurate translations started to appear by intellectuals like Taha Hussein (1883-1973), translator of Racine *Andromaque*, Sophocles *Antigone* and Voltaire *Zadig*. Such authors were members of the Egyptian intellectual elite who had the most intimate knowledge of western culture often after spending their formative years in European universities (ibid).

The 1952 revolution and the reign of Jamal Abdul-Naser brought with it a new pedagogical policy of educating the masses. Translated literature was growing more popular in the form of cheap abridged translations (al-Hilal pocket novels) which introduced the great French works of authors like Dumas, Hugo, and Balzac. Besides adventure and mystery, Egyptian translators had a predilection for moralizing, melodramatic novels and a literature that conformed to the dominant religious and moral values of the Egyptian readership.

On the other hand, the translation of Arabic literary masterpieces was dominated by the politics of the relationships between the Orient and the Occident. Gamal Ghitany, whose novel *Zayani Barakat* was translated into nine languages, writes:

The translation of Arabic literature remains determined by the global relationship between the Arabic Orient and Occident. The latter's perceptions are biased by prejudices constructed through a long and complex mutual history. The Occidental reader prefers to turn to works which confirm his prejudices of the exotic Orient. In return, some Arabic authors in their search for a larger non-Arabic audience, feed these biased representations by either producing *touristic* literature or one that amplifies the Oriental contradictions as imagined by the Occident (Ghitany: 25).

Given the above picture, it is no surprise that the reception of translated Arabic literature in the West has been conditioned by the dominant western ideological, aesthetic and moral values and their filtered representations of Arabic culture. Throughout the last two

centuries, *The Arabian Nights* has been the main literary source of western representations of the Arab world, in both their negative (the 'barbarian' Orient and positive (the 'magical' Orient) dimensions (Jacquemond: 150-151). Other celebrated works were selected for translation because they conformed to dominant Western ideologies and aesthetics. According to Jacquemond, this becomes evident when we look at the first Egyptian works that found their way into translation, namely, Taha Hussein's *al-Ayyam* and Tawfiq al-Hakim's *Yawmiyyat Na'ib fi al-Aryaf*. These two autobiographical works were written by Occidentalized bourgeois writers whose moral and aesthetic values were closer to their foreign readership than to traditional Egyptian society. Their translated works stressed the gap between the authors' 'modernist' ideals and the 'backwardness' of traditional society. While the authors' purpose was an attempt at writing a social critique, their French readers saw in their works a description of the flaws of Egyptian society, confirming both radical alterity and French self-representation in a way all the more gratifying since it came through the other's voice (op.cit. p.151).

However, as modern Arabic literary works and translations grew in number the western readership began to realize that the Arabic Orient had an identity of its own. This was coupled with at the international scene by the Islamic resurgence and the increasing visibility of the Arab settlers in Europe and the Americas. For these reasons, the once extremely closed Orientalist field has been opened to a somewhat larger group of producers and consumers (Tomiche: 21, Jacquemond: 151).

### **Textual Sensitivity:**

Translating is not simply a mimetic process of establishing correlation between words and objects. In other words, we depend far more on the connotations of words rather than on denotations. Even a purely symbolic language must refer to something within the 'pragmatic' constraints of a given context. Translation then becomes a process of choices conditioned by sociocultural circumstances. It follows that no text is sensitive by itself but the interpretation of its connotations makes it so. As Venuti (1995:19) indicates, "a translation does not copy in the sense of repeating that text verbatim; rather, the translation enters into a mimetic relation that inevitably deviates from the foreign language by relying on target language approximants".

Traditionally, the four grounds for censorship are: sedition, blasphemy, obscenity and libel which can be paralleled to a quartet of state, religion, decency and individual privacy. The potentiality of a given text to be sensitive depends on its content, context and target readership. Although taboo words referring to human organs may not be deemed offensive if rendered in the context of a medical textbook and read by senior medical students, yet, you would not pass the same text around a homecoming party. This entails that the degree of an individual's response to sensitive texts depends on the role he assumes in the community. The same person may react differently to the same 'taboo' text when s/he acts as a parent, a medical professor or a preacher. Not only that, but the sensitivity of a text may change from time to time and from place to place. As Steiner (1975:18) has pointed out, "the spectrum of permissible expression as against that which is taboo shifts perpetually". For example, much of what Henry Miller says in his *Tropics of Cancer* has lost the power to shock the average American reader the way it did when the books were first published. Yet the same 'semi-taboo' material is still considered extremely obscene in Spain or South America where translators are expected to sanitize the ST by exercising self-censorship and decorum. For instance, Miller's sentence "*he bawls the piss out of me*" is censored in the Spanish version of the *Tropics* as "*me pone verde*" [*to run someone down*] which is clearly more socially acceptable than Miller's choice (Sanchez-Benedito: 269).

Sensitive texts, be it religious, political, erotic or otherwise come under the close scrutiny of translators and critics alike. For instance, several sets of translated Biblical texts were criticized for being male dominated and as a result have been re-translated under feminist pressure. The English rewritings include Joann Haugerud's *The Word for Us* (1977) and *An Inclusive Language Lectionary* (1983). The most striking aspect of these re-translations is the focus on 'inclusive language' and the terms of reference associated with it. The initiators felt that earlier translations were full of male-biased pronouns, imagery and metaphors that excluded women from full participation in Christian belief (Flotow: 52-53).

The recasting of masculine language takes several forms: terms such as 'brethren' or 'king' which have exclusively male referents have been replaced with more specific inclusive terms such as 'sisters and brothers' or more general terms such as 'monarch' or 'ruler'. The phrases 'women and men' or words such as 'people' or 'one' replace the generic 'man'. The following is an excerpt from the Standard Version of John 6:35-37 with its dominant masculine pronouns:

*Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; **he** who comes to me shall not hunger, and **he** who believes in me shall never thirst...; and **him** who comes to me I will not cast out.*

The re-translation by Joann Haugerud (1977: 14) reads:

*Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; **anyone** who comes to me shall not hunger, and **anyone** who believes in me shall never thirst...; and **those** who come to me I will not cast out.*

Haugerud's solution is to use neutral and plural pronouns in order to eliminate male bias. Another solution used whenever possible is to repeat a name rather than employ the masculine pronoun *he*.

Translators are likely to encounter many problems especially when translating sensitive religious texts between languages as different in syntax and cultural background as Arabic and English. The difficulties are further enhanced when the task involves rendering a religious text such as Hadith. Its translation requires extreme precision and veracity owing to the sensitivity of the subject matter rather than the linguistic structure. What is required is a model that transfers the communicative function of the ST in relation to its context (Megrab: 231). Consider the following prophetic saying:

لا يؤمن احدكم حتى يحب لأخيه ما يحب لنفسه.

If the translation does not preserve the condition relation that holds in the ST, the meaning can be distorted as in:

*He who wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself truly believes in God.*

The translation implies that such a wish is what makes a 'regular' believer a 'true' believer in God. In the original such a wish is a condition for belief in God; no one has the least belief until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself; otherwise he remains a 'regular' Muslim (i.e. one who verbally professes the creed of Islam) and not a Mu'min (one who wholeheartedly devotes his deeds towards the rightful religion). A more faithful translation should preserve the condition relation existing in the ST as in:

*None of you [truly] believes in God until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself.*

The addition of *None of you* and the fronting of the adverb along with the verb is vital to the expression of the intended meaning.

While sensitive texts require all objectivity in order to provide as detached a translation as possible, such a technique may, however, threaten the communicative goal of the TT. Consider, for example, the following Hadith:

الدنيا متاع وخير متاعها المرأة الصالحة.

*The world is an enjoyment and the best enjoyment of the world is a virtuous woman.*

This translation does not convey the intended meaning of the word متاع as *provision* (for our interim journey towards the hereafter) which is different from متعة *enjoyment*. With translator's mediation, a more appropriate translation would be:

*The world is but a provision and the best provision is a virtuous woman.*

On the other hand, the Hadith لايسأل الرجل فيم ضرب إمراته "No man shall be taken to task for beating his wife" can be viewed completely differently in English and can generate serious adverse reaction and stereotyped assumptions within a Western TL audience. Viewed in terms of other prophetic traditions such as إستوصوا بالنساء خيرا "Act kindly towards women", the 'beating' can be reinterpreted to adhere both to the teachings of Islam and to bear all the potential synonyms that might be understood by the metaphorical word "beating". So a more appropriate 'mediated' translation would be:

*No man shall be taken to task for acting with the intention of reforming his wife (Megrab: 234).*

The above approach to the translation of prophetic traditions is underscored by the fact that Hadiths include rhetorically poetic devices such as metaphor that makes them highly informative texts and so demand more effort in processing than primary lexical meanings. For instance, the saying: كان داوود عليه السلام لا يأكل إلا من عمل يده "Dawud (peace be upon him) ate only from his manual work" which is different from the intended second order meaning "The

prophet David ate only out of that which he earned through his manual work." The communicative goal of the original text is to urge people to work and be self-dependant (Megrab: 235). The significance of relying on second order meanings is intended to make the Hadith less predictable and in effect more interesting. Yet, a direct faithful translation will only give a first order meaning. The sensitivity of the text may hinder any attempt to create a correspondingly interesting text in the TL. Without the translator's mediation at this stage, the loss of the second order meaning would be inevitable.

Counter-political overtones may constitute a good ground for censorship not only in the society of the original text but also in the target culture of its translation. For instance, Tolstoy's *Resurrection* was censored in Russia both as a work of fiction and a critique on politics. Some five hundred pages long, the novel passionately proclaims the need for a revolution against oppression, injustice and class distinction. The settings are drawn from the less salubrious side of Russian life –prisons, brothels, detention centres...etc. On 16<sup>th</sup> March 1900, *The Daily telegraph* criticized *Resurrection* as "too coarse in texture and too 'high' in flavour to suit delicate literary taste, or even to recommend them to general consumption". In America, the novel was translated and appeared in a serial publication in *The Cosmopolitan*. The editor John Walker chopped and cut, reorganized and removed over-explicit descriptions of Katyusha Maslova's life of sexual degradation in the brothel. Material which occupied over two hundred pages in the original was condensed into slightly over fifty pages in the magazine. The extent of the alterations can best be appreciated by comparing extract 'A' from the original novel with extract 'B' from *The Cosmopolitan* translation.

#### A

*From that day, a life of chronic sin against human and divine laws commenced for Katusha Maslova, a life which is led by hundreds of thousands of women; a life which for nine women out of ten ends in painful disease, premature decrepitude, and death.*

*Heavy sleep until late in the afternoon followed the orgies of the night. Between three and four o'clock came the weary getting up from a dirty bed, soda water, coffee, listless pacing up and down the room in bedgowns and dressing jackets; then washing, perfuming and anointing the body and hair, trying on dresses, disputes about them with the mistress of the house, surveying one's self in looking-glasses,*

*painting the face, the eyebrows; fat, sweet food; than dressing in gaudy silks, exposing much of the body; then the arrival of visitors, music, dancing, sexual connection with old and young and middle-aged, with lads and decrepit old men, bachelors, married men, merchants, clerks, Armenians, Jews, Tartars... of all classes, ages and characters .Then at the end of the week came the visit to the police station where doctors, sometimes seriously and strictly, sometimes with playful levity examined these women, completely destroying the modesty given as a protection not only to human beings but also to animals, and gave them written permissions to continue in the sins they and their accomplices had been committing all the week.*

*And in this manner Katusha Masluva lived seven years. During this time she had changed houses backwards and forwards once or twice, and had once been to the hospital. In the seventh year of her life in the brothel, when she was twenty-eight years old, happened that for which she was put in prison and for which she was now being taken to be tried , after more than three months' confinement with thieves and murderers in the stifling air of a prison (Holman 1997:277).*

## **B**

*From this day out, Katusha's troubles began. Anxious to do only what was right, she found poverty betraying her at every step and herself the sport of cruel circumstances. The story of her misfortunes is too cruel to be told. Made the sport of passion and brutality, she found herself sinking from one degree of unhappiness to another, until driven by circumstances into the most degraded life-a life which for nine out of ten women ends in painful disease, premature decrepitude and death.*

*Ten years had passed when there happened that for which she had been arrested, and for which she was now about to be tried, after nearly six months of confinement among thieves and murderers in the stifling air of a prison (The Cosmopolitan April 1899:606).*

More than 17,000 words in the original *Resurrection* were affected by changes of some sort before it was published for the Russian audience. Out of a total of 129 chapters only twenty five came through without a single alteration. Three chapters were cut altogether while Russian equivalents of such words as prostitute, brothel, fornication, faeces, seduce and sex-

life were replaced with insipid euphemisms as they were felt to be offensive to a public ill-prepared for such openness. State censorship in Russia had its counterpart in America in the form of pressures of the market and perceptions of both editors and translators concerning what does and what does not constitute an offence against good taste, decency and decorum. Like any other exposure or revelation of things hidden from view, the site, the timing the purpose of the exposure and the nature of the audience are crucial factors in determining what can and what cannot be made explicit (Holman: 280).

Stuart Gilbert's translation into English of Andre Malraux's *La Voie Royale* provides a good example of manipulation of a novel with sexual overtones. Gilbert's search for the sensational is evident in his attempt to intensify and exalt in the erotic. One of the devices employed in such a venture is to replace completely neutral terms with potentially loaded words, as when the white of the eye is described as "slotted" between the pupil and the cheek where the French merely says "entre". Addition also serves its purpose as in the erotic cliché "supple loins" where the French merely says "fesse" and the much larger amplification of "tendue" into the whole phrase "their bodies tense with a deep excitement"(Fawcett:252-3). Gilbert further uses verbal extensions such as "kindling within herself the ardour of her own desire" to translate "créer son propre désir" to make the woman the more sexually active partner while Perkin the so-called sexual pirate fades into the background in the translation. Finally, the addition of synonyms also plays a part in the intensification of the erotic by turning "corps sans poil" into "sleek, hairless body" and rendering "De deux coups de couteau, il fit de minces trous" as "With two quick jabs of his knife he punctured small holes" where the neutral "fit" is given the highly concrete and dynamic "punctured" (ibid). In all the above instances, one aspect of the original is taken up and marked more heavily in translation by the use of a number of translation techniques including the quickening of the narrative pace by omitting whole phrases such as " Perkin stared into the darkness" which is a massive reduction of "Perkin ne fit aucun geste; il regardait l'ombre, devant lui, sans bouger". Such translation shifts and systemic manipulations tend to heighten the intensity of the novel; yet, it's hard to say for what purpose. Certainly, the translator was not driven by social censorship of vulgarity since most of the adaptations were in favour of making the novel more sensational. Perhaps, the tendency was to produce a "dime novel" and increase sales or may be the whole thing was an idiolectal idiosyncrasy. This remains a moot point open for speculations.

### **Manipulation of anecdotal and humorous texts:**

Anyone who has ever tried to translate humor across cultures will know that jokes travel badly. No matter how well the translator knows the target language, cultural references and polysemous items entail longwinded explanations, after which the recipient rarely reacts with a laugh (Chiaro:77). However, it would sound naïve to assume that a common linguistic code would preserve the funny element across cultures. A case in point is the American situation comedies which may not be equally successful in Britain. Without a shared sociocultural knowledge between sender and recipient, a common linguistic code will be of little help. Consequently, a joke is unlikely to succeed beyond its frontiers.

In many cultures, jokes poke fun at a certain minority group as being witless or weird in a given aspect. The translator of such jokes has to replace the 'underdog' group by an equivalent minority label in the target culture. Thus, in France Belgians are depicted as lacking wit; in the United States, the imbeciles are the poles and their place is taken by the Portuguese in Brazil, the Irish in England and the Upper Egyptians in Egypt. Chiaro quotes the following joke as being relatively easy to translate provided that the word 'Polish' is substituted by the relevant minority label in the target culture (Chiaro:78).

*At Heathrow Airport:*

*Air France: Flight 106, departing 2.30 p.m.*

*British Airways: Flight 22, departing 2.35 p.m.*

*Polish Air: Flight 157, when the little hand is on the four and the big hand is on the twelve.*

In jokes that involve religious, ethnic, political or sexually sensitive references, the translator's intervention to censor the text becomes mandatory. For instance, a derogatory reference to religious characters is strictly forbidden in an Islamic culture. Similarly, a comic depiction of a king or ruler is punishable by law in undemocratic societies. Sexual jokes are often transmitted orally, in SMS messages, or in chatting forums but very rarely in newspapers, magazines or T.V. subtitles. The following joke can never be translated or subtitled in the media in Islamic and Arab countries. If it is heard in a comic T.V. series, it might be tolerated in its source form but very rarely if ever rendered in the target language.

*Two boys are arguing:*

*-My Dad's better than yours!*

*- Oh no he's not!*

*-My brother's better than yours!*

*-Oh no he's not!*

*-My mother's better than yours!*

*Well... I suppose that's true cos my dad says so too!*

The sexuality of men's mothers is not cited in written jokes as a form of filial cuckoldry in the Islamic world as it is in Western countries. Verbally, however, mothers and sisters are depicted as objects of reverence whose chastity is invulnerable. For example, the French graffiti retort *Et ta soeur?* (*and your sister?*) may be equally offensive to an Arab recipient by suggesting that she is sexually active. Yet the interpretation of the reference may be different when rendered in a joke. According to Chiaro, The above joke about one's mother creates laughter for an English audience simply because the adulterer happens to have been found out. In other cultures he can be ridiculed through the sexuality of female members of his family (Chiaro: 80).

A good example of a translation problem created by wordplay on grammar from Louky Bersinik's *L'Euguélienne* is cited by Howard Scott (1984: 35) on the politics of abortion wherein the following line occurs:

*Le ou la coupable doit être punie.*

The additional *e* on the past participle *puni* indicates it is the woman who is punished for abortion. But this doesn't transfer smoothly to English which lacks gender agreement. Scott intervenes by supplementing the translation with an explicitation;

*The guilty one must be punished, whether she is a man or a woman.*

When a comic situation is heavily culturally oriented, the translator should intervene to infuse some sociocultural background information in order to allow the recipient who is not *au fait*

with the underlying implications to understand the word play as intended by the original sender.

*British Rail announces today that coffee was going up 20 p. a slice* (Chiaro p.12).

The above joke compares British rail coffee to stale bread. The humorous element will not be understood by a recipient who has never traveled on train in the United Kingdom. It thus follows that a joke need not be linguistically ambiguous to be funny. The witty element could be hidden in the delivery tactics, the intonation, and the accent or even in the non-verbal aspects such as gesture or mime. If a recipient fails to appreciate a given joke despite his understanding of its linguistic and sociocultural aspects then this could be ascribed to the subjective variable which lies out of the coverage area of the translator's intervention. A member of a given religious sect is hardly going to enjoy being insulted by someone's idea of a witty remark at his or her expense, any more than the Irish are amused by the thousands of jokes that depict them as imbeciles.

### **Manipulation of Allusions and Culture-specific items:**

Allusions are one type of culture-bound elements in the text. They are expected to carry meaning in the culture or subculture in which they arise beyond the mere words used at the textual level. From a communicative point of view, the use of allusion is linked to pragmatic factors such as implicature, inference and relevance. It can be thought of as a message or stimulus which the communicator sends, and it is up to the receiver to find the intended referent and fill in the gaps in the text. Therefore, translators need to be not just bilingual but bicultural in order to fully understand the ST and be able to transmit it to the target audience. But what about the TT readers? Is it realistic to expect them to be bicultural also? (Leppihalme: 4)

As culture-bound allusions depend largely on familiarity to convey meaning, it's no use to have a lexically 'correct' translation without the translator's intervention to make such allusions intelligible to the reader. For example, an American journalist discussing problems with the planned health care reform in the United States compared the cost issue to the *Cheshire cat* as it may sometimes vanish leaving behind only a smile, i.e. the promise of new

benefits. The writer of this comparison expects his readers to connect the image with an illustration in Lewis Carroll's *Alice Adventures in Wonderland* with its strange cat figure that slowly fades a way, until slowly only the smile is left. But if this article were to be translated for the readers of a business magazine in another country, targeting economists and investors the receptors might be confused as to the implications of introducing a foreign children's story to a serious article on a serious subject (ibid: ix). A similar reaction may be evoked if a newspaper article refers to the lack of security patrols around midnight in the following remark "Apparently all police patrols *turn into pumpkins at midnight*". And if the opposition party columnist writes "Someone's got to stand up and say that *the emperor has no clothes*".

Whenever a cultural or ideological item in the source text has no reference in the target culture it becomes a culture-specific item (CSI). In the first line of *The Waste Land* (April is the cruelest month...), April is associated with the blooming flowers of spring. In the western part of the Arabian Gulf this is occupied by February while in the southern hemisphere October would be the cruelest of them all. The intertextual gap would be greater if the translation was made into a language whose intertextual tradition had April, for example as the month of the most devastating hurricanes (Alvarez and Vidal: 58). The translator is bound to interpret the implications of the CSI of the SL in order to help the TL recipient appreciate the image invoked by the author.

It should be pointed out, however, that CSI's are governed by the pragmatic maxims of who, when, where and when. Thus while the image of April as the month of spring profusion is a relatively static CSI, other items have a transient and more dynamic nature that may change over a sufficient period of time. Thus the concepts of fast food, privatization, cold war, terrorism, cloning and globalization have all undergone tremendous changes over the past decade. Translator's intervention to interpret the implications of such concepts is no longer required owing to the global nature of such items. In other words, the notion of CSI is open to intercultural evolution over the course of time; objects, habits or values restricted to one community come to be shared by others (ibid).

There are several methods of CSI manipulation in translation. They range from a zero change to a drastic overhaul.

### **1. Zero change:**

This is a case of repetition whereby the SL item is identically reproduced in the TL despite the presence of a traditionally modified TL equivalent. This includes both proper and common names which carry an exotic flavour or a fashionable trend. A case in point is the proper name *Peter* which has the biblical equivalent of بطرس but which is rendered as بيتر to maintain the air of modernity in the movie title *Peter Pan*. Similarly, the common noun *script* can be translated into its Arabic equivalent as نص even though some translators prefer a repetition of the SL item سيناريو to give an air of technical know-how. Finally, the latest computer jargon 'bluetooth' found its way into Arabic and many other world languages by way of transliteration بلوتوث in view of the lack of a concise equivalent that describes the technical aspect of the device without resorting to a lengthy paraphrase or a calque such as السن الزرقاء.

### **2. Orthographic adaptation:**

This includes the transcription or transliteration of SL references by using TL characters. In such instances, the translator intervenes in order to introduce a new name for which the TL has no established equivalent. In the case of English/Arabic translation many consonants, vowels and diphthongs cannot be accurately reproduced in the Arabic alphabetical system. The result will be an approximation by means of the nearest Arabic characters whose selection will depend on the translator's own perception of the phonetic quality of the sound. A case in point is the various transliterations of the English word 'congress' which is rendered by Egyptian translators as كونجرس in view of the Cairene pronunciation of the ج as/g/ whereas translators in the East Mediterranean Arab countries transliterate the same word with the approximant letter غ as كونغرس. Urdu translators, on the other hand, use the character گ in كو گ and the result is a third form for the same word.

### **3. Linguistic (non-cultural) translation:**

Sometimes a given SL item may have a linguistic target version albeit not the exact cultural equivalent. The unit of measurement *pint*, for example, has a linguistically transliterated

equivalent باينت and *yard* has the equivalent ياردة although neither is used for measurement in the Arab world. The same goes for the phrase *grand jury* which is translated in Spanish as *gran jurado* and كبار المحلفين [big jury] in Arabic. Yet, this phrase only makes sense in Spanish or in Arabic in connection with US culture, as there has practically never been any type of jury in Spain or in the Arab world (Aixela: 62).

#### 4. Glossing:

When the translator feels that the implications of the CSI require a commentary or explanation he may choose to do so extratextually in the form of a footnote, endnote or a glossary. This happens in explaining untranslatable puns or annotating references to famous people.

Sometimes the gloss is inserted intertextually so as not to disrupt the reader's attention.

e.g.

seventy miles → سبعين ميلا (112 كم) [seventy miles(112 km)]

The Pentagon announced today.... → أعلنت وزارة الدفاع البنتاغون اليوم [The Department of Defense the Pentagon announced today...]

#### 5. Substitution by Synonymy:

A translator may resort to synonyms or parallel references to avoid repeating the CSI. At one time, he may refer to a person by his first name while in another sentence by his surname. In a tourist guidebook on the cuisine of the Arabian Gulf countries, the translator renders the word 'Harees' in transliteration then gives its cultural equivalent '*oatmeal*' only to wind up with 'this *Quaker meal* is a favorite dish in Ramadan...'

In other instances, the translator may use a more common and less specific TL item in order to demystify the CSI. Alvarez and Vidal (p: 63) cite the example of 'American football' which is rendered in French as 'un ballon de rugby' → [a ball of rugby]. Likewise the word 'stool' is given a neutral (less culturally specific) reference كرسى since the other alternative is to have a lengthy paraphrase مقعد بلا ظهر أو ذراعين (كرسي تسريحة).

Although pure lexical equivalence is impossible between languages a series of approximations certainly is possible and these approximations are sometimes very rough,

sometimes apparently accurate. The translator's individual preference may step into the picture and his fidelity is thus questioned. Mason cites an interesting example of exploiting synonyms to serve ideological purposes. In translating a Spanish text from the *UNESCO Courier* into English, the ST word *sabios* 'wise men' (which covers both the Western highly valued 'rational' form and the pejorative non-Western 'intuitive' wisdom) is rendered as 'diviners' in English. The latter tends to exclude the 'rational' sense and focuses on intuition. The translator seems intent on stripping the source text of its commitment to a cause which is promoted in the ST culture (Mason 1994:28). Other instances of alteration include the following;

*encuentros [encounters] → clash of cultures*

*el hombre indígena [indigenous men] → pre-Columbian civilization*

*testemonios [testimonies] → written records*

Further, while the ST promotes the notion of active participation of the Mexicans in the creation of their own destiny the translation portrays them in a more passive role by substituting certain lexical items:

*busqueda [search] → the way in which they view...*

*luchar contra [to struggle against] → to save from*

*epocas de gran creatividad [epochs of grand creativity] → bursts of creativity*

Thus, the active 'search' to preserve memory has turned into passive 'viewing' and 'struggle' into 'save' while 'epochs of creativity' have become 'bursts' (Hatim and Mason: 157). Likewise, the translator downplays the positive involvement of the indigenous Mexicans by suppressing the counter-argument of the source text as can be seen in the following sample:

*A un fraile extraordinario, Bernardino de Sahagún... se debió el rescate de un gran tesoro de testimonios de la época prehispánica. Pero hubo también indígenas... que siguieron escribiendo en su propia lengua náhuatl o azteca.*

*[To an extraordinary monk, Bernardino de Sahagún ... was owed the recovery of a great treasure of testimonies of the pre-Hispanic age. But there were also indigenous people who continued to write in their own languages].*

*TT*

*An extraordinary man, the Spanish Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagún, ... gathered invaluable, first-hand information on the pre-Colombian era. Meanwhile, indigenous chroniclers were writing in their own languages (op.cit: 158).*

Such 'ideological' mediation is justified on the grounds that the *Courier* is a periodical that reflects the aims of UNESCO as an institution that promotes the cultures of the world and disseminates impartial knowledge and understanding.

## **6. Deletion:**

Owing to ideological or stylistic obscurity, a translator may opt for deleting the entire CSI. Items like the transcription of dialectal variations tend to be deleted if they carry no obvious weight to the understanding and credibility of the text.

Aixela (70) points out that contrary to English whose grammar demands constant lexical repetitions, in Spanish, one of the traditional parameters of good style and originality is to avoid repetitions of unnecessary items too close to each other. Consequently, many redundant anaphoric references are deleted in the translation of an English text into Spanish.

In some cases, there are source text explanations about cultural references in the target culture. Such references are frequent candidates for deletion in the target text where, for instance, explaining that Mecca lies in the south west of Saudi Arabia could be felt superfluous to the average Arab reader.

Words such as "of course", "certainly" and "no doubt", used sentence initially will be followed in English by some form of rebuttal ("*of course John Major is going through a bad patch. However...*"). In Arabic and Farsi, such signals relay conviction and the statements they introduce are to be substantiated and not opposed (Hatim: 37). In other words, the text-initial *of course* is not associated with a concession to be countered but a case to be argued with. Thus for the English-language reader, the element: '*Of course this does not mean that we should defend all clergymen...*' sets up an expectation that a counter-argument will follow,

along the lines of '*However, we should defend some of them...*'. No such pattern may follow in Arabic oration. The signal to the reader indicated by *of course* runs counter to expectations. The intended format might be signaled by something like '*Under no circumstances does this mean that we should defend ...*' (Hatim and Mason: 152). In oratorical Arabic texts, such words may be used only as cohesive devices to link sentences without actually adding to the overall semantic value. In such cases, translation mediation is called for in order to delete and replace such linking words by relevant TL substitutes or punctuation marks.

Similarly, in Arabic news reporting it has become the convention to quote speakers by prefacing every segment of their utterances with a 'decorative' clause containing a verb of saying such as 'he said', 'he added', 'he went on to say', 'he stressed', 'he made it clear', 'he concluded by saying', and so on. In English, the entire sequence is initiated, interrupted or concluded only once by a neutral verb of saying supplemented by punctuation marks. In such instances, the translator should intrude to orient his rendition towards the target language and abandon the rhetorical structure of the source text. Such a kind of manipulation may not be individually intended by the translator. In fact, it reflects a naturalization of a set of norms that are propped up by the entire cultural and rhetorical system of Modern Standard Arabic (Hatim: 44).

## **7. Stylistic Mediation:**

The trainee-translator, who tends to be hypnotized by the form of the source text, will typically reproduce source text norms in the translation, whereas the experienced translator will tend to over-norm in relation to the target language. For instance, Tourist brochure discourse in French tends to work on the principle of accumulation by juxtaposition: place X is wonderful because of factors A, B, C and D. English discourse also functions on the basis of accumulation, but uses the technique of paraphrastic variation to make the accumulation less heavy. Thus, "place X offers not just A but also B". The second technique is to identify various classes of tourists and to point to specific attractions for each class. If you like place X (amusement park, for example), it is because it has B (a magnificent aquarium). This personalization is typical of English but less common in French where one finds a large number of impersonal "on" constructions, or sentences with the town or an attraction as

subject followed by an animate verb (e.g. l'Hôtel des prices vous attend). Hewson (1997: 53-4) cites the following excerpt of a tourist brochure:

*Coleraine Borough is an outstandingly beautiful area covering 120 square miles of some of the most spectacular and dramatic countryside in Northern Ireland .It boasts the Golden shore resorts of Portrush...and Castlerock. This is an ideal holiday base for all the family with a variety of things to see and do. Children will love the unbeatable combination of water activities, beaches, and adventure playgrounds...not to mention the ice cream, candy floss and seaside souvenirs.*

We may note that sentences begin with the subject, classes of tourists are identified and the accumulation is lightened by "not to mention". The French translation reads as follows:

*Région d'une beauté exceptionnelle, coleraine vous offer un des paysages les plus spectaculaires et grandises d'Irlande du nord. Vous serez charmés par les stations balneairés de la côte Dorée que vous choisissiez Portrush... ou Castlerock. Vous trouvez ici le lieu de vacances ideal, de quoi satisfaire toute la famille, du plus petit au plus grand. Son incomparable variété d'activités aquatiques, d'activités aquatique de plages, et de galleries de jeux...sans oublier les délicieuses glaces, barbes à papa et les souvenirs du bord de mer feront la joie de vos enfants.*

The assertions typical of the French tourist discourse are present in the form of " vous trouverez ici..." , " vos enfants seront comblés par..." , "vous serez charmés par...". The technique of accumulation has also been exploited by the personification "son incomparable variété d'activités aquatiques, de plages..."(Hewson 1997: 540).

## **8. Attenuation:**

This strategy includes the deletion or dilution of taboo or offensive material on religious, ideological or social grounds. The compensation is conducted by way of using euphemistic

expressions. In some cases, manipulation is effected by watering down the argument of the ST. For example, the following back-translation of a Spanish ST reveals a counter-argumentative discourse where a particular claim is being first cited and then rebutted. The genre can be classified as an editorial that displays commitment to a given cause (Hatim and Mason 1997: 154).

*About the greatest and most tragic encounters experienced by indigenous man persons would have to write such as the conquistador himself, Hernan Cortes in his Letters of Account and the soldier-chronicler, Bernal Diaz del Castilo in his True Story of New Spain. But also vanquished left of their testimonies....*

The translation reflects a drastic intertextual intrusion where the text format is shifted to one that is predominantly expository and the genre is typically one of reporting.

*The greatest and most tragic clash of cultures in pre-Columbian civilization was recorded by some of those who took part in the conquest of Mexico. Hernan Cortes himself sent five remarkable letters (Cartas de Relacion) back to Spain between 1519 and 1526; and the soldier-chronicler Bernal Diaz del Castillo, who served under Cortes, fifty years after the event wrote his Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva Espana ("True History of the Conquest of New Spain"). The vanquished peoples also left written records.*

The English translation of Simone de Beauvoire's *Le deuxieme sexe* by the American professor of zoology Howard Parshley which came out in 1952 has seen several reprintings and is thus considered successful. However, *The Second Sex* is based on the deletion of more than ten per cent of the original material (Flotow: 49). Large sections of text recounting the names and achievements of 78 women politicians, military leaders, saints, artists and poets have been eliminated. Similarly, the translation deletes references to cultural taboos such as lesbian relationships and unwelcome remarks such as the oppression of women at the hand of a "patriarchial" society. While some critics vindicated Parshley's deletion as an attempt to lighten the burden for the American reader, Margaret Simon insists that the deletions are serious ideological interventions in the text that should at least be marked and explained to resolve the ensuing confusion (op.cit: 50). When, for example, there are references to earlier

argumentation that has been cut out, the development of Beauvoire's thought is scrambled and she appears as a confused, incoherent thinker. In fact, the increasing criticism by Anglophone feminists of Beauvoir for 'perpetuating patriarchal stereotypes of female sexuality' may be due to censorship by her (predominantly male) translators (ibid).

The 1956 English translation of Beauvoir's novel *Les mandarins* censored the French original by omitting scenes and changing passages in order to attenuate the boldness of the sexual imagery. For example, the translation censors references to oral sex and attenuates the language of both Ann, the female protagonist, and her daughter Nadine. The latter's vulgar language is replaced by euphemisms. For example, her bold comment on sex as a deal "comment veux tu que j'aie des histories avec des types si je ne baise pas" (*Les Mandarins*: 350) is translated "how do you expect me to have affairs with guys if I don't go to bed with them". Here, the impact of Nadine's vulgarity and unhappiness is weakened since the original utterance literally states 'if I don't f---' (Klaw: 197).

Generally speaking, attenuation is an area that constitutes fertile grounds for translator intervention by dint of the following factors:

### **8.1. Objectives of initiators:**

It should be stated here that translators are not the only agents who bear full responsibility for the end product. There are, of course, publishers, editors, proofreaders and technical producers who may change the ST in order to conform to social expectations. Such agents will not allow the publication of works which are prone to break the linguistic and cultural norms of the target culture, especially in countries with a strong notion of correctness in the written variety of their language like the Arab world.

The publisher's policy may lay down special conditions which transcend the idiosyncrasy of the translator. The German publisher of the translation of Dickens novels gave specific instructions "to avoid long sentences or complicated syntax, and to make the text accessible to the German reader with average education". Here, the publisher is not concerned with the stylistic qualities of the ST but rather with what the public is capable of reading (Hewson 1997: 51). Such a view would entail making decisions on whether to reproduce (normalize), explicate or omit (insignificant) culture-specific items. Similarly, Clem Robyns speaks of pre-established volume constraints in the translation of 'Serie Noire' in France

between 1955 and 1970 which forced the translators to apply intense abridgement of the original text and the deletion of ideologically loaded references (Robyns: 23-42).

The 1926 Galician translated fragments of *Ulysses* embody manipulation for nationalistic purposes. The translator, Otero Pedrayo (1926) was involved with Galician nationalism and committed his life to the objective of the protecting and dignifying the Galician language and culture. His approach to the ST signified his political and cultural affiliation. For instance, he would choose a more specific word, related in meaning but limiting the scope of the original. This is the case with 'diet/xantar' and 'trousers/calzos' which can be directly rendered as *dieta* and *pantaloon*, both Galician but exactly the same as in Spanish. Yet, 'xantar' refers only to lunch time and 'calzos' makes reference to a traditional type of clothes used instead of trousers. The effect is both reduction of reference and an added domestic tone (Millan-Varela: 288). In other cases, even though the meaning of the straightforward TL equivalent is the same as the ST original, Otero prefers the more Galician 'rustic' and even colloquial variant which makes the style less 'scientific'. Thus he uses 'velocity/*rapidez*' rather than *velocidade*, 'session/*porcion*' instead of *seccion* and 'fragments/*anacos*' instead of *fragmentos* in an attempt to give a higher meaning to traditional Galician words.

The elevated style of the original *Ulysses* is deflated in the Galician text and the formal register is turned into a more familiar, even colloquial tone. This is achieved by simplifying noun phrases as in 'points of observation'/*sitios* [places], 'phonetic symbols'/*fonemas* [phoneme], 'dwarf wall'/ *murino* [small wall], and a less varied use of vocabulary as in rendering both 'reflect' and 'think' into *matinar*. The reason for the latter could be the need to avoid the verbs *pensar* and *mirar*, which are also Galician but present the same form and sound as in Spanish (Millan Varela: 289). By doing this, the etymological link with Latin and the Romance language is purposely broken as an act of rebely against Spanish and protectionism of Galician.

It should be emphasized that this type of manipulation is not owing to linguistic limitations in the target system, but to the translator's own personal choice. A literal word by word translation would have been possible owing to the abundance of Latin forms in the original text. However, the translator opted for explicitation to reflect the underlying conception of the Galician language and culture as simple, easily accessible and familiar (op. cit. p.290).

Kruger (Kruger 1997: 78) notes that a historian writing on the Afrikaner rebellion of 1914 asked the translator to manipulate the English version by adapting instances of ideologically marked language so that the translation would be acceptable to a modern readership while still resembling an eye-witness report. The historian felt that if the text was published in an uncensored form, modern readers would be offended by the language of the time and would probably become prejudiced against the Afrikaner rebels and their cause. In the verbal abuse exchanged between the government troops and the rebels the word "Kaffer" was one of the main offending terms that was omitted from the final translation and replaced by another word with a lesser intensity.

e.g.

[ST] *"Jul het met witmense te doen, en nie met kaffers nie, en jul moet jul dus ook nie soos kaffers gedra nie"*.

[lit] *"You are dealing with white people now, not with kaffirs, therefore do not behave like kaffir"*.

[TT] *"You are dealing with people, not animals, and you shouldn't act like animals"*.

The term "*kaffir*" is a Muslim word of abuse applied to 'unbelievers' or 'infidels'. The derogatory meaning of the word has been extended to expressions such as the following:

*Kafferboetie* (lit. 'kaffir brother'): equivalent to *nigger lover*.

*Kaffer work*; *unskilled manual labour*.

*Kafferpak*: a thorough beating.

Owing to its racist connotations, the term 'kaffir' has become ideologically repugnant in South Africa. This is the reason why the translation commissioner asked the translator to sanitize the text of expressions such as these that might offend modern readers (Kruger 1997: 81). The commissioner expected the translator to maintain the referential, stylistic and structural features of the ST intact. Therefore, the translator had to translate communicatively by omitting or adapting (i.e. toning down) the offensive and emotionally-laden expressions. Unfortunately, by modifying the bitter tone of the ST, the personal style of the source text author is lost in translation. Thus, the translator acted as an agent of reconciliation, and by

doing so she altered the function of the source text: it is no longer an eye-witness account of a historical event (op.cit. p.83-84).

To sum up, the translator is constrained by upstream factors contained in the translation order and downstream factors in the nature of the publication, the dis(satisfaction) of the target reader and the norms of translation in the recipient culture.

## **8.2. Recipient expectations:**

A translator could be asked to adapt his translation to meet the needs of the target audience. The same source text may be treated differently depending on whether his target recipients are teenagers, school children, literature specialists or technical experts. The treatment of an SL work as an instance of popular literature leads to an increasing number of deletions of descriptive extracts, prefaces or author commentaries. This strategy seeks to increase the book's appeal for the average reader who belongs to a popular audience that has no time for literary niceties and details of complex characters (Aixela: 72). Under such circumstances, the translator assumes the image of a traitor who commits a deliberate act of rewriting, adapting and censoring an original which is deemed not fit for publication in the receiving culture in its ST form. This position transpired in the 1976 translation of Gunter Grass' *From the Diary of a Snail* which was censored by British courts of law whereby the published translation bore the following note: "the author and the publisher regret that certain passages have been omitted for British legal reasons" (Hewson 1997: 49).

The French translations of Kafka's *Metamorphosis* and Golding's *Lord of the Flies* exhibit fundamental changes whereby the elements of ambiguity and suspense in the original have been either omitted or badly affected to cater for the ideological norms of the target readers. Yet, the translations sold well as the translated versions were welcomed by the average French 'monolingual' reader who has no access to the original (ibid).

In July 1972, *Ms Magazine* published an interview with Simone de Beauvoir entitled '*The radicalization of Simone de Beauvoir*'. The edited translation reflected wide modifications and omissions that played down her emphasis on socialism and made her seem less anti-capitalist. The English translation left out entire sequences on lesbianism and women which altered the impact of the interview as a whole. Keefe (1994: 20) notes that the

translation may well have been tailored for a certain white middle-class, feminist readership of *Ms Magazine*.

### **8.3. Translator competence and working incentives:**

Many in-house translators in the Arab world complain about stressful working conditions where the tag 'urgent' or 'rush' dominates their daily routine. Often they are asked to rush their translations with last minute assignments with nearly no time for revision. Coupled with poor incentives, such working conditions and the lack of in-service training may explain a number of incongruities and obvious mistakes that may constitute an unintentional manipulation of the ST. A case in point is the breakdown in interpreting an interview with a Western journalist where the speaker, a Lebanese Christian leader insisted on excluding the term "civil war" and instead used the concept "*sectarian intrigue*" (*al-fitna al-ta'ifiyya*) in reference to the breakdown of the caliphate in the early days of Islam and the emergence of factionalism, which represents a blemish in the history of Islam. The intertextual reference escaped the interpreter who used the term at hand "civil war", the very expression which the Christian leader was trying to avoid (Hatim: 41).

Munday (2002: 90) suggests that one possible motivation for alterations in translated texts might be related to the skirting of specific translation problems in the source text. Thus, the translator of *The Guardian* (March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2000) deleted the word *responsables del viaje* [those in charge] from the active ST sentence which was not easy (for the translator) to render succinctly in the TT passive structure:

ST: *Los responsables del viaje desmontaron el motor desahuciado.*

[Those in charge dismantled the write-off motor.]

TT: *The engine- a write off- was dismantled.*

The next example by the same translator asserts that the alteration is not ideologically motivated but rather the result of sloppy work. This is very much so when we learn that the ST is a press report on the ill-fate of a young boy who was rescued along the shores of Florida after his mother drowned. The ST number of words was reduced from 3146 to a meager 2396 in the TT. This counters conventional thinking that a TT tends to be longer than its ST due to

explicitation. This may be justified by the constraints of space in the media but more so by the rushed work of the translator who failed to realize the reflexive transitivity of the verb *se inyectaron*:

*ST: La mayoría de los pasajeros se inyectaron gravinol intravenoso.*

[Most passengers injected themselves with gravinol.]

*TT: Most passengers were injected with Gravinol.*

While the above two ST examples suggest that the passengers were responsible for dismantling the engine and injecting themselves with Gravinol to counter sea-sickness, the translation implies that this was an action done to them by those in charge of the crossing from Cuba to Florida. Had the translation been audited before publication the incrimination of those in charge of crossing would not have materialized.

#### **8.4. Pre-established Translations:**

A prior text is intertextually called up by elements of a text currently unfolding for translation. In other words, the statements, structures and images in the text at hand reactualize similar ones in earlier translations of similar texts. Thus the mediation process in a current text is triggered by the conventions utilized in previous translations. The 'Bundestag' links up with the German legislative system, and the Arabic '*sheikh*' with Islamic-Arab social conventions.

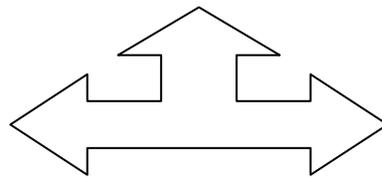
As the figure below illustrates there is a triangular continuum of interaction among the tripods of mediation. On the one hand, there is the author–invoked interpretation which may predominate the pragmatics of context and dictate the manner and style of TL translation. On the other hand, the initiator/translator may opt for intervention on the basis of TL socio-cultural norms. Further still, a third translator may follow the diction of earlier established texts/translations and use them as the basis for referral. Actual texts and their translations, however, may be a hybrid product of all these factors.

Referral variable

Pragmatics of Context

Socio-textual conventions

Established translations



ST based rendering

TT based

rendering

Author –invoked

Translator

mediated

(Minimal intervention)

Cases in Between

(Minimal

intervention)

Bakhtin (1986: 78-9) notes that 'double-voicing' of earlier references may not only draw upon conventions of earlier texts, but may also 're-accentuate' them by referring to them ironically, parodically or reverently. For example, citing the phrase "fifty-seven varieties" with reference to the original ad of Heinz indicates a wide choice of products whereas quoting it as the *New Statesman* journalist did in commenting on President Reagan's foreign policy implies that ad-hocery is the hallmark of this policy.

Names of institutions, fictional, non-fictional and biblical characters that have gained a traditional form will usually force the translator to adopt the established form regardless of whether it is correct or not. The Shakespearean character *Othello* has been traditionally rendered as عطيل whereas the same name if used for a regular person would be transliterated أوثيللو. Yet, translators of later versions of the play have retained the transliterated name intact as the source text has achieved canonical status between the first translation and the later ones. This implies an increase in the acceptability of the restrictions posed by the source text. Similarly, the transliterated form of the US Midwestern state *Indianapolis* has long been rendered إنديانابوليس although the correct transliteration would be إنديانابلس. Generally speaking,

the existence of a popular translation of a proper name or even a classical masterpiece would increase the constraints on the leeway allowed to the translator.

### **8.5. Non-cognitive Constraints:**

Aside from investigating cognitive variables that influence translator/interpreter performance such as memory overload, heavy accents of SL speakers and environmental noise, little research has been done on the role of the pressure and interference of other interlocutors in a given setting. Highly sensitive texts which involve interpreting for political leaders at times of international crises are likely to be subject to various types of non-cognitive constraints that influence his choice of certain strategies in terms of reinforcing cultural stereotypes and enabling or obstructing other's points of views (Baker: 111-2). Baker cites the interview with Saddam Hussein which was broadcast on the British channel ITN on 11 November 1990 as a good example of manipulation at its best.

With the Gulf war looming and the close monitoring by both the participants (including Saddam who has adequate knowledge of the TL) and the millions of viewers, the interpreter was under immense pressure to render everything literally, faithfully and honestly in order to shirk off responsibility. The interpreter sees his role as one of transmitting the 'semantic ' meaning of everything that Saddam says. He does not try to convey the rhetoric of Saddam's argument or the subtle irony in some of his statements. For example, in answering the host's question about Mrs Thatcher's warning that he should be accountable for war compensations, the interpreter translates Saddam's answer word-for-word as follows:

*In any case, when Mrs. Thatcher says anything like  
this seriously then of course it has to be taken seriously.*

The phrase "in any case" in this context has the force of the sarcastic "*oh well*" in English which casts doubts on the seriousness of Mrs Thatcher. The interpreter's keenness to render every word at face value instead of taking the risk of misinterpretation results in modifying the tone intended by the SL speaker. This fear of taking responsibility for 'interpretation' manifests itself in providing a series of synonyms strung after each content word in order to

avoid missing any potential meaning intended by the speaker. The boldfaced synonyms below represent the translator's insertions (op.cit.116-7).

*Let us... we must rather... we must **choose or take or adopt** a single **criterion** or a single **standard**.*

*And once the **states**... once the **states of the world** or **countries** began to **realize** or to **see** or **gauge** things in accordance with...*

The fear of being accused of misinterpretation forces the interpreter to interrupt Saddam (who is breathing down his neck) and asks him about the meaning he intended for the word *المستضعفون* [literally: bullied, victimized; taken advantage of]. He starts translating:

Interpreter: *I... I am the helpless citizen of the Middle East...*

Then he stops suddenly and asks Saddam:

Interpreter: *Mustad'af, Sir?*

Saddam: *Mustad'af, don't you know what mustad'af means in English?*

Interpreter: *Sir, has no power and no strength, meaning helpless?*

Saddam: *Yes, exactly, he has no power ...he has strength... meaning that God is with him. Meaning that our strength lies in God's strength. So we are not weak, but others may see us as weak.*

The interpreter then turns to the T.V. host and makes a metatextual comment to rectify the breakdown in the communication.

Interpreter: *I must sanction to ... the use ...the word... a word which we need to be very specific about. I used helpless to describe it but I wasn't really very certain about it. What he meant is that we are people who are not weak in ourselves, because we have the strength of god behind us , but who may be looked by others to be weak... we are sort of looked or viewed to be weak by others (Baker:118).*

Whether a misinterpretation or merely a slip of the tongue, it is clear from the above examples that the main interlocuter is playing a positive role in manipulating the translation given by the interpreter in order to suit the image he wants to portray for himself before the eyes of the world.

On the other hand, there are instances where the interpreter amplifies and elaborates Saddam's statements in a manner which suggests that he sees himself as a member of the (Iraqi) community that is putting its case across to the western world. He may also be deliberately trying to impress Saddam as a competent translator who can argue the case very well. At times, he inserts intensifiers such as *clearly* and *obviously* and elaborates Saddam's short answers.

e.g.

Saddam literally says: *[Isn't there an anomaly and double standards there towards the Arabs and Muslims. We respect the opinion of whoever has an opinion.]*

Interpreter: *Isn't there an irony, double standards, clearly there in the behaviour towards the Arabs and towards the Muslims. We respect the view of anybody who may have a view on the subject of Kuwait, because the issue of Kuwait is a complicated one and we do not presuppose that whoever had a view that it must not be accepted or wrong.*

The level of tension and stress the interpreter was subjected to is even made worse by an incriminating speaker who breathes down his neck. When asked about reports of atrocities committed in Kuwait, Saddam replies (literally):

*You are right in part of what you say.*

Interpreter: *Yes, you are right, you're partly right there.*

Saddam (correcting the interpreter): *IN PART OF WHAT YOU SAY.*

Interpreter (reassuring him): *Partly right there* (Baker: 121).

## **Conclusion**

This study attempted to offer explorations and critical assessments of text manipulation and alteration at the ideational and the textual/ lexico-grammatical levels including total text

volume. The question is what causes such alterations. Some of the possible motivations include the sociocultural and ideological (political) framework in which the translations have been produced. Other factors may involve the translation commissioner who lays down certain objectives and gives explicit instructions to the translator. Ideologically, there is always the possibility that any intervention is intentionally motivated by a publisher or even a translator to create a different image of the ST in the minds of its readers. Some of the changes in sentence structures, paragraph division and punctuation may be carried out by a copy-editor, while omissions in the TT may be due to the constraints of space in the media.

Apart from conventional governmental censorship, the translator cannot be exonerated from his role as a censor/mediator. Some of the alterations in the examples cited in this paper were attributed to either the translator's religious affiliation or political allegiance. The TT recipients, on the other hand, may impose their own expectations on the translator who modifies the TT to conform to established sociolinguistic constraints; the use of euphemisms being a salient feature of such an influence.

Although we have attempted to diagnose the cases of manipulation in translated texts, there is more investigation that can be done. Interviews with translation commissioners, editors, and translators, if possible, would illuminate some of the reasoning behind the instances of mediation. The subsequent reactions of the TT recipients might be gauged against that of the ST readers. Alternative renditions of the same ST may be compared to solicit evidence of manipulation. Other hypotheses that can be tested include the following: do translations of the same text into other languages within a similar sociocultural and ideological context exhibit the same degree of manipulation? What is the role of textual typology: is non-fiction subject to greater shifts than fiction? If so, what are the reasons?

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