Beyond Literalism: Arberry's Translating (in) Visibility of Imru al Qays' Mu'allaqa through the Lens of Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract
The translation of Pre-Islamic Arabic poetry into English is assumed by translators themselves to be their Gordian knot given the ensuing lexical, phonological, semantic and cultural variances existing between the two languages. The present paper aims at accentuating the way(s) diverse socio-cultural configurations can impinge on translators' strategy of literalism. With this objective in mind, the paper probes Arberry's translation venture in approaching Imru al Qays' Mu'allaqa by investigating the pivotal roles culture and ideology fulfill in maneuvering the translator's word choice. The approach adopted while investigating such postulation is a critical discourse analysis perspective steeped in Van Dijk's (2004) model of probing ideologies to six of al-Mu'allaqa's most culturally challenging lines of verse. Within the confines of this work, ideology unfolds to be highly salient in shaping the course of Arberry's rendition of the text through destabilizing his literalism.

Key words: al-Mu'allaqa, ideology, Imru al Qays, literalism, translation

Introduction

Sir William Jones was the first English orientalist to venture into the translation of al-Mu'allaqa in 1783, though his endeavor is believed to be fragmentary. (Ibn Salim Hanna,1966). Other subsequent translation projects include that of Caussin de Perceval in French and W. Ablwardts in German. However, these were met with much reticence by Arberry (1905-1969), who held that those attempts were an "unwholesome depiction of the Arabian original; being chiefly "paraphrases" rather than translations" (Arberry, 1957). Having said that Imru' al-Qays'Mu'allaqa is so boastfully marked with such poetic and ethno-cultural insignia that no translation enterprise would thrive "to convey the masterly sweep" of it"(Faris, 1966, p.43), Arberry embarked into presenting the English readers with an unembroidered copy of it. Assumed to be the finest among many translations of al-Mu'allaqa, Arberry engaged in the text with a high degree of poetic sensitivity whose aim boils down to: "how best to convey in his own idiom the impression made upon his mind by words uttered 14 hundred years ago, in a remote desert land, at the first dawn of an exotic literature" (Arberry, 1957, p. 60).

The present paper has as a major purpose: unraveling what goes over and above Arberry's rendition of one of the most poetically and culturally reverberating poems, i.e.Imru'al-Qays'Mu'allaqa. Put differently, this paper aims at demonstrating that Arberry's cultural affiliation intervenes in his translation making him visible, and shattering, thus, his strategy of literalism which a priori suggests a sheer invisibility of the translator. I am, thereby, proposing concepts that are referentially significant to the implementation of the present investigation. The first working concepts I underscore are that of translation and ideology. A special attention is also accorded to the notion of equivalence and its manifold implications. In relation to this, I, then, try to tie up those concepts with my practical part where I investigate the potentiality of the influence of ideology on Arberry's literalism as substantiated in six selected lines of verse while using Van Dijk's model of probing ideologies.

Translation scope

A myriad of definitions are bestowed on translation as a subject field, a process and a product. Thus far, one that echoes best the scope of this paper is Nida and Taber's:"Translation consists of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalence of source language (SL) message firstly, in terms of meaning and secondly, in terms of style"(1982, p.12). Such a definition prioritizes meaning including its entire contextual undertones over the structure of the text. It also emphasizes the way meaning transpositions across languages and cultures come to carry with them all of the blemishes that may mark, in a manner of speaking, a neat and tidy translation, in default of corresponding linguistic and cultural configurations. In consequence, translators, no matter what translating strategies they espouse, are nudged to navigate through the uncharted potentials that their languages open out, including meaning possibilities that bring into play cultural and ideological assumptions. The quality of openness in the texture of language which is manifest in its ability to take in new meanings and make old meanings wear new uses sends to the notion of equivalence in translation and the manners it has been defined and redefined.

Equivalence, as Baker contends, in her influential book *In Other Words* (2011), is a rather relative concept since it is predisposed by a variety of linguistic and cultural elements. Accordingly, she distinguishes between word-level and above word level and full and partial equivalence. These levels actually, are as manifold as levels of language operating at expression scale "formal or natural equivalence" (Nida, 1964; Catford, 1965; Pym, 1998) or signification scale "dynamic, textual or directional equivalence" (Nida, 1964; Catford, 1965; Pym, 1998). At this point, culture, as a system of abstractions and materializations of those abstractions become manifestly potent as regards what type of equivalence is imminent. Notwithstanding its elusiveness, the contextual or localized perception of culture is essential to producing an adequate translation strategy from that culture's perspective.

The narrative of translation, indeed, spreads out a multitude of translation strategies propounded by different translators and scholars in the discipline, chiefly, Nida (1964);Seguinot (1989);Newmark (1981);and Harvey (2000). Speaking of translation strategies or methods, however, drives us to summon up fewer types. Those fall roughly under the banner of two axes: 1) domestication also interchangeably referred to as paraphrase or dynamic equivalence (a target text-oriented approach) and 2) literalism also referred to as foreignism, metaphrase or formal correspondence (a source text oriented approach). (Catford 1965; Venuti, 1998; Nida, 1964; Newmark, 1981).

It is worth remembering that Arberry's translation strategy is ostensibly source text-based since he refuses to detribalize and uproot al-Mu'allaqa to merely gratify the conformist taste of his own English culture. In other words, through his literalism, Arberry, initially, intended to convey a factual reproduction of al-Muallaqa. Yet, his procedure was disrupted by his own cultural and ideological affiliations which were all the most visible through the lines he produced.

Ideology

Being as elusive asthe concept of culture, ideology has hoarded numerous definitions from the most to the least innocent ones. Notwithstanding, I have chosen Van Dijk' definition as the most pertinent to the present study since it is the one germane to its scope. Outlining their socio-cognitive function, Van Dijk (2006) describes ideologies as:

> …more fundamental or axiomatic...They control and organize other socially shared beliefs. Thus, a racist ideology may control attitudes about immigration…Hence, ideologies are foundational social beliefs of a rather general and abstract nature. One of their cognitive functions is to provide ideological coherence to the beliefs of a group and thus facilitate their acquisition and use in everyday situations. Among other things, ideologies also specify what general cultural values (freedom, equality, justice, etc) are relevant for the group (p. 116).

Van Dijk (1995) also identifies critical discourse analysis as ideology analysis. He asserts, "…ideologies are typical, though not exclusively, expressed and reproduced in discourse and communication…" (p.17).   It is important to note at this point that translation becomes a prolific ground where ideologies are discursively transferred, re /produced and re/shaped.

Research tools
Within the confines of this paper, an analysis of the English rendition of six ideologically confrontational lines of verse of al-Mu'allaqua is undertaken. The selected extracts intend to show the ideologically driven poetic and ethnic impetus of the poem and the manner such impetus is carried over, with a prominent maneuvering tinge, by Arberry. A critical discourse analysis perspective- Van Dijk's (2004) model of investigating ideology more particularly- is implemented for the capacity it offers in disintegrating the text to expose the embedded ideological charge within it.

Van Dijk contends that ideologies are built upon terms of a square whose edges draw attention to: emphasizing our good things; de-emphasizing our bad things; emphasizing the others' bad things; de-emphasizing their good things. Interestingly, the requisites- as propounded by Van Dijk-that enter into such socio-cognitive model of analyzing ideology are many. Strong among them, we have:

*Categorization***:** the manner wherein we categorize the world or a group of people either positively or negatively, though, it is more negative than positive as a practice, based on overgeneralizations, half-truths, or even lies. Often, categorizations are subjectively and stereotypically construed. They also correlate mostly with the concepts of "othering" (about treating with alienation a person or a group pertaining to a different culture as inherently different) and "stereotyping" (about typecasting a group or a person on the basis of over simplified or exaggerated statements).We tend, for instance, to pigeonhole the other to specific features such as "lazy", "aggressive", "effeminate", "violent", "beautiful", "smart", and so forth.

The notion of categorization prompts us to bring to the fore two other notions that Van Dijk outlined, namely, "negative other representation" and "positive other representation" which occur when categorising people as out-groups and in-groups in a complementary or secondary way to the self-glorification. In gender discourse, for instance, we often speak of the language used in hegemonic masculine groups and societies about women and men. This language is believed to be reductionist and pejorative when used to describe women, but positive and gratifying when used to describe men. Inextricably related to categorization and negative or positive other representation is the notion of "lexicalization".

Lexicalization: can be defined as the conscious or unconscious use of negative expressions to depict something or someone. Lexicalization is a fertile ground of ideological expression. A case in point is the connotations that the binary set "suicide bomber" versus "sacrificial victim/martyr" triggers off when depicting the same person but from different perspectives. In this relation, Van Dijk (1995) contends:

> To refer to the same persons, groups, social relations or social issues, language users generally have a choice of several words, depending on discourse genre, personal context (mood, opinion, perspective), social context (formality, familiarity, group membership, dominance relations)and socio-cultural context (language variants, sociolect, norms and values. Many of these contexts are ideologically based…Racist or sexist slurs directed at

or used about minorities and women, directly express and enact relationships of power abuse…" (p.25).

Counterfactuals: about things set in opposition with the current facts. Counterfactuals are endorsed arguments laid down in relation to particular views expressing dissimilar presentations of genuine facts. The sentence "if men had no eyes, they could not see" is an instance of a counterfactual simply because men do have eyes. Counterfactuals link to the above stated concept of categorization when it draws upon categorizations based on half-truths or lies.

*Euphemism***:** the use of less offensive terms to describe something or someone. Euphemism is also defined as the substitution of unpleasant or offensive words for less direct innocuous ones. The point of using euphemisms is to decrease negative emotions. In Algerian Arabic dialect, for example, we have words and expressions like "rah biin jadding xalqah" (he is in God's hands), "lqa mulaah" (he met his Lord) to point out somebody's decease. Likewise, in English, we have, "pass away" and "called to the internal sleep" for dying.

Metaphor: the different naming we accord to the animate or inanimate, often other than their initial ones. Metaphor, generally, works efficiently when the interactions share the same culture. It can be, therefore, a means of nurturing and feeding intimacy. When someone produces a metaphor, the recipient of this metaphor will explore the producer's intended meaning by deploying certain strategies. Chief among them, drawing on the cultural background they both have in common. If somebody says "Oliver Cromwell was the bête noire of Charles I and the Monarchy in general", the hearer can understand such metaphor only if certain conditions are met. Metaphorical meaning construal here is built upon the assumption that the recipient knows through reading in Encyclopedia Britannica, for instance, about Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) as the moving spirit of the Civil War, the one behind the execution of Charles I (1648) and eventually the foundation of the Republic. Interestingly, when a person's or a group's features are metaphorically exaggerated in either negative or positive ways, we call it a "hyperbole".

Hyperbolic statements: profusely feed on metaphors, yet, they can also, literally speaking, amount to simple overstatements or exaggerations. Consider the following statement:

"I like all types of pasta, but Algerian traditional pasta 'couscous' is the best in the world."

This is a case of an exaggerated hyperbolic statement based on a subjective and personal judgment.

Vagueness: nebulous expressions used in order not to provide enough information or accurate meaning. Vagueness can be intentional or unintentional. Importantly, the motives behind the intentional use of vagueness range from self-protection by detaching oneself from certain circumstances to a lack of information about a given context, passing by informal settings where preciseness is not always sought after.

Implementing Van Dijk's Model on Arberry's Translation of Imru al Qays' Mu'allaqa: an analysis of sixlines of verse

1. Line of verse one

قفا نبك من ذِكرى حبيب ومنزل

بسقط اللوى بين الدخول فحومل

qifaanabki min ðikraa ḥabibin wamanzilin   biṣiqṭi el liwabajna al daxuli faḥawmali

Halt fiends both! Let us weep, recalling a love and a lodging
By the rim of the twisted sands between Ed-Dakhhol and Haumal

This line of verse as mentioned earlier or couplet is an example of the *Nasib* (nostalgic yearning for the bygone days) segment which marks the opening of al-Mu'allaqa.It is the poet's longing for his beloved's campground with all the reminiscences it triggers off. "Qifaa" is a dual imperative of the Arabic verb "waqafa" meaning "stop" or "stand up". Interestingly, Arrbery's translation "Halt friends both!" is the nearest equivalence to qifaa where "both" expresses duality added to the verb halt. It is worth mentioning that this dual imperative sends also to the use of the dual pronoun in Arabic in reference to one person or a group of people. One such example is when Allah orders Malik, the Hell fire custodian in the Chapter of ق, ' ألقيا، عنيد كفار كل جهنم في)(Throw into in hell every obstinate blasphemer) (translation mine).

Clearly, rhythm, here, is prioritized over rhyme since Arberry decides to choose the blank verse procedure. Besides, the verse consists of iambic pentameter (ten syllables; five short and five long). This renders best the Arabic long verse. It is noteworthy that the blank verse also known as the un-rhyming verse is a literary device which consists of iambic pentameter. Having no fixed number of lines, un-rhymed iambic pentameter suits best long narrative poems of reflective and dramatic characters.

At content level, Arberry's rendition of "ṣiqṭi el liwa" as "the rim of twisted sands", although a literal reproduction of the original, is not the finest. Because tribal aura is essentially safeguarded by place referents' names- in spite of the same name having other possible meaning- reputably known as the lexicon of nostalgia, it would be more resonating to keep such lexicon by way of transferring the word into the alphabet of the target language known as transliteration.

Lexicon of nostalgia, in fact, is one of the hallmarks of al-Mu'allaqa which resists any form of domestication. Note that domestication as a target text-oriented strategy aims at toning down the foreignness of the source text by accentuating the familiarity the target language reader has with the constituents of his language and culture and invoking such constituents in the translation. Domestication is set in opposition to foreignization (a source-text based translating approach) that breaches the aforementioned familiarity between the text and the target reader in favor of a more faithful rendition of the text. (Venuti, 1995: 2000).

At the apex of such lexicon of nostalgia, names of places (villages, rivers, valleys, and mountains), and types of plants that grow where the beloved's tribe once dwelt, are found. These

names as Stetkevych (2003) states are "key elements of the Arabic poetic lexicon"(p. 101). Interestingly, instead of preserving such lexicon as substantiated in the expression of "ṣiqṭi el liwa", Arberry rather broke the expression into its constituents and translated each separately using the broader phrase "twisted sands". This is precisely what might be regarded as "counterfactual" in Van Dijk's words. Arberry's alternative of literal translation, actually, weakens the effect such expression could have had, had it been transliterated, creating a gap between the original expression's content, intent, and effect and the manner it has been carried across. The effect that the place referents produce in the original with all the wholeness they impart is lost in the literal translation by Arberry as it dissects it into commonplace common and non specific terms.

2. Line of verse five

وقوفا بها صحبي علىّ مطيهم
يقولون لا تهلك أسى و تجمل

wuquufunbihaa saḥbi ʕalayyin matijjihumjaquuluunalaatahlak?asanwa tadʒammali
There my companions halted their beasts awhile over me
Saying, "don't perish of sorrow, restrain yourself decently"

Arberry's version displays the features of the traditional metrical form of the target language, opting for simple syntax and vocabulary while stressing the rhythm. The expression "مَطِيَّهُمْ" (matiyyihum) means "their riding animals", "أسى" (?asan) means the "grief", and "تجمّل" (tadʒammali) means "be attributed with patience and calm". This is a poet's vivid portrayal of his own agony exacerbated by his recollections of his beloved. His spectators are his animal riding companions to his beloved's campgrounds.

Arberry's translation of this line seemed unprejudiced as he, through this dramatic depiction, succeeds to render the image in its most natural style with literalism being preeminent in enshrining the verse's particular Arabian frame of mind. However, Arberry only loosely translates the expression "مَطِيَّهُمْ" (matiyyihum) as "their beasts" while the nearest formal equivalence to the expression in English would be "their mouns", since not all beasts are to be riddenwhilst all mounts are. Arberry's word choice of "beasts" instead of "mounts" or "horses" may fall under what Van Djik names "negative other representation". Even if such choice was not driven by prejudice, it ultimately yielded to it. This representation, even if unintended or unconscious, may be akin to a fairy book tale of "beast riding" men who are essentially "the villains" because "the heroes" are for the most part "horse riders". It also further instills the stereotypical image that the west has about the exotic Arabian men and their cultures, and nurtures their fantasies about them.

3. Line of verse eleven

و يوم عقرت للعذارى مطيتي
فيا عجبا من كورها المتحمل

wajawmaʕaqartu lilʕaðaaraamatijjatiifayaaʕadʒaban min kuurihaa ?almutahammali
And the day I slaughtered for the virgins my riding beast
And oh, how marvelous was the diving of loaded saddle

This line of verse is crafted to serve the "faxr"(self-glorification and pride)theme which was one of the major themes in Arab pagan poetry along with al-Madh (Eulogy),al-Hija (Satire), al-Ritha (Elegy), al-Wasf (description), al-Ghazal (Amatory verse) to cite some. Arberry tries to convey the poet's sense of pride using the English iambic pentameter and rhythm without rhyming. Again, here, referring to the ridden animal as a beast fosters such sense of alienation partaking into that clichéd praxis of men riding beasts as rough, and hence, of the Arab man as a rough. This recurring figure implies that Arberry's use of the term was not naïve, but instead, was full of ideological insinuations. While Arberry's choice of literalism is largely foreseen as his modus operandi, his version is punctuated by his own ideological affiliation that he is induced to pursue. Van Dijk (2004) also refers to such type of representations as "lexicalization". Another instance of lexicalization in this verse is the rendering of the term "للعذارى" (lilʕaðaaraa) as "the virgins", even though; a more accurate cultural equivalence would be "the beautiful women" or "the desired women".

The term "عذارى" (ʕaðaaraa), here, occurs with the conventional metaphor of "beautiful women" which is very frequent in Arab culture. Besides, how could the poet assume the "women" to be virgins when he already had an erotic escapade with them earlier? Once more, Arberry's turn of phrase is skewed by formulaic representations or rather misrepresentations of the other, making him override and suspend other impending conventional meanings of the same word.

4.Line of verse twelve

فظل العذارى يرتمين بلحمها
و شحم كهداب الدمقس المفتل

faḍalla lʕaðaaraajartamiinabilahmihaawaʃahmin kahudaabi?addimaqsi ?almufattali
And the virgins went on tossing its hacked flesh about
And the frilly fat like fringers of twisted silk

Through this line of verse, Arberry tries to bring about a further vivid image of the poet' self glorification and indulgence with the "virgins". The translator is so absorbed by the utility of his translation procedure that he downplays the role context may have in navigating through the possible meanings a word can set off. This is evidenced, over again, in his translation of the expression (jartamiinabilahmihaa) as "tossing its hacked flesh about" whereas a more accurate translation would be "passing its hacked flesh among them". Arberry's literalism and disregard of contextual meanings, another time, locks his translation venture in, through the "negative representations of the other" tinge as this rendition may suggest that the poet and his companions were so naïve and extravagant that they played with the meat instead of eating it.

5. Line of verse forty three

ألا رب خصم فيك ألوى رددته
نصيح على تعذاله غير مؤت

?ala rubbaxasminfiki?alwaradadtuhunasihinʕala taʕðaalihi ɣajra mu?tali
Many's the stubborn foe on your account I've turned and thwarted
Sincere though he was in his reproaches, not negligent

Arberry's version deconstructs the source text into its semantic and syntactic units and tries to conform to formal patterns of the target text poetic style. Thisis accomplished by using variable stressed rhythmic units which buttresses the aura Arberry wants to recreate in the most faithful way possible to the original one. To this aim, Arberry converts the term "خَصْمٍ… ألْوَى"into "stubborn foe" which may be seen as an exaggerated form of its connotation "stubborn disputing opponent". The translator's word choice of "foe" in the context of arguments might produce a stereotypical image of the Arabs in the minds of non Arab readers. This is precisely what Van Dijk calls categorization.

6. Line of verse sixty five

فأدبرن كالجزع المفصل بينه
بجيد معم في العشيرة مخول

fa?adbarna kaldʒizʕi lmufassalibajnahubidʒiidin muʕamin fii lʕaʃirati muxwali
Turning to flee, they were beads of Yemen spaced with cowries
Hung on a boy's neck, he nobly uncled in the clan

In this line of verse, the poet describes how the horse goes through the herd while hunting and thus the herd spreads all over like a cut in a piece of jewelry made of beads, and he uses the simile of jewelry on the nobility neck to glorify the significance of the herd in pursuit. Manifestly, Arberry opts for a typical poetic style in rendering the source text verse demonstrating the features of traditional metrical English poetry. The two lines move smoothly opting for an iambic pentameter by arranging iambi adapting the target text metrical system and paying more attention to rhythmic patterns in terms of stressed and unstressed syllables. Arberry translates "مُعَمِّ في العَشيرَةِ مُخْوَلِ" (muʕamin fii lʕaʃirati muxwali) as "he nobly uncled in the clan". The problem arises from the English version of the Arabic words "عَمّ" (ʕam) for "paternal uncle" and (xaal) خْأَل for "maternal uncle. The translator overlooks the nuances existing between both terms as he combines them into a single English word "uncle". Another concern relates to Arberry's translation of the word "العَشيرَة"(?alʕaʃira) as "clan" which may be seen as declassing compared to the more high-status term "tribe". A clan is a sub-group, which is "socio-familistic" in essence, within the larger and stronger political body referred to as "tribe". Although both terms may be mystifying, the translator's wording is doomed to being "counter-factual" due to its stereotypical content. The term "tribe" comes out as more fitting into the self-glorification disposition of the lines of verse.

Conclusion
The preceding lines have shown the intricate manners through which ideology, culture and translation intersect in Arberry's rendition of al-Mu'allaqa. In the course of his translation venture, Arberry attempted, on the one hand, to develop a natural poetic translation instantiated in the blank verse formula, usually with no rhyme, yet, with a regular metrical pattern, whereby he seeks to conform to orthodox English poetics. With no intention to preserve the rhyme and metre of the source text, Arberry's version appears to be concerned more with preserving the semantic and syntactic features of the original than retaining the structure and overall figure of the poem

unbroken. To this end, Arberry breaks down the text into units and operates a literal transformation of lexical units, similes and expressions individually.

On the other hand, by carefully trying to literalize the text, he downplayed, on occasion, the fact that words may have more than one literal meaning which can be acquired by virtue of codified metaphorical extensions and polysemous sense relations. It is noteworthy that the conventional uses of language are multiple and the selection from among them is made possible through the particular context they feed off. Arberry's translation enterprise along with the source text oriented strategy he espoused was driven by his intention to define the text "as an unparalleled artifact with the wholeness of the tribal and cultural fundamentals contained within it", (Benneghrouzi, 2016, p. 181) and "to enshrine the spirit and soil of al-Mu'allaqa with the entire poetic and tribal momentousness its lines set off" ((Benneghrouzi, 2016, p. 187).However, the nuisance emanates from its reliance on stereotypically lexicalized Arabic words/expressions taking them at face value and its accidental nonadherence to the very socio-cultural constitute maneuvering one among other word/expression choices.

One immediate corollary of this attitude in approaching the text is the assumption that numerous translated expressions fall into formulaically predisposed discourse which is one of the most frowned upon linguistic practices as it hinges upon stereotypical categorizations. At this juncture, the translators' ideological and cultural affiliations impinge on their translation strategy and word choice since these affiliations participate plentifully in the discrepancy between the original text and the translated one. It is particularly critical discourse analysis which helps unravel such unhinged discourse influencing readership. Thus, Van Dijk's (2004) frame of reference proved relevant to Arberry's translation as it sustained the probability of ideological manipulation of discourse in translation.

Phonetic scripts used for transliteration in Arabic adapted from the Arabic International Phonetic Alphabet

Vowels

/a/أَ	/u/أُ	/i/إِ

Note that length is expressed by doubling the vowels, i.e., /aa/;/uu/;/ii/.

Consonants

B	ب	M	م	J	ي
T	ث	N	ن	H	ه
D	د	F	ف	X	خ
K	ك	L	ل	ʃ	ش
Q	ق	R	ر	dʒ	ج
Z	ظ	W	و	ḍ	ض
ṣ	ص	z̧	ز	θ	ث

| ṭ | ط | Ð | ذ | ɣ | غ |

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