

The Case for Interpretive Translation and Interdisciplinarity

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Abstract

The present paper explores theoretical and practical evidence for 'interpretive translation' as an interdisciplinary activity which is informed by insights from a variety of disciplines including semantics, pragmatics, reading and reception theories, communication theory, text-linguistics, literary studies, cultural studies, and critical theory. The imperative of 'interpretation' in translating is clearly seen in the translation of literary texts where connotation, metaphor, symbolism, diverse cultural allusions and various other types of 'implicit meaning' are predominant features. Thus, explication, commentary, annotation, or other strategies are required to facilitate the comprehension of the translated text and its effective 'exploitation' by the receptor language reading community. The interpretive nature of translation is also reinforced by the increasing need for global understanding and cooperation. This situation highlights the strategic role of translators, their 'visibility', responsibility and consequently their scholarship and interpretive competence as global mediators. While it emphasizes the 'epistemological' and 'hermeneutical' orientation of translation, the paper calls for an expansion of the field to be an area of research and scholarship which truly exploits its interdisciplinary, intellectual, communicative, reflective, critical, and educational potentials to disseminate human thought and knowledge, and to foster cross-cultural understanding and mutual enrichment.

Keywords: interpretive translation, interpretive imperative, interdisciplinarity, translator visibility, target readership, literature in translation.

I. Introduction

Translation is meaning-based. It is an interlingual, intercultural act of communication. The linguistic and extra-linguistic meanings of a source- language text (hence SLT), particularly a 'literary text' are not always readily accessible to the reader/translator, and even more so to the translation target readership. Such meanings must therefore be 'explored', 'discovered', 'explicated' or 'interpreted' to facilitate the full comprehension of the SLT and consequently its creative reproduction, comprehension, acceptability and effective 'exploitation' in the Receptor Language (RL). The translator interpretive tasks are necessarily 'interdisciplinary', being informed by insights from a variety of fields such as semantics, pragmatics, reading and reception theories, communication theory, literary theory, text-linguistics, critical theory, and cultural studies. This situation highlights the interpretive competence of translators, their responsibility as 'global mediators', and their position of privilege in the field of interdisciplinary research and scholarship. In this context, the present paper provides theoretical and practical justification for 'interpretive translation'. Much of the supportive evidence is drawn from an extensive review of relevant literature and classroom discussions of English/Arabic bidirectional translations of literary and 'authoritative' texts conducted in the context of an MA translation program at the English Department at Umm Al-Qura University in Makkah. The corpus of texts translated and discussed included the following:

- English Texts:

- (1) The Lion and the Unicorn (part 1: England Your England): An essay by George Orwell 1941.
- (2) Araby : A short story from 'the Dubliners' by James Joyce 1914.
- (3) Luck : A short story by Mark Twain 1891.
- (4) The Tell-Tale Heart: A short story by Edgar Allan Poe, 1845.
- (5) Winning the Cultural War: by Charlton Heston . Address at Harvard Law School, 16 February 1999.

- Arabic texts: A collection of short stories by Hassan Waragli (1999):

- (1) The Wind and the Ember (الريح والجدوة) ; (2) The Calf (العجل) ; (3) Hamza Crosses the Straits of Gibraltar (حمزة يعبر بحر الجاز) ; (4) The Dark Cloud (السحابة السوداء) ; (5) The Veil (الغشاوة).

II. Interpretation, Interpretive Theory and Related Concepts

'Interpretation' is defined as "the act of finding meaning in a work of art or literature" and is thus synonymous with "explanation, explication, elucidation" (Blazer 2005: slide 3). This Definition highlights the issue of 'interdisciplinarity' in the quest for meaning in texts. The interpretation of texts, necessarily utilizes the explanatory, analytic, and evaluative principles of hermeneutics, reading / writing theories, literary theory, and critical theory, among others. 'Literary theory', for example, is viewed as a 'hermeneutical method', suggesting principles for textual analysis, and 'systematizing' 'literary criticism' which is considered to be 'a particular act of interpretation'. 'Critical theory', on the other hand, is said to embody "the methodological analysis of culture in general". Of particular import for our thesis is 'Psychoanalytic Criticism' or the "analysis of the psyche of the text, author, reader, and culture"; and 'reception theory' or 'reader-response criticism' (Blazer, *ibid*: slides 5-9).

According to interpretive theory knowledge and meaning are acts of interpretation. Schleiermacher (1998), for example, argues that any problem of interpretation is a problem of

understanding. He even defined hermeneutics as the “art of avoiding misunderstanding”, stressing the need for both ‘linguistic’ and ‘psychological interpretation’ of discourse (Scott 2003). People are able to interpret texts, Fish (1976) argues, because they are part of an “interpretive community” that gives them a “particular way of reading a text”, a reading that is culturally-constructed. Highlighting the common root of ‘communication’ and ‘community’, Purves (1984), points out that people communicate to form small or large communities. Literary discourse and the study of literature constitute a “major vehicle for creating communities and are important cohesive forces of a society” (p. 18).

Literary discourse is said to communicate by “verbal compression”, imagery, symbolism, metaphor, etc., all requiring an expansion upon the text, an in-depth understanding that can only be achieved through “*explication*”-- “the mental mining for embedded meanings”. Such meanings, in their various levels, are often left out for the reader/translator to “flesh out” through a complex, often “tantalizing” strategy of “perception” and “explication” (Vogel 1994: 16, 17). Even the “best of craftsmanship”, as Thomas (1965) points out, “always leaves holes and gaps in the works of the poem [or other literary discourse types, for that matter], so that something that is not in the poem can creep, crawl, flash, or thunder in. That something is *explication*” (cited in Vogel, *ibid*: 21; my bracketing).

It is argued that “every translation comprises some degree of *explication*”, with its power of “manifestation” or “illumination” (Berman 1999: 5). In the translational process, as Heidegger (1968: 10) points out “the work of thinking is transposed into the spirit of another language and so undergoes an inevitable transformation which can be fecund, because it shines a new light on the fundamental position of the question” (cited by Berman in Venuti, 1999: 289).

2.1 Interpretive Translation

Translation is viewed as “mode of engaging in *plausible interpretation*” which is considered to be the “*supreme objective of scholarship*” (Wallerstein, 1996: 117; my emphasis). Translation studies as Bankier (1996:119) points out, was affected by the “paradigm shift” or general “epistemological re-orientation” which characterized the humanities during the second half of the twentieth century, and in the light of which translating came to be viewed as a ‘hermeneutical enterprise’ whose success depends initially on the ‘understanding’ and proper ‘interpreting’ of texts. It is argued, in this context, that texts are produced “*to be interpreted*” (Neubert & Shreve 1992: 48; my emphasis). Meaning in literature, as a result, came to be viewed as the “significance” of the work in relation to the “outside world”, to “life outside the text” (Harris 1996: 141).

The complex tasks, skills, and problems involved in understanding, interpreting, and communicating information and knowledge across languages and cultures truly highlight the challenging, *interdisciplinary* nature of interpretive translation.

III. Interpretive Translation and Interdisciplinarity

Interpretive translation as “a humanist enterprise” is necessarily interdisciplinary. It bridges the gap between a variety of relevant disciplines such as linguistics, psychology, communication theory, literary studies, sociology, pragmatics, and cultural studies (see:

Bassnett-MacGuire 1980; Newmark 1988; Hatim & Mason 1990; Neubert & Shreve 1992; Baker 1992; Leitch 1992; Nida 1996; Wilss 1996; Leppihalme 1997). It is argued, for example, that translating, like language, must be open-ended and creative. “It can never be more holistic or comprehensive than the disciplines on which it depends” (Nida 1996: 22).

3.1 Reading, Comprehension and Interpretation

Translation is fundamentally an act of “understanding and making others understand”. A “misinterpretation” or “misreading” will automatically lead to a “distortion of the source message and a communication breakdown between source text writer and target readers” (Kadhim 2005: 1). “There is no question”, Reiss (2000: 106) points out, “that simply reading a text sets in motion an act of interpretation”. It is argued that reading provides texts with a goal, an existence, a ‘raison-d’être’. “A text can only come to life”, writes Iser (1971: 2-3), “when it is read, and if it is to be examined, it must, therefore, be studied through the eyes of the reader”. Arguing along a similar line, Purves (1984: 4) points out that “one never stops learning to be a reader”, that literary texts “not only mean but guide our making of their meaning”; and that “without knowledge about the workings of language, and without strategies of interpretation, we are illiterate”.

As a “privileged reader”, and as motivated by “language barrier”, and some “feeling of responsibility and human nobility”, the interpretive translator strives to make sense; reading to produce, and decoding to re-encode (Kadhim 2005: 2). “The highly complex processes of writing”, as Wallerstein (1996: 107) points out, “clearly reveal all the difficulties and contradictions of *thinking of the world*”, and as a result, “we cannot begin to tackle the issue of how best to translate a text in the humanities and social sciences until we analyze *how texts are written and how they are read*” (my emphasis).

Reading is said to occur in the “*realm of the said*”, while interpretation happens in the “*realm of the implied*” (Scholes 1985; cited in Leitch 1992: 12; my emphasis). It is important, however, to realize that interpretation is not motivated only by “textual opacity” and the “possibilities” or persistent “threats of misreading and misinterpretation” characterizing literary discourse. Interpretation, as Benjamin (1968b) points out, occurs “for intellectual practice, to create a fuller universe of meanings through reflection or through intense contemplation” (cited in Leitch 1992: 12). Reading literary texts in particular provides the basis for intensely interactive content-based *communication*. As a result, the reader is “immediately obliged to engage in procedures of *interpretation* and *negotiation* of meaning” (Gajdusek 1988: 230; my emphasis).

3.2 Interpretive Translation and Communication Theory

Translation is an act of interlingual communication whose fundamental basis is mutual understanding. Communication, however, should not be viewed as a mere exchange of information, but as a “highly cognitive as well as affective and value-laden activity” (Thanasoulas 2001: 5). The translator is required to take the source texts and recreate them as “members of the text world of the target language” which must “compete” within the TL “communicative environment”, and “exhibit social directness” like their “SL progenitors” (Neubert & Shreve 1992: 41, 42, 43).

The success of translation is said to be a function of “the *communicative roles* it plays in social life”. Texts are considered to be the “building blocks of communication in general and of translation in particular”. The activities of producing and receiving texts “play a significant role

in creating and maintaining social relations”, in fostering a “social development” which is “documented by the social diversity of textual exchange” (Neubert & Shreve, *ibid*: 10, 40). The “skopos” or “communicative value” of translation are dependent on “*pragmatic factors* such as target norms, audience acceptability, target-culture situationality, the TT’s intertextual relations, the translator’s intentionality, and so on” (Rabadan 1996: 130; my emphasis).

3.3 Interpretive Translation and Textuality

If translation is construed as a “textual process” aiming at fostering cross-cultural understanding, and “competing” within the TL textual world as “a dynamic mechanism for transmitting and activating knowledge”, then the translator needs, as Neubert and Shreve (1992: 69, my emphasis) point out, the “organizing” or “orienting principle” of *textuality* which is necessary for the “transfer”, and “retrieval” of information involved in the translation process. Such principle is crucial for translation theory in general, and interpretive translation in particular. Our understanding of textuality is crucial for our understanding of the translation process. As Wallerstein (1996: 107) points out, “we cannot begin to tackle the issue of how best to translate a text in the humanities and social sciences until we analyze how texts are written, and how they are read”. Texts are required to satisfy specific ‘standards of textuality’ to be acceptable as “communicative occurrences” (de Beaugrande & Dressler 1981).

The standard of ‘intentionality’, for example, as (Neubert & Shreve 1992: 72) points out, designates the writer’s intentions, his/her desire to “have effect”, to “achieve something with the text”. Intentionality is associated with the notion ‘*acceptability*’ which refers the acceptance of the translated text as a “piece of purposeful linguistic communication”, and which is conditioned by the TL readers ability to “extract the contents of the text”. The translational task, as a result, often involves modifications for the interest of the text receptors (de Beaugrande & Dressler 1981: 129). Grice’s (1975: 45-46) “Cooperative Principle” with its maxims of ‘Quantity’, ‘Quality’, ‘Relation’, and ‘Manner’, are relevant to the translator’s reproduction of the TLT and its “acceptance” by the target reading community.

The production and reception of texts depends on the “participants’ knowledge of other texts”, thus the standard of textuality known as ‘*intertextuality*’ (de Beaugrande & Dressler 1981: 182). The translator’s challenge in this respect, resides in the translation’s “double intertextuality” - the ST network of relationships with other SL texts, and its new relationship and “competition” with original receptor language texts (see section 3.5.1 below). The features of textuality and the challenges they pose for the reader, translator, interpreter, or critic, among others, are best illustrated in *literary discourse*.

3.4 Interpretive Translation, Literary Theory and Critical Discourse

Meaning in texts is sometimes left to be explored and discovered. The writer of imaginative literature as Irmsher (1975: 105) argues, often leaves “things unexplained”, therefore leaving “much for the reader [translator] to conjecture and imagine”. The study of literature, is said to provide a useful tool which is the ability to *interpret* a discourse; to understand how meaning is “created through reading” (Spack 1985: 706, my bracketing, my emphasis).

The “shift” from the ‘traditional essentialist’ or ‘corpus’ approach to literature (Lefevere 1988:173) to a much broader conceptual framework for the subject has had considerable impact on translation theory and on literary translation in particular. Literature, as (Ketkar 2003: 1-3) points out, is no longer considered to be an “autonomous and

independent domain”; it is instead viewed in a “much broader social and cultural framework”. Translation theory, as a result, stresses the close alliance of literature to the discipline of “cultural studies”, and its reliance for its analytical tools on “various social sciences like linguistics, semiotics, anthropology, history, economics, and psychoanalysis”.

The analysis, discussion, explanation, interpretation, and evaluation of literary discourse is usually the task of *literary criticism* which is “often informed” by, and is a “practical application” of literary theory (Blazer 2005). Some approaches to literary criticism can provide relevant insights for our argument for interpretive translation (Bain et al 1991). The *historical/biographical* critical approach, for example, considers a literary work to be a reflection of its author and his world, and calls for an investigation of the author’s beliefs, prejudices, history, life experience, and the intellectual, social, and cultural context of his times (see Arnold 1865). *Psychological* criticism operates on the belief that “great literature” is a truthful reflection and realistic representation of human motivation and behavior. Thus critics focus on the analysis of the author’s or fictional characters’ behaviors and psychological motivations. Freudian, Jungian, and Lacanian psychological approaches are influential forces in this school of criticism (Freud 1900; Lacan 2001; Jung 1966, 2005). *Reception/reader-response* criticism, on the other hand, claims that meaning is inherent not in the text itself but in the reader and the reading community. Readers’ ability to process and understand texts is subject to the “*interpretive strategies*” they learned in their particular “*interpretive community*” (see: Rosenblatt 1938; Fish 1976; Iser 1974, 1978; Mailloux 1982; Tompkins 1980; my emphasis).

As an “intellectual practice” interpretation transcends “textual opacity” to help create a “fuller universe of meanings” through “reflection” and “intense contemplation”. In this respect, as Scholes (1985), argues, it is necessary to break the “hermetic seal” around literary texts, and end the “formalistic tradition” of “disinterested”, “unindoctrinated”, “amoral” criticism which “*dehistoricizes*” and “*desocializes*” literature. Texts are said to be “indissolubly” linked with “a social body” and consequently, “criticism is rooted in community”, and aesthetics cannot be “severed from ethics and politics”. Literary study and criticism should not be viewed as a “mere aesthetic scrutiny” in search of “appreciation and refinement”, but as *cultural analysis* in the pursuit of “social understanding and human emancipation” (Scholes in Leitch 1992: 13, 14; my emphasis).

3.5 Interpretive Translation and Cultural Studies

Newmark (1988:94) defines culture as “a way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression”. This definition can be said to imply that culture reflects the ways in which different cultural groups perceive and interpret meaning. Language is a social institution which is said to underpin three pillars or major categories of human activity upon which culture is built: the “personal”, whereby “individuals think and function”, the “collective”, whereby “we function in social context”, and the “expressive”, whereby “society expresses itself”. The transposition of thoughts expressed in the source language into the appropriate expressions of another social group must necessarily entail “a process of cultural decoding, recoding and encoding” (Karamanian 2003: 1).

In the context of culturally-oriented translation studies literary texts are viewed as fundamentally social texts. Consequently, literary analysis or literary criticism are cases of *cultural analysis* or *cultural criticism*. With the advent of the “cultural turn” (Hermans 1999; Lefevere 1992), translation was no longer merely concerned with finding “verbal equivalents,

but also with “interpreting a text encoded in one semiotic system with the help of another” (Ketkar 2003:3).

Implicit cultural meanings are common features of more than one type of discourse. As Leppihalme (1997:3), for example, points out, “A translator of economic or political texts no less than the literary translator can hardly avoid coming across *“implicit messages grounded in the source culture, and vital interests may be at stake if misunderstanding occurs”* (my emphasis). Such implicit messages are often carried by allusions or presuppositions, intertextuality and symbolism.

3.5.1 Cultural Allusions, Intertextuality, Symbolism

Of particular concern for the student translator is the issue of cultural allusions, presuppositions, or ‘cultural bumps’ which refer to those “underlying assumptions, beliefs, and ideas that are culturally rooted, widespread, but rarely, if ever, described or defined because they seem so basic and obvious as not to require verbal formulation” (Ping 1999: 1, 2). Allusions are implicit meanings taking the form of “embedded texts” or ‘in-texts’ (Nord 1991:102) and are a source of potential misunderstanding and consequently mistranslation. They must be understood across cultural barriers. Their understanding and proper handling presupposes a “particular participation from text receivers and a high degree of biculturalisation” (Leppihalme 1997: 3, 4). One of the important aspects of *alluding*, as Johnson (1976: 579) points out, is the capacity of literature “to create new literature out of old”. Readers are involved in a recreation “by hinting at half-hidden meanings” which they are expected to recover and use for a “*deeper understanding* of the work” (my emphasis).

The broad, “semiotic” nature of culture” highlights the need for an “interpretive”, “ethnographic” approach to its description, analysis and transfer, which has significant implications for social sciences in general and translation studies in particular. The analysis of culture with its “*webs of significance*”, as Geertz (1973: 5) points out, is therefore “*not an experimental science* in search of law but an *interpretative one in search of meaning*”, in search of “*explication*” and comprehension (my emphasis).

A text, as (Lye: 1997: 2) points out, cannot be “only itself”; it is “woven of former texts” (filiations, historical references, practices, play of language), which it continues to evoke. Translation, consequently must “go beyond the text, towards *intertextuality* and *interdiscursivity*” (Mihalache 2002: Abstract, p. 479; my emphasis).

The notion of intertextuality refers to texts in terms of two axes: a horizontal axis which connects the author and the reader of a text, and a vertical axis which connects the text to other texts. The two axes are connected by “shared codes”, and as a result, “every text and every reading depends on prior codes”. This textual feature may be the most challenging for a translator who is believed to consciously refigure “elements of intentionality, acceptability, situationality, informativity, coherence, and cohesion to conform to the textual expectations of the L2 target audience. The translator, as a result, is required to “extend the communicative reach” of the SL text in order to allow its intertextuality to “show through” in the TL text, and consequently to help the readers to be acquainted with the Source Language “communicative culture” (Kristeva 1980: 69).

The notion of intertextuality is significant to the ‘critical cultural turn’ in translation studies, whereby translation came to be viewed as a form of ‘intercultural communication’, raising the need for text interpretation. According to Kristeva (1988: 59-60) any signifying

system or practice already consists of other modes of cultural signification. A literary text would implicate not only other verbal texts but also other modes of significance like food, fashion, local medicinal systems, metaphysical systems, traditional and conventional narratives, like myths, literary texts, legends, as well as literary conventions like genres, literary devices and other symbolic structures.

According to Geertzian theory, which championed symbolic anthropology, a prime attention is given to *the role of symbols* in the construction of “public meaning”, and thus public culture. The latter is defined in 'The Interpretation of Cultures' as “a system of inherited conceptions expressed in *symbolic forms* by means of which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (Geertz 1973:89; my emphasis).

Literary discourse is by nature *symbolic*. Such discourse is characterized by the predominance of symbolic signification or implicit signification. As Lye (1996: 1) points out “we share reality through common signs. We cannot share anyone else’s reality except through the mediation of our symbolic world—that is, through a ‘text’ of some sort, which text has a context—in fact, many contexts”.

IV. Interpretive Translation: Evidence from Translation Performance Analysis

A comprehensive illustration of implicit meanings requiring interpretation in translation is beyond the scope of the present paper. This section, therefore, discusses a limited number of cases of cultural, intertextual and symbolic signification. Such type of signification, in our view, imperatively requires more interpretive action. The English and Arabic translations analyzed are samples of students performance in two MA translation courses: ‘literary translation’ and ‘culture and translation’ offered within the context of an MA Translation Program at the English Department at Umm Al-Qura University in Makkah (see the Introduction above for details on the content and sources of the translation corpus). Let us now consider the following examples:

4.1 Cultural Allusions

4.1.1 Example

SLT: from ‘winning the cultural wars’ by Charlton Heston

Disobedience is our DNA. We feel innate kinship with that disobedient spirit that *tossed tea into the Boston Harbor*, that *sent Thoreau to jail*, that *refused to sit in the back of the bus*, that *protested a war in Vietnam*... Disobedience demands that you put yourself at risk... *Dr. King* stood on lots of balconies. You must be willing to be humiliated... to endure the modern-day equivalent of *the police dog at Montgomery* and the *water cannons at Selma* (my emphasis).

Arabic Translation:

. وعلاقتنا فطرية ووثيقة وبتلك الروح المتمردة التي قذفت بالشاي في العصيان المدني جزء لا يتجزأ من جيناتنا الوراثية (حمضنا النووي) مياه مرفأ بوسطن، وأرسلت ثورو إلى السجن، ورفضت الجلوس في مؤخرة الحافلة، وتظاهرت احتجاجا على الحرب في فيتنام... ويتطلب العصيان المدني أن تعرض نفسك للخطر والاذى... فقد وقف الدكتور كينغ في العديد من الشرفات... يجب أن تكون مستعدا لتقبل الإذلال، وتحمل ما يعادل في العصر الحديث كلاب مونتغمري ومدافع الماء في سلما.

The Arabic translation in sample 1 above clearly indicates that although the translation of a creative text can be quite accurate at least at the denotative level, much is lost in the translation if cultural signification of the Source Language text is not tended to and elucidated in the process. The target Arabic text remains, to a considerable extent, semantically and culturally opaque, just like the target English text in example 2.

4.1.2 Example

SLT from 'Hamza Crosses the Straits of Gibraltar' by Waragli

قال البحر: « من هنا كان عبورهم، امتطوا صهواتي المصطخبة وعبروا غير هيا بين ولا وجلين ... من هنا عبر طريف، وطارق، وموسى، ويوسف... أسرجوا الأفراس وخاضوا بما لجحي، أعزة على الكافرين أذلة على المؤمنين ... هذه هي سبيلهم، وفي سبيل الله ما لا قوا .(28) حمزة يعبر بحر المغرب، الوراكلي، ص.

English Translation:

The sea said: " From here was their *passageway*. They rode my roaring waves and fearlessly crossed to the other side... From here crossed *Tarif* and *Tariq* and *Musa* and *Yusuf*. They saddled their horses and rode my depths (my emphasis).

For both samples above, the student translator is required to engage in extensive reading, becoming a researcher whose task is to make crucial implicit meaning or signification explicit for the target readership. The two samples, for example, include crucial *allusions* to important events in either American or Arab and Muslim history (culture). Some of these events have dramatically affected the lives of nations and even changed the course of history. In the context of American history, dramatic events such as 'tossing tea into the Boston Harbor', 'protesting war in Vietnam' or 'refusing to sit in the back of the bus' were cases of effective 'civil disobedience' that led to much freedom and emancipation in the nation, and were emblematic of a free and independent spirit. The crossing of the Straits of Gibraltar by *Tarif*, *Tariq*, and others is another case in point. The events marked the beginning of the establishment of a brilliant Muslim civilization in Spain which lasted for eight centuries and which triggered European Renaissance and delivered humanity from bondage, ignorance and backwardness.

4.2. Intertextuality

4.2.1 Example

SLT from 'The Calf' by Waragli

و (الظالمين) س تحكم بالقوانين الوضعية، يا للكارثة، يا للمصيبة، أو أكون في (الكافرين) أنزل الله، ما بغير إنك ستقضي بينهم أعوذ بك من الحور بعد الكور (من قصة العجل، رحماك يا رب، رحماك، بغير ما أنزل الله؟ و (الفاستقين) الذين يحكمون الوراكلي، ص. 65)

English Translation:

You are going to judge people by what Allah has not revealed. You are going to rule by positivist (secular) laws. Oh! What a calamity! what a tribulation!. Would I be one of the *unbelievers*, one of the *wrong-doers*, one of the *rebellious* people who rule by what Allah has not revealed? Oh Allah be merciful with me ! I seek refuge in you. Let me not *go astray after being rightly guided* (my emphasis).

The Source Language *intertextuality* with the Holy Qur'anic discourse, as included in sample 4.2.1 above, helps the student translator, researcher to understand and to translate the SL text better. The use of the words 'unbelievers', 'wrong-doers', and 'rebellious' clearly evoke specific verses of the Holy Qur'an, which is the first frame of reference, and the primary source of legislation in the Muslim culture. The main character in the story, a judge by profession, has, out of greed and temptation, ruled by what was not decreed:

If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) *Unbelievers* (Al-Ma'idah: 44) / they are (No better than) *wrong-doers* (Al-Ma'idah: 45) / they are (no better than) those who *rebel* (Al-Ma'idah: 47) (Yusuf Ali).

4.2.2 Example

SLT from 'The Calf' by Hassan Al-Waragli

لقد طوعت لك نفسك، من أجل ذلك، القتل فقتلت (من قصة العجل، ص. 65)

English Translation:

Your soul, for that reason, tempted you to kill, so you killed.

Intertextuality is also operational in sample 4.2.2. The SL expression "your soul tempted you to kill" evokes the Qur'anic text (see verse below) that describes the situation of Adam's sons Cain and Abel, a situation reflecting the predicament of Abdulmajid, the protagonist in the story 'The Calf' who has, out of jealousy, envy and love for material life, become a killer:

Then *his soul prompted him to slay his brother, and he slew him,*
And became one of the losers (Al-Ma'idah: 30) (A.J. Arberry).

4.3. Symbolism

4.3.1 Example

SLT from 'The Wind and the Ember' by Waragli

الرياح والجدوة

English Translation:

The wind and the ember (firebrand).

The two Arabic words for the 'wind' and 'the ember' are used intertextually with the Holy Qur'anic discourse, and are deeply rooted in the Islamic culture. The word (reeH) 'wind' is commonly - though not always - used in the Holy Qur'an to *symbolize* good tidings, grace and mercy:

He it is Who enableth you to traverse through land and sea; so that ye even board ships;- they sail with them with a *favourable wind*, and *they rejoice* (Yunus: 22) (Yusuf Ali).

And also:

Among His Signs is this, that He sends *the Winds*, as heralds of *Glad Tidings*, giving you a taste of His (Grace and) *Mercy* (Al-Rum: 46) (Yusuf Ali).

The symbolic significance of the 'wind' is further confirmed in the 'Sunnah':

Do not curse the wind, for it is a relief (faraj) and soothing mercy from Allah (min rawHi Allah) (Hadith narrated by al-Nasaai).

The word (jadwah or jidwah) (ember, firebrand) refers to a remnant of fire, of

burning wood covered with ashes. The *inter-text* in the Holy Qur'an reads:

He (Moses) said to his family: "Tarry ye; I perceive a fire;
I hope to bring you from there some information, or a burning
firebrand, that ye may warm yourselves" (al-Qasas: 29) (Yusuf Ali).

Both Arabic terms (*reeH* and *jadwah*) *symbolically* describe the current Muslim world situation which resembles that of an extinguishing, dying fire which is turning to ashes as indicated by the recurrent theme in the story "ramaad, ramaad, ramaad" (ashes, ashes, ashes). The weak ember (or moribund soul and confusion of the modern man, of the ummah), represents still a glimmer of hope, which requires the power of a soothing and favorable wind in order to be ablaze again, to radiate warmth, change and revival.

4.3.2 Example

SLT from 'Araby' by James Joyce

The former tenant of the house, a priest, had died in the back drawing-room. Air, musty from having been long enclosed, hung in all the room, and the waste room behind the kitchen was littered with old useless papers. Among these I found a few paper-covered books, the pages of which were curled and damp: *the abbot*, by Walter Scott, the *Devout Communicant*, and *the Memoirs of Vidocq*.

Arabic Translation:

انحباسه الطويل عالقا في أرجاء لقد مات القسيس، المستأجر لمنزله؛ مات في غرفة الاستقبال الخلفية. كان الهواء العفن من جزاء مبعثرة قديمة ومهملة، وجدت بينها مجموعة من الكتب ذات الغرفة كلها، وكانت غرفة المهملات خلف المطبخ مغطاة بأوراق منها كتاب "رئيس الدير" لوالتر سكوت، وكتاب "المتناول الورع"، وكتاب "مذكرات الأغلفة الورقية والصفحات المجددة التديئة، فيدوك".

Symbolic meaning or significance is also predominant in sample 4.3.2, as it is in the whole story 'Araby'. The story is about a confused and disoriented youthful character who starts out with a romantic view of the world (Araby, the grand oriental fête in Dublin, the songs of Araby) and who is gradually developing a realistic view of the world. Expressions such as "the priest had died", "the musty air", "the littered waste room", "the paper-covered books with curled and damp pages", etc. are elements of a drab and lifeless setting, and are *symbolically* indicative of the youth's eventual 'prise de conscience' or return to reality. The death of the priest *allegorically* represents the death of the church (Roman Catholicism in Ireland). The choice of book titles is itself deliberate, reinforcing the themes of dishonesty, hypocrisy and deception in the story. *The Abbot* (1820) by Sir Walter Scott is a historical novel which is said to dishonestly present Mary Queen of Scots in a romantic and religious fashion. Likewise, the popular novel "The Memoirs of Vidocq" (1829) was about a bad police commissioner from Paris who was a thief and thus could hide his crimes (Selected essays on James Joyce's "Araby" - The Literary Link).

Conclusion

This paper has presented theoretical and practical evidence for interpretive translation as an activity which is necessarily interdisciplinary. In the light of comprehensive theoretical exploration and substantial discussion and practice (initially conducted within the context of a graduate course on translation and culture) a number of points can be made:

1. Translation, particularly of literary discourse, is always interpretive.

2. The 'interpretive imperative' is dictated by a number of factors including:
 - (a) The function and utility of translation work as a crucial means of human communication and mutual understanding.
 - (b) The responsibility of the translator and his strategic role as a 'global mediator and 'primary communicator'.
 - (c) The inability of the target readership- as a result of the language barrier or other, to access information and knowledge, and to derive benefit from often highly ambiguous texts from an alien culture.
 - (d) Translation is predominantly concept-based, but meaning in language, is complex, contextual, elusive, changing and often ambiguous.
 - (e) Literary texts display 'signifying power'. Various elements of explicit and implicit meaning (and 'potential' vehicles of ambiguity) are at play in these texts, including denotation, connotation, figures of speech, implication, cultural presuppositions, etc.
3. The goals of interpretive translation are the 'intelligibility', 'domestication', 'acceptability' and the 'full exploitation' of the translated texts in the RL and culture. Consequently, tasks of explication, inferencing, annotation, commentary, critique, or other 'transfer strategies' are required.
4. The translation of creative literature must produce TL texts that are equally creative- thorough, idiomatic, fully intelligible, productive and effective.
5. Much is invariably lost in the literal translation of literary work-- cultural, intertextual, symbolic signification, the communication effect, and literary appreciation.
6. Literary texts are part of the general activity of 'textual exchange' whose role is to foster 'social development' through 'creating and maintaining social relations'. They are, therefore, written to be fully construed and exploited both within and across languages and cultures.
7. Translation, particularly in its interpretive form, is a highly intellectual practice which generates knowledge, global understanding and 'mutual enrichment'.
8. Interpretive translation work is necessarily interdisciplinary. It draws on insights from various auxiliary disciplines including semantics, pragmatics, interpretive theory, reading theory, communication theory, literary theory, cultural studies and critical theory.
9. The eclectic nature and daunting tasks of Interpretive Translation highlight the importance of the student translator's required skills and competencies.
10. The importance and benefits of 'literature in translation' are undeniable, and interpretive translation practice can be fully exploited for pedagogical, academic, critical, and research purposes, to assume its position of privilege in the overall field of interdisciplinary research and scholarship.

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