

## **Re-representing the Self: Saudi Translators' Doxic Peritextual Practice of Deconstructing Orientalists' Writings about Arabia <sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores the Saudis' employment of translation to let their country speak for itself and undermine the Orientalists' ability to represent Saudi Arabia. The paper serves as an attempt to fill two gaps; presenting Saudi identity from a Saudi perspective and examining the Saudi translators' agency. To fill these gaps, the following question is raised: what is the role of the Saudi translators when translating Orientalists' accounts about Arabia to reconstruct the image of Saudi Arabia? The paper aims to examine the prevailing practices of Saudi translators of Orientalists' writings about Arabia into Arabic. The paper adopts Bourdieu's apparatus of *doxa*, and Genette's conception of *peritexts* to analyze the practices of three Saudi academics/translators in Saudi History; namely, 'Abd Allah Al 'Askar, 'Abd Allah Al-'Uthaymīn, and 'Uwaīdah Al Juhany. The argued misrepresentation of Saudi Arabia within Orientalists' writings led Saudi academics/translators to adopt deconstruction as a doxic critique in the peritexts of their TTs to reconstruct the image of the Self (i.e., Saudi Arabia), and hence overturn the Other's (i.e., Orientalists') narratives. Owing to the Saudi academics/translators' ability to compare historical sources and evaluate Orientalists' assumptions about the Kingdom, one of the rules of the game is that deconstruction is practiced by these academics. Saudi academics/translators perceive such a practice as a national service, considering that, through their peritexts, they grant Saudi Arabia an opportunity to represent itself through its own voice. This doxic practice presents Saudi translators, not as servants of the STs, but rather as authors, with something to say about their national identity.

*Keywords:* Bourdieu, deconstruction, doxa, peritexts, Orientalist writings, Saudi translators' agency

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## Introduction

Translation Studies (TS henceforth) has recently extended its focus beyond linguistic considerations to encompass a multitude of trends, including translation sociology. The sociology of translation is a subfield that has gained momentum since the 1990s. It attempts to formulate more agent aware descriptive, theoretical approaches to address the increasing interest in exploring the translators' role in connection with their agency (Inghilleri, 2005). Translatorial agency is "translation practices and decisions which are socially and historically conditioned" (Hanna, 2014, p. 60). This social phenomenon in TS allows the realization of translation as a socially situated activity through underscoring the pivotal role played by translators in shaping the translation product and in introducing new perspectives through translation (Khalifa, 2014). From this perspective, translation hence becomes a world presented from the translator's standpoint. Notwithstanding that the concept of translatorial agency has burgeoned in the wake of the sociological turn in TS, the two major sociological studies in the Saudi field of translation (namely, Alkhamis, 2012; Alsiary, 2016) have completely neglected the role of the human agents in the translation activity within the Kingdom. The paper thus sheds light on the Saudi translators' agency when translating books about their country.

The Arabian Peninsula, of which Saudi Arabia comprises four-fifths, has always held a mysterious fascination for Western explorers and scholars. Their resultant writings represent a significant cumulative amount of knowledge about Arabia (Aloboudi, 2017). However, several Orientalists, such as Simpson (1989), Lewis (2002), and Bonacina (2015), assert that a considerable number of Orientalists' accounts are subject to prejudice when representing Arabia. This prejudice against the Other, the Western attitude of superiority, and the standard view that cultural conflict is an indication of vitality are factors that have hindered the accuracy of Orientalists' perceptions of the Arabian Peninsula (Simpson, 1989). Moreover, several of them never had any personal contact with Arabs and hence based their narratives on second-hand accounts (Bonacina, 2015). Consequently, they often tend to enforce almost the same stereotypes of Arabia that they carried in their bags (Simpson, 1989). They also had a particular disability since they applied a Western categorization of thought and analysis to the settings of a society that was formed by different influences and followed another way of life (Lewis, 2002). These obstacles were dangerously misleading and led to a distorted image of Arabia (Simpson, 1989; Lewis, 2002).

Owing to this arguably biased construction of Arabia that underlies certain Orientalists' accounts, it is true to say that Saudis dealt with them thoughtfully. Al-Jaseer (1990) argues that, notwithstanding some Orientalists' misrepresentation of Arabia and misunderstanding of its social settings and historical events, Saudi readers must read Orientalists' works de-constructively, as they may contain useful information about Saudi history. Al Bādī (2002) further maintains that the people of Arabia should read Orientalists' accounts not as irrefutable facts but out of curiosity about what the Other wrote about them. Such a deconstructive reading of the Other's narratives, urged by Saudi historians, has also been reflected through a national translational project in the Kingdom.

Against this background, the paper raises the question: what is the role played by the Saudi translators when translating Orientalists' accounts about Arabia to reconstruct the image of Saudi Arabia in their translations? The paper aims to examine the Saudi translators' prevailing practices for reconstructing the image of Saudi Arabia when translating Orientalists' writings about the Arabian Peninsula. In order to achieve this aim, the paper adopts Bourdieu's sociological analytical tool of *doxa*, and Genette's concept of *peritexts* to analyze, in particular, the peritexts of the translations of three Saudi academics/translators ('Abd Allah Al 'Askar<sup>2</sup>, 'Abd Allah Al-'Uthaymīn<sup>3</sup> and 'Uwā'idah Al Juhany<sup>4</sup>). The research aim highlights the significance of this paper. This significance is based on three legitimizing factors: first, the importance of the object of inquiry, i.e., presenting the Saudi identity from a Saudi perspective. Second, the absence of research applying the sociological model of Bourdieu to study the practices and agency of the Saudi translators in the field. Third, the lack of research situating the Saudi translators as its central focus.

## Literature Review

### *The Human-less nature of the Sociological Studies in the Field*

Bourdieu conceptualizes the social spaces within which interactions and events take place as *fields*. Bourdieu (1990, p. 87) contends that "fields are historically constituted areas of activity with its specific institutions and laws of functioning." Drawing upon Bourdieu's notion of field, the paper can hypothesize a field of activity which could be called: the Saudi field of translating Orientalists' books about Arabia. It is presumably a sub-field that falls within the general field of translation in Saudi Arabia. There are, thus far, two studies analyzed the Saudi field of translation using the sociological model of Pierre Bourdieu as an analytical lens.

However, these two studies neglected the translators' agency in the field in which the agents explored in both studies are solely publishers. Alkhamis (2012) offered a general overview of the Saudi field of translation. In his examination of the practices of the field, Alkhamis (2012) primarily focused on the practices of Obeikan, a Saudi private publisher, in translating political books in the context of the international geopolitical aftermath of the 1991 war on Iraq. In addition, the conception of *doxa* was used in Alkhamis' (2012) study in its broader context concerning the religiopolitical and social beliefs circulating in the Saudi social space such as Nationalism and Anti-Imperialism. The second socio-cultural study conducted in the Saudi field of translation was Alsiary's (2016), which focused on the field of translating children's literature. Like Alkhamis, Alsiary (2016) only examined the practices of Saudi publishers such as Obeikan, Jarir, and King Abdul-Aziz library. Notwithstanding her reliance on Bourdieu's framework, Alsiary (2016) did not adopt Bourdieu's *doxa* to examine the publishers' practices in her given field; rather she opted for Toury's (1995) conception of *norms*. The paradigm of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), within which Toury's *norms* falls, has "provided insights in TS on how translated literature functions within the historical and literary "systems" of the target culture" where DTS principally focuses on the text and overlooks the vital role played by the translators as well as the social reality during the process of translation (Khalifa, 2014, p. 12). This human-less perspective of the translation activity was reflected in Alsiary's (2016) conclusion assuming that publishers are the main players in the field since they control and marginalize the translators' role. It is safe to claim

that such a conclusion is partially reached by Alsiary (2016) owing to her marginalization of the translators in participating in the study, by the researcher's own admission as one of the limitations of her research.

This indicates that there has been an entire overlooking of the agency of the human agents in the Saudi field of translation in the previously conducted studies. This paper serves as an attempt to fill this gap in the studies of the field by analyzing the practices of the Saudi translators in the presumed sub-field of translating Orientalists' books about Arabia. In doing so, the concept of *doxa* is examined as being a collective rhythm in connection with the dominant practices within the field itself. This field-specific application of *doxa* in TS is drawing inspiration from Hanna's (2005; 2016) and Elgindy's (2013) studies of the practices of translating Shakespeare in Egypt, and political Islam into English, respectively.

### ***The Saudi Deconstruction of Orientalists' Narratives: Letting Saudi Arabia Speak for Itself***

The flow of translating Orientalists' books about Arabia in Saudi Arabia was professionally inaugurated in 1985 with Al-'Uthaymīn's translation of Burckhardt's (1831) *Notes on the History of the Bedouins and Wahabys*. Al-Semmari (2009), who is the Secretary-General of King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives that is a Saudi governmental body specializing in the history of Arabia, points out that this translation activity reflects the Saudis' attempt to establish the Other's perception of their country, among various other objectives. This Saudi attempt was achieved by adopting a systematic national approach, according to Al-Semmari (King Abdulaziz Foundation, 2019). The Saudi translations of Orientalists' histories of Arabia can be understood in terms of the scholarly terrain, in which they rewrite Saudi history through systematically deconstructing Orientalists' narratives and assumptions.

Through translation, Saudis adopt a form of critical analysis that intends to unpack (i.e., deconstruct) the deeper meanings underlying the ways in which Orientalists imagine and construct Arabia, which is frequently as essentially inferior. This deconstructive method usually intends to undermine "the West's ability to represent other societies" (Clifford, 1986, p. 10) and to "recover the past by systematically overturning Western cultural assumptions" about the Arabian Peninsula (Bandia, 2009, p. 219). It is a form of Saudi resistance to and repudiation of the Western version of Saudi history.

This approach, which has been adopted by Saudi translators, can provide insights into Saudis' perception of their national identity. It can hence be comprehended as a response to Said's (1979) call for a self-representation of the Orient. Said (1979) claimed that silencing the Orient is a recurrent theme of Orientalism, which does not allow the Orient to describe its own history, culture, language, and life experiences. The representations made of the Oriental, according to Said (1979), fail to capture the reality because the Orient is never given a voice of its own. Saudi translators allow Saudi Arabia to speak for itself about itself by providing counter-narratives through their translations. This combination of Said's Orientalism and Derrida's deconstructionism

was recently conceptualized by several scholars, such as Lewis (1994) and Levinson (2013), as De-Orientalism.

Considering the adoption of Post-Colonial apparatuses in this paper for understating the Saudi destabilization of the Western discourses and narratives, it is worth mentioning that the Saudi case cannot be analyzed under a Post-Colonial lens in its temporal definition as being the chronological formation of post-independence, and the colonized experience of imperialism (*Gilbert & Tompkins, 1996*). The bulk of Arabia, which constitutes modern Saudi Arabia, has not been subjected to colonization. Therefore, Saudis have not developed a sense of inferiority found within the habitus of colonized nations (Long, 2005). Moreover, it might be argued that European writings about Arabia and its history cannot thereby be considered colonial histories. Post-Colonialism is applied in this paper as a critical tool for examining the relationship between the Self (Saudi Arabia) and the West not as that between a coloniser and the colonized, but as a binary Us-Them relationship generated by cultural representations, and Saudi Arabia's endeavor to speak for itself to repudiate the perverted hegemonic interpretation of its history and identity.

The deconstruction of the Orientalist discourse about Saudi Arabia has been set as, in Bourdieu's terms, a doxic practice manifested in Saudi academics/translators' products. The concept of *doxa* in Bourdieu's sociology will be defined in the following section before we proceed to an examination of translators' practices in the field.

### **Bourdieu's Conceptualisation of *Doxa***

*Doxa* is one of the fundamental notions in Bourdieu's sociology, which he borrowed from Greek philosophy's *endoxa*. The simplest definition of the doxic practice of a social agent denotes being attuned to the collective rhythm (i.e., the practices circulating widely among the agents of a specific field of activity) without necessarily being conscious of it (Bourdieu 1977). The fact that doxic beliefs operate beyond the level of consciousness is what makes them unquestioned, accepted without comment or question and able to function below the level of language (Bourdieu, 1977). When agents become aware of *doxa*, the taken for granted beliefs and practices enter the realm of language. Hence, two trends begin to emerge in the field: orthodoxy and heterodoxy.

Orthodoxy refers to the trend in the field that seeks to reinforce the existing prevailing practices in the field, whereas heterodoxy is the trend that challenges the doxic and creates new practices and beliefs (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002). Orthodoxy is the discourse established by the agents occupying the dominant position in a given field to preserve the *status quo* of that field and their position within it (Bourdieu, 1993). On the contrary, the discourse of heterodoxy is commonly adopted by newcomers or the existing dominant agents in the field (Bourdieu, 1993). It is thus the discourse of orthodoxy that endeavors to justify the *doxa* and promote it to "the status of the presupposed" in the field (Hanna, 2016, p. 48).

Bourdieu's hypothesis of the two realms of *doxa* and opinion is vital in the sociological investigation of translators' role in the field of translation.

## Research Methodology

As indicated above, Bourdieu's analytical apparatus of *doxa* is employed in the paper to examine the collective practices of the Saudi translators in the given field. In identifying doxic and non-doxic practices in the field, a general examination of the field practices is provided. However, the main testing ground of the paper is a multiple-case study, which consists of the practices of three notable Saudi academics/translators of the Orientalists' writings about Saudi history – 'Abd Allah Al 'Askar, 'Abd Allah Al-'Uthaymīn and 'Uwā'idah Al Juhany. Owing to the expensive nature of a multiple-case study, it would help to achieve the aim of the paper in the sense that it allows exploring a wide range of cases (O'Brien & Saldanha, 2014). The data is particularly scrutinized through the paratextual zone of the of following translated books: 'Askar's translation of Commins' *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia*, Al-'Uthaymīn's first (1985) and last (2013) editions of his translation of Burckhardt's *Notes on the History of the Bedouins and Wahabys*, and Al Juhany translation of Brydges' *The Brief History of the Wahaby*.

The presumed doxic practice of deconstruction in the given field is exercised first and foremost in the paratextual elements of the translations. Paratexts include both the book elements, such as the presentation of the book, the preface and the notes, which are called the "*peritext*" while the "distanced elements" are the messages outside the book (e.g., the interviews, letters, articles) authored by the named translator and provide a direct glimpse of the translator himself and his own voice, which are called the "*epitext*" (Genette, 1997, p. 5). Hence, the paratextual framings carry "spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic and functional" messages (Genette, 1997, p. 4), which can help in recognizing the sociological settings of the translators' practices, and agency (Ali, 2018).

The following section analyses the Saudi academics/translators' paratextual practices as the dominant agents with regard to deconstructing Orientalists' accounts about Saudi Arabia.

## Academics/translators' Agency in Siting and Preserving the Doxic: Peritextual Deconstruction

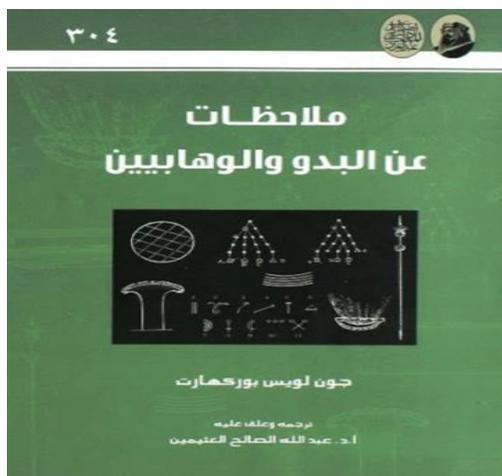
Deconstructing Orientalists' accounts has been practiced since the first known translation produced by a Saudi translator in the field that appeared through the individual effort of Al-'Uthaymīn in 1985. In his translation of the second chapter of Burckhardt's (1831) book, Al-'Uthaymīn extensively employs the peritextual framings (i.e., preface and footnotes) of his TT to deconstruct Burckhardt's assumptions. Al-'Uthaymīn's practice was established as doxic, considering that it can be traced in most of the following products of the Saudi academics/translators in the field. Al Juhany's and Ash Shaikh's translation of Pelly's report in 1991 represents an early example of these products that abide by the doxa. Similar to Al-'Uthaymīn, the peritexts of Al Juhany's and Ash Shaikh's TT are mainly deconstructive. It is thus arguable that owing to Al-'Uthaymīn's precedence and dominant position, his deconstructive discourse in translation has acquired the status of the foundational doxa in the field.

Doxic practices are, in Bourdieu's terms, the "rules of the game," which construct the foundations of the field and draw its boundaries (Hanna, 2016, pp. 21-2). Associating

deconstruction with translation in the field, which is one of the rules of the game, originates criteria of consecration that categorize particular translators' positions over others. Being an academic in the Modern History of the Arabian Peninsula, particularly Saudi History, can be seen as a prime condition for consecrating the translators in the field. King Abdulaziz Foundation, as the dominant institutional agent in the field, also plays a central role in the consecration of the academics in the given field. Al-Semmari (2009) declares, the Foundation merely commissions and deals with academics who specialize in History. Their consecration is arguably attributed to their specialisation, which makes them competent to compare historical sources in order to deconstruct Orientalists' assumptions and narrations. Moreover, Saudi human agents are more consecrated than non-Saudis in the field. This consecrated status of Saudi translators engenders a scheme of perception among the agents that the translation product of the Saudi would be of a higher quality than that of the non-Saudi. This viewpoint is evident in the Saudi academics/translators' disqualification of translations produced by non-Saudi translators. For instance, in Al-'Uthaymīn's (2000) review of the Arabic translation of Vassiliev's (1998) *The History of Saudi Arabia*, produced by two Levantine translators, Al-'Uthaymīn attributes the mistranslations of Arabic proper and places names found in the TT to the fact that the translators are not from that region. Furthermore, in Al 'Askar's (2002) review of the translation of Palgrave's (1865) account, undertaken in Egypt by an Egyptian translator and publisher, the Saudi translator argues that the TT does not successfully meet the doxa of deconstruction as the agents involved do not fully understand the issues raised in the text, as they relate to Arabia.

The consecration of Saudi academics/translators in the field influences the decisions of other translators. The translation by Al Biqā'ī's, a Syrian translator and professor in Linguistics and Literary Criticism at KSU, of Raymond and Driault's (1925) book provides a telling example. Al Biqā'ī (2003) declares, in his preface, that Adh Dhāhirī, a well-known Saudi philosopher and historian, had been appointed to deconstruct and revise the text, and further maintains that several Saudi academic specialists in Saudi History had helped him to understand specific issues in the book during its translation. In doing so, Al Biqā'ī demonstrates his awareness of the consecration of Saudi agents and is thus keen for his readers to believe that his translation has been revised and commented on by many different Saudi academics and historians. It is, then, the peritexts through which the agents attempt to display their compliance with the doxa.

The peritextual framings of the TTs are utilized to promote the position of the doxa in the field. Readers are made aware of the doxic practice even before they read the book through the cover pages. By way of example, the front cover of the last edition of Al-'Uthaymīn's translation of Burckhardt's *Notes* (figure 1) presents the TT as delving into the Orientalist's assumptions and narrations of Arabia, rather than constituting a pure act of translation. Such a presentation of the TT is exhibited in the phrase: "Translated and Annotated by Prof. 'Abd Allah Aṣ Ṣāliḥ Al-'Uthaymīn."



Translators' attempt to clarify their conformity to the doxa also extend to the internal, peritextual zones. For instance, Al Juhany divides his TT into two main parts, entitled as *Al Qism Al 'Awwal: dirāsah 'an Al Mū'allif wa kitābih* [The First Part: A Study on the Author and His Book] and *Al Qism Ath Thānī: At Tarjamah wa At Ta'līq- kitāb (Mūjaz li tārikh Al Wahhābī)* [The Second Part: Translation and Commentary on (*The Brief History of the Wahabiy*)] (Al Juhany, 2005, p. 13-59). By dividing his translated book into two titled sections, Al Juhany clearly and deliberately tends to reveal his orthodoxic discourse to his readers by highlighting that his TT is not a mere translation in which deconstruction permeates its two sections. In a similar vein, Al 'Askar (2013, pp. 9-10) states in his preface:

[...] حيث إنني علّقت في الهامش على بعض المعلومات أو الشروحات التي شعرت أنها تحتاج إلى تعليق يسير. كما أنني علّقت على بعض آراء المؤلف، التي لا تحتل رأيين [...].

[...] As I annotated in the footnote on some information or explanations that I felt that they need a brief comment on. I also commented on some of the author's opinions where two views are impossible. (the researcher's own translation)

Using the expression: *tahtāj* [need], Al 'Askar seems to grant the doxa a binding nature. Moreover, the phrase, *Al Latī lā tahtāmil ra'ūn* [where two views are impossible] reflects his perception that his standpoints are taken-for-granted. The ideological grounds of the doxa manifests itself here in the Saudi academic/translator's justification of his orthodoxic discourse.

*Doxa* generates a "field of opinion" where various legitimate answers can be provided to the question about the dominant doxa (Deer, 2008). This appears in the agent's justification for the integrity of the prevalent doxic practice in the field. The rationalization of the doxa has emerged in the agents' discourse since it first appeared in the field. Al-'Uthaymīn (1985, p. 8) justifies his formation of the doxa as follows:

ولعل في ترجمة ذلك والتعليق على ما هو في حاجة إلى التعليق منه إسهاماً متواضعاً في خدمة تاريخ هذه البلاد.  
Translating and commenting when needed can be perhaps a modest contribution towards serving the history of this country. (the researcher's own translation)

The translational doxa of deconstructing the Orientalists' narration of Saudi history and reconstructing the image of Saudi Arabia is a national service that the Saudi translator argues he provides for his country. To serve the Kingdom, Al Juhany (2005, p. 5) was also keen on, as indicated in his preface:

٤- تصويب المعلومات والوقائع والتواريخ التي قد ترد خطأ في النص من خلال مقارنتها بالمصادر الأولية والمراجع الثانوية الموثوقة المختصة، وتوثيق ذلك من تلك المصادر والمراجع.

[...]

٦- التعليق على الأفكار والمفاهيم الخاطئة أو غير الدقيقة التي ربما ترد في النص، وتصويبها من المصادر التي تمثل وجهة نظر أهل الدعوة الإصلاحية وغيرها وتوثيق ذلك من تلك المصادر.

4- correcting the ST fallacious information, events, and dates through comparing them with the primary sources and secondary reliable and specialized sources, and documenting that from these sources and references.

[...]

6- commenting on the misconceptions and the inaccurate perceptions that may appear in the text, correcting them from sources representing the viewpoint of the Reform Movement followers and other sources, and documenting the corrections from these sources. (the researcher's own translation)

Al Juhany (2005) tends, in his own words, to *correct* what are deemed to be the false narratives and erroneous assumptions of the ST through using supporting sources about Ibn 'Abd Al Wahhāb's movement and other Saudi and pro-Saudi sources. Al Juhany's footnotes are thus ideologically steered, as they seem to positively present and legitimize the Self. The ideological causes of the doxa become further notable through the examination of the translators' deconstructive footnotes.

Owing to the discursive nature of Saudi academics/translators' footnotes, that tend to express their judgments about the Orientalists' assumptions about Saudi Arabia, the translators not only "say something," but also "do something" (Buendía, 2013, p. 159). Through these footnotes, the translators are "purposefully guiding the interpretation of the text," and according it a "socially acceptable meaning" (Buendía, 2013, p. 159). Any interpretation involves, in some sense, the adoption of a "subject position" that thereby highlights the "authorship of the translator" where he/she is visible and his/her voice is apparent (Varney, 2008, p. 119). This realization of deconstructionism through the footnotes recalls Lefevere's (1992) conceptualization of translation as rewriting, where the translator's ideological position-taking is inevitably reflected. In light of this, footnotes can provide a window onto Saudi translators' agency in presenting their views on their national identity, as shown hereinafter:

**Example 1**

**ST:** [...], but we had scarcely left Bahra, when the Wahhabys rushed into it. We heard the discharges of musketry, and were soon after informed, that the invaders massacred all the inhabitants whom they could find, pillaged the camp and baggage, and carried away a small caravan, which had halted at Bahra sometime before our arrival. All this time the eighty horsemen never offered the least resistance, but galloped off towards Mekka, where they spread the greatest consternation.

The intercourse between Djidda and Mekka was thus interrupted during a whole week; but the Wahabys, having accomplished their purpose, retreated to their homes. They had set out from a distance of at least fifteen days' journeies to plunder on this road; [...] (Burckhardt, 1831, p. 297).

**Al-'Uthaymīn's Translation and Footnote**

لكن ما إن غادرنا بَحْرَةَ حتى اقتحمها الوهابيون. وقد سمعنا أصوات البنادق، وأخبرنا بعد ذلك أن الغزاة قتلوا كل السكان الذين وجدوهم، ونهبوا المُخَيِّمَ والأمتعة، وأخذوا قافلة صغيرة كانت قد تَوَقَّفت في ذلك المورد قبل وصولنا إليه بقليل. وفي ذلك كله لم يبد الثمانون فارساً أيّ مقاومة؛ بل عدوا بخيلهم مُتَّجهين إلى حيث نشروا أعظم الرعب. وبذلك قُطِعَ الإيصال بين جدة ومكة طوال أسبوع. لكن الوهابيين بعد أن حَقَّقوا هدفهم تراجعوا إلى أوطانهم. فقد أتوا من مسافات تبعد خمسة عشر يوماً، على الأقل، للنهب على تلك الطريق (١).

(١) بل أتوا لمحاربة عدوهم الذي غزا أراضيهم. المترجم.

(Burckhardt, 2013, p. 496)

**The Researcher's Own Back Translation:** But as soon as we left Bahrah, the Wahhabis broke into it. We heard the sound of gunfire, and were later informed that the invaders had massacred all of the inhabitants whom they could find, pillaged the camp and baggage, and carried away a small caravan, which had halted at that resource shortly before our arrival. Through all this, the eighty horsemen never offered the least resistance but galloped off to where they spread the greatest fear. The intercourse between Jedda and Makkah was thus interrupted for a whole week, but the Wahhabis, having accomplished their purpose, retreated home. They had traveled for at least fifteen days to plunder on this road (1).

(1) Rather, they had come to fight their enemy, who invaded their lands. The translator.

**Analysis**

The author negatively represents the purpose behind the Najdis' campaigns in Hejaz during the first Saudi State. The expressions "invaders," "massacred," "pillaged" and "plunder" are utilized by Burckhardt to frame the historical event within a particular contextualization. The ST framing does not appear to comply with Al-'Uthaymīn's ideological perception. Al-'Uthaymīn inserts a footnote to produce a representation that contradicts that of the author. Al-'Uthaymīn asserts that the Najdis arrived in Hejaz to fight their enemy, who had invaded their land. The labeling in his reframing of the event mainly shows that the Saudi translator perceives the Saudi fighting as a patriotic mission to free their land rather than based on a desire to plunder and invade,

and the Ottoman existence in the Arabian Peninsula as that of a foreign invading enemy, rather than a legitimate rule.

### *Example 2*

**ST:** The underpinnings of the Wahhabi influence, however, were shaky in two respects. First, its dependence on Saudi government disposed leading Wahhabi clerics to support its polices. As political discontent in the Kingdom intensified, the Wahhabi establishment found itself in the awkward position of defending an unpopular dynasty (Commins, 2006, p. 156).

### *Al 'Askar's Translation and Footnote*

على أي حال، كانت أسس التأثير الوهابي متصدعة من ناحيتين. أولاً: دفع اعتمادها على الحكومة السعودية رجال الدين الوهابيين البارزين لتأييد سياساتها. ومع اشتداد السخط السياسي في المملكة، وجدت المؤسسة الوهابية نفسها في موقف حرج للدفاع عن أسرة حاكمة غير محبوبة (1).

(1) من الصعب أن يقتنع المرء بنتيجة كهذه. فلا المؤلف استقصى مقدار محبة الشعب السعودي للأسرة المالكة. ولا هو أحال إلى دراسة تؤكد ما ذهب إليه. وكان عليه أن يكون أكثر إنصافاً عند الحديث عن مشاعر السعوديين. (المترجم). (Commins, 2013, p. 238)

**The Researcher's Own Back Translation:** However, the underpinnings of the Wahhabi influence were shaky in two respects. First, its dependence on the Saudi government disposed leading Wahhabi clerics to support its polices. As the political discontent in the Kingdom intensified, the Wahhabi establishment found itself in the awkward position of defending an unpopular dynasty (1).

(1) It is hard to be convinced by such a conclusion. The author neither surveyed how much Saudis love the royal family nor referred to a study confirming his conclusion. He should have been fairer when describing Saudis' feelings. (The translator).

### *Analysis*

Al 'Askar does not accept Commins' claim regarding the unpopularity of the Saud dynasty among Saudi citizens, as this claim is concluded personally by the Orientalist and unsupported by any evidence. Al 'Askar's argument here recalls Said's (1979) assumption about the silencing of the Orient found in Orientalists' discourse by Al 'Askar, stating that Commins did not ask Saudis for their opinion in order to come up with this conclusion, albeit he remained in Saudi Arabia for some time while writing his book, as Commins (2006) himself declares in his introduction of the ST. Al 'Askar's footnote then asks that Saudi Arabia should be allowed to speak for itself. This footnote can also be regarded as the translator's endeavor to give Saudi Arabia a voice by rejecting the Orientalist's representation as it does not capture the reality.

### *Example 3*

**ST:** [...] and though the inhabitants of the province of Hedjaz were not sorry to be relieved from the dominion of the Sectaries, yet their love of their country was still powerful enough to make them view the defeat of Arabs by Turks as a national misfortune; [...] (Brydges, 1834, p. 92).

### *Al Juhany's Translation and Footnote*

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ومع أن سكان ولاية الحجاز لم يكونوا أسفين لخالصهم من هيمنة أهل المذهب الوهابي (٢) إلا أن حبهم لبلادهم كان لا يزال من القوة بحيث جعلهم ينظرون إلى هزيمة العرب على أيد الأتراك على أنها محنة وطنية.

(٢) لم يكن أهل الدعوة الإصلاحية يدعون إلى مذهب جديد، وإنما كانوا يدعون الناس إلى العودة إلى ما كان عليه سلف الأمة.

(Brydges, 2005, p. 181)

**The Researcher's Own Back Translation:** Although the inhabitants of the province of Hejaz were not sorry to be relieved of the dominion of the Wahhabi Sectaries (2), yet their love for their country remained sufficiently robust to enable them to view the defeat of Arabs by Turks as a national misfortune.

(2) The people of the reform dawah did not call for a novel doctrine, but instead called people to reinstate the pious Islamic ancestors.

### Analysis

Notwithstanding Brydges' sentence, which appears to represent the people of Hejaz positively, Al Juhany may grasp that there is a hidden religious derogation of the followers of Ibn 'Abd Al Wahhāb's movement contained within the same sentence. The Saudi translator rejects the implied connotation of the author's representation of the followers as: "sectarians," which may imply that the movement is a novel creed beyond the pale of Sunni Islam. Al Juhany re-represents thereby the movement in accordance with the Saudi frame of reference as being a Sunni movement, which calls for the emulation of the practices of the *Salaf Al 'Ummah* [the pious Islamic ancestors]. Al Juhany's footnote can be thus interpreted as his attempt to reproduce the representation of the Saudi field of power and the majority of the Sunni Saudis, considering that the movement constitutes the dogmatic ground for the establishment of Saudi Arabia.

### Example 4

**ST:** In 1802, Othman el Medhayfe besieged Tayf; and this pretty town, the summer residence of all the rich Mekkans and the paradise of Hedjaz, as the Arabs call it, was taken after a vigorous resistance, and shared the fate of Imam Hosseyn, with this difference, that Othman's enmity to the Sherif induced him to ruin most of the good buildings, and, in the general massacre, his soldiers were not commanded to spare. Either the infirm or the infants (Burckhardt, 1831, p. 191).

### Al-'Uthaymīn's Translation and Footnote

وفي سنة ١٨٠٢م حاصر عثمان المضايبي الطائف. واستولى على هذه المدينة الجميلة، مصيف كل التجار المكيين وفردوس الحجاز -كما يسميها العرب- بعد مقاومة عنيفة. فلقيت مصيراً مثل ذلك المصير الذي لقيته كربلاء مع اختلاف واحد؛ هو أن عداوة عثمان للشريف جعلته يخرب معظم المباني الجيدة، ويأمر جنوده خلال المذبحة العامة ألا يتركوا شيخاً أو طفلاً إلا قتلوه. (١)

(١) يبدو أن المؤلف قد استلقى معلوماته عن هذه الحادثة من أعداء السعوديين. وقد ذكر ابن بشر (مصدر سبق ذكره، ج ١، ص ص ١٦٢-١٦٣) أن عثمان ومن معه قتلوا من أهل الطائف مائتين في الأسواق والبيوت. لكن من المرجح أن هؤلاء كانوا من الرجال لا من غيرهم. ذلك أنه لم يذكر أي مصدر موثوق تعرّض السعوديين للنساء والأطفال وكبار السن. المترجم.

(Burckhardt, 1985, p. 88; 2013, p. 432)

***The Researcher's Own Back Translation:*** In 1802, Othman Al Maḍāīfī besieged Taif. He captured this pretty city, the summer residence of all of the merchants of Makkah and the paradise of Hejaz - as the Arabs call it - after a violent resistance. It met the same fate as Kerbela, with one difference: Othman's enmity to the Sharif induced him to ruin most of the beautiful buildings, and to order his soldiers, in the general massacre, to kill all of the elderly and infants (1).

(1) It appears that the author obtained his information about this event from the Saudis' enemies. Ibn Bishr (ibid, vol. 1, pp. 162-163) mentioned that Othman and those with him killed two hundred of the people of Taif in markets and houses. It is likely that these were all men, not others since it has not been mentioned in any reliable source that Saudis hurt women, children, and the elderly. The translator.

### ***Analysis***

It appears that Burckhardt's narrative about the Saudis' treatment of the people of Taif following its conquest in the first Saudi State challenges that accepted by Al-'Uthaymīn. He thus invalidates the ST narrative through various means. First, since the narrative constructs a negative image of the Saudi troops, Al-'Uthaymīn argues that the author had obtained this information from the Saudis' enemies. Second, Al-'Uthaymīn further maintains that there is no reliable source that narrates such treatment of the people of Taif at the hands of Othman and his men. Third, Al-'Uthaymīn refers to the famous book on Saudi history by Ibn Bishr, who was a Saudi historian lived during the first Saudi State, to re-narrate the same event. Ibn Bishr's narration contradicts that produced by Burckhardt. Referring to Ibn Bishr in re-narrating the event implies that it is among the reliable sources that Al-'Uthaymīn trusts in narrating the Saudi history. Moreover, Al-'Uthaymīn may aim, through his footnote, to orient the target readers towards a deconstructive reading of Burckhardt's account by arguing that it is not an entirely trustworthy source for Saudi history.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This paper endeavored to fill a significant gap in the sociological studies of the Saudi field of translation in which Saudi translators' role has been overlooked for a long time. The findings of this paper challenge that of Alkhamis' (2012) and Alsiary's (2016) stating that the role of the Saudi translators is marginalized in shaping translation products in the field. This paper made use of Bourdieu's sociological concept of *doxa* and Genette's notion of *paratext* to scrutinize the agency of the Saudi academics/translators in initiating and consolidating a doxic practice in the peritextual zone (footnotes, in particular) of their TTs to deconstruct Orientalists' assumptions regarding Arabia. It is thus widely believed in the field that the doxa of deconstruction is preferably achieved by Saudi academics who specialize in Saudi History, given their ability to compare historical sources and evaluate Orientalists' assumptions about the Kingdom. The Saudis perceive such a doxic practice as a national service to their country since they reform what they perceive as a distorted image of their country in the Orientalists' writings. The prevalent doxa of deconstruction in the field is hence the systematic national approach the Saudis adopt when translating Orientalists' accounts about Saudi Arabia pointed out by Al-Semmari (King Abdulaziz Foundation, 2019). This re-representation of the Self can provide insights into Saudis' perception

of their national identity and history. Indeed, through this doxic practice, Saudi academics/translators accentuate the claim that translators' role should not be perceived as a transparent means of communication that is expected to convey the exact message of the ST, but as a socially situated activity affected by the sociological and ideopolitical settings of its producers (Inghilleri, 2005; Hanna, 2014). The Saudi translators understudy can hence be recognized as authors, employing the peritextual framings to make their own voices heard.

### Author's Notes

<sup>1</sup> This paper is part of my PhD thesis that is to be submitted to the University of Leeds, UK., in 2021, and funded by Qassim University and the Saudi Cultural Bureau in London.

<sup>2</sup> Al 'Askar (1952-2016) was a Professor in the History of the Arabian Peninsula at King Saud University (KSU henceforth). He served on several boards in History and the Saudi Shura Council [The Consultative Assembly of Saudi Arabia], and published a considerable number of books, articles, and translations related to Saudi history.

<sup>3</sup> Al-'Uthaymīn (1936-2016) was a Professor in Saudi History and also Head of the History Department at KSU. He was a member at the Saudi Shura Council, and General Secretary of the King Faisal International Prize for 30 years, as well as being a famous contemporary historian, author, translator, and poet.

<sup>4</sup> Al Juhany (1950-) is a Professor in Saudi History at KSU. He is a member of the Board of Directors of King Salman's Centre for Historical and Civilisation Studies of Arabian Peninsula. He has been awarded a King 'Abdelaziz Merit of the first degree for his academic works on Arabia.

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