



***The question of translation in philosophical readings from the
perspective of contemporary Arab thought***

Lakli Hanane^{1*}

University of Djelfa (Algeria), laklihanane@gmail.com

Received: 15/11/2024

Accepted: 16/12/2024

Abstract:

Translation criticism is undoubtedly one of the basic topics in philosophical thought in particular, as it is the framework from which the cultural meaning is formed as defined by modern history and is primarily related to the communication of human civilizations and the cross-pollination and similarity of their vocabulary in many cases. As a result of the expansion of the intellectual and cultural orbits of this nation and the accessibility of its perceptions, the contemporary Arab intellectual system has given its effort and attention to translation as a sure path towards building and renewing creative thought, without excluding the convergence of languages and the presentation of the credibility of terminological transfer, which gives a new impetus to the exchange of cultures between the self and the other despite the obstacles and challenges.

Keywords: communication; Creativity; the credibility; the language ;Translation; Thought.

* Lakli Hanane

I. INTRODUCTION

The diversity of creative activity in the Arab world between various forms of fields whose thinkers seek to achieve the principle of communication with others through translation, which makes translation an academic subject worthy of research, study and attention due to its positive effects on people's lives among themselves. With the development of modern technology, it has become easy for contemporary man to overcome distances due to the digital revolution that informs us of the present and the new that the world around us is dealing with through linking the prosperity of the translation movement with the state of civilizational prosperity in general. Therefore, translation from one language to another was the path that people took in the past to get to know the ideas of the different other, which added enlightenment and permanent renewal to the lives and minds of people, as the pioneers of Islamic philosophy did in their translation of many Greek books before in order to benefit from them. However, understanding one language or more than one language does not mean the individual's ability to translate, as there are conditions, rules and foundations on which it is based, otherwise, as the Italian proverb says, translation is always treason, unless the translator is characterized by his ability to transfer according to certain conditions and standards. So what is translation? What is its importance and intellectual and philosophical dimensions? What is its function within the contemporary Arab intellectual system?

2. What is philosophical translation?

Translation in its true sense is that which does not have stable texts with all its meanings, that is, that which requires the translator's effort and diligence, and it differs from the concept of interpretation. As long as translation deals with the text in a fundamental way, it is necessary to arrive at a method that gives this text its due, despite what it is described as being variable according to times, places and people. It remains an intellectual and creative activity that is based primarily on acquiring cognitive content, intellectual and cultural skills and the ability to convey these contents in various ways and according to integrated contents: «Translation is a linguistic practice through which texts are transferred from one language to another, where attention is focused on it as a cultural event that takes place across multiple cultures. When a text is translated, the translation is not limited to linguistic transfer, but rather extends to transferring the cultural and ideological loads of the text. Translation thus becomes a process of cultural negotiation between a foreign and a local culture. This negotiation results in a multi-voiced, hybrid-featured dialogic text. On the other hand, translation, as an exchange cultural activity, is not limited to translating the linguistic product, but extends to translating other cultural products according to different methods.» (Hafnawi, 2018, pp. 124-125) With different intellectual orientations, including philosophical translation, and more precisely the translation of philosophical texts, which is an important part of the work of philosophy itself, it is a work that goes beyond the technical nature of finding corresponding meanings between two different languages.

What is the relationship between translation and philosophy? Is the text translated to later become the object of thought, or is it simultaneously the object of both practices? Does one of these practices establish and pave the way for the other, or are they synchronous?

First, it goes without saying that translation is the transfer of speech and text from its original language in which it was written to another language, provided that the words are transferred in a correct manner close to their original meanings so as not to lead to a change in their meaning. However, this common definition may be limited to overthrowing the various

types of translation. Thus, by focusing on philosophical translation, it can be said that the philosophical text is one of the specialized texts that are considered communicative texts according to the classification of types of texts in translation, and it is an application of the philosophical method to the text in terms of coordination, criticism and modification.

3. Arabic translation history:

The Arabs were the first people and groups throughout time to use translation as a tool for communication, as they relied on it at the beginning of their cultural renaissance in the second century AH to borrow the sciences of those who came before them. They took an institutional interest in it by establishing the House of Wisdom in Baghdad. In the era of the modern renaissance, translation regained its role and significance: «Since the history of the language of any nation is closely linked to political, religious and social events... it is appropriate to divide the history of Arabic literature into five eras: the era of ignorance, the era of early Islam, which includes the Umayyad period, the Abbasid era, and after it the Turkish state, then the era of the last renaissance during the rule of the Alawite dynasty in Egypt.» (Alexandrian, 1919, page 09) We have seen fit to refer to these eras in the history of Arabic translation, considering that they are essentially linked to the language. As for the Umayyad era, translation was of great importance and an urgent need, whether in government departments or in daily life. Most of what was translated in this era was related to administrative and commercial documents, all of which were necessary for dealing with people and the owners of the conquered land, as mentioned by the thinker Othman Ahmed. There was no project to translate Greek scientific and philosophical works, and the situation remained like that until the Abbasid Caliphate was established, when Muslims were provided with what enabled them to move to the stage of documentation. This was during the period of Al-Mansur Al-Abbassi, and this is what characterized intellectual life, as Al-Jabiri mentioned, and social life during that period and for more than a century.

The first signs of the theory of translation among the Arabs were what Al-Jahiz mentioned in his book *Al-Hayawan* about the translation of Arabic poetry, saying: "The books of India were transferred, Greek wisdom was translated, and Persian literature was transformed. Some of it became more beautiful, and some of it did not decrease at all. If the wisdom of the Arabs were transformed, that miracle, which is meter, would be nullified." (Amr, 1969, p. 75) Due to the difficulty of translating Arabic poetry with its distinctive meters according to Al-Jahiz, we prohibit translation.

In the Renaissance, the Islamic translation movement refers to the period of intellectual exchange and interaction between the Islamic world and Europe that occurred during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries AD. Europe's invasion of Andalusia during the European Dark Ages allowed them to discover the scientific and cognitive works developed by Muslims. During this period, many Arabic and Persian scientific, philosophical and literary works were translated into Latin, which allowed European scholars and thinkers to access these works, study them, adopt them into their cultures and develop them to suit their countries. Muslims and Arabs benefited greatly from the ideas of prominent intellectuals and scholars from the West that were translated into the Arabic language. This was also a motivation for many Arab thinkers in the modern period to learn about Western cultures and benefit from them in their homelands.

And: "With the beginning of what we can call the era of independence of Arab entities and the emergence of new states in the middle of the twentieth century, translation centers and institutions appeared... The Arab League showed interest in the role of translation and called,

based on an initiative by the late Dean of Literature Taha Hussein, for the establishment of Arab translation institutions, which were established only a few years ago in Algeria. It is still in the experimental stage and has begun to graduate translators who are troubled by the question: What can we translate? Why do we translate, and for whom do we translate? I mean that their educational effort is not linked to a local or Arab national project, and before them the Arab world is empty of a renaissance goal.

This means that there is an official Arab awareness of the role of translation and its low status within the limits of the theoretical awareness of the situation without being confirmed by practical behavior and national awareness. For this reason, we see the activity of translation as scattered centers on the level of the Arab world and it does not go beyond being formal efforts of centers, organizations, or institutions that are in reality merely publishing houses. (Jalal, 2022, p. 37).

4.Translation in contemporary Arab thought:

Translation, as previously mentioned, is not only a transfer of knowledge and a change in terminology, but it is also a communication between different civilizations and cultures. This communication can only be fruitful when: «We are divided by the spirit of human adventure fueled by a thirst for knowledge to absorb the achievements and conquests of science based on human genius in order to change reality by his will, to change our cultural reality and social structure because of our urgent need for that, and in this way we are builders of civilization with awareness, will and rationality. We may transmit texts of theories or terminology, but our talk about this remains gibberish because we cannot transmit the creative head nor the life and history of the social activity that created it.

We may import theories and curricula of education, but we cannot import the passion for science and the thirst for knowledge, that is, the spirit of education itself. The question is: What is the reality of translation in general and scientific translation in particular in our Arab world?» (Jalal, 2022, p. 101) There is no doubt that translation in the Arab world suffers from various intellectual and cognitive problems and obstacles that are due to a number of different reasons, the most prominent of which is related to the role assigned to the translator himself to acquire a mold and form that calls for distinguished creative intellectual production. It seems that: «The translation crisis is a societal crisis, and if we were to determine the nature of the obstacles in light of our field study, we would summarize them as follows:

- The lack of a comprehensive development plan or strategy that mobilizes the energy of Arab countries and is the basis for creative scientific societal activity. This strategy constitutes the material societal basis for freedom of thought and humanity. This is also the problem of the reader, language, and book.
- Culture and intellectual, rational, scientific development, if they exist, occupy a second place.
- Socialization that reinforces a state of self-isolation and kills intellectual curiosity, the spirit of adventure and rebellion.
- Lack of uniformity in the Arabic term.
- Cultural and scientific backwardness.

- Scientific and cultural illiteracy, the most important manifestations of which are the social deterioration of the value of science and the spread of superstition, quackery and sorcery. (Jalal, 2022, pp. 109-110).

In view of the above, it becomes clear to us that the prosperity of the translation movement remains subject to a strategic intellectual and material situation together. Translation is directed to the reader first before the translator benefits from it, seeking to achieve its goals and justifications for taking its causes. It can be pointed out here that Arab culture believed in the past that translation distorts the text and diminishes its value, especially if it is translated into a language other than Arabic, while contemporary culture has moved away from translation and encouraged working on it due to its importance. Thus, translation has swept the consciousness of many contemporary Arab writers and thinkers after it had been absent from the scene in a clear and strange way, especially among some intellectuals, if most of them were transferred. However, a group of thinkers emerged who showed their interest in translation and removing that cognitive barrier between the self and the other.

5.Examples of contemporary Arabic readings on the translation of philosophical texts:

The research deals with the critical study of the subject of translation in the Arab world, as the works of Moroccan intellectual Taha Abdel Rahman come at the forefront of the intellectual approaches most present in the contemporary Arab scene, especially in the field of thought and philosophy, and more precisely in the field of Arabic translation, which he spoke about in a new theoretical framework that goes beyond Western centrality in the field of heritage readings. From the perspective of the methodological formulation of this review: «Abdul Rahman proposes what he calls the jurisprudence of philosophy, which is a science concerned with examining philosophy as a craftsman examines a machine. Its goal is to provide us with knowledge of the precise mechanisms of philosophical practice and to encompass the great techniques of production and creativity in it, which, in his opinion, constitutes the necessary basis for moving from the rank of using philosophy to the rank of making philosophy. The basic concern that occupies him is to pave a way for independent creative practice in Islamic philosophy, which he believes has remained, from its earliest beginnings until the present time, a prisoner of dependence, imitation, and transmission from others, whether these were the ancient Greeks or the modern Arabs.» (Shamma, 2024, p. 131).

Taha Abdel Rahman considered, through what he presented, that the first task upon which philosophy is based is that it requires reviewing the relationship between philosophy and translation. He considers that this review is a basic building block for determining the relationship between philosophy and its traditional meaning is based, as he says, on its absolute comprehensiveness and morality. Abstraction and its narrow rationality, which adds to the issue of renewal and intellectual creativity, and he expressed this by saying: «Since we have settled our opinion that the issue of philosophical creativity in the context of adherence to translation cannot be resolved unless the concept of philosophy is reviewed, and that there is no hope for this review unless the jurisprudence of philosophy is advanced and begins with standing on the truth of the connection that must be established between philosophy and translation, we have vowed to ourselves to carry out this task despite the difficulties it entails and the dangers it entails.» (Explanatory, 2017, p. 151).

6. Translation in the thought of Abu Ya'rub Al-Marzouki:

The Tunisian thinker Abu Ya'rub Al-Marzouki believes that the solution to what is happening in the intellectual arena, whose owners seek intellectual influence, indicates a lack of conformity between the name and the named, especially as he calls them among the stars of the elite. Hence, he named an alternative to the facts that distorts their meaning in a way that makes them become a fertile womb for the opposite of what is expected of them in the case of matching the names to the named ones. Thus, we have, as he says, names without their names in all areas of specialization. Hence, the election should be conducted in accordance with what preserves the situation, and by that he means the falsification that preserves the appearance as much as possible, and its preservation comes from violence and corruption. The result of these characteristics, Al-Marzouki says: «It is the end of every philosophical thought of interpretation. Describing this understanding and interpretation of the role of understanding and interpretation as a final scientific truth means the transformation of philosophy into a positive religion and then the transformation of intellectual schools into sectarian groups that defend beliefs and not intellectual circles that search for the truth. Therefore, it is no wonder that the most important paradox of this shift is represented in the fact that the conditional action and transformation in thought, simply because they have transferred the function of thought from indirect action to direct action, has ended all influence of the tools of symbolic action and influence.» (Al-Marzouki, 2012, p. 22).

7. The question of translation and globalization in the Arab world:

When talking about translation in terms of its cultural renaissance role and its intellectual and cognitive effectiveness, especially in the era of globalization, it is necessary to address some of the problems on which it is based in terms of the issue of Arabization, which the Arab League had a place and awareness of, as well as its efforts to reform the poor status of translation in most countries of the Arab world. In this regard, we: «By Arabization of translation, we mean the impact of translation as an institutional social activity based on Arab goals and founded on the choices of Arab minds in light of a comprehensive development strategy so that it is truly an expression of Arab concerns and a response to our social issues and following the ability of society to rise. By globalization, we mean that cultural tendency that appears new on the surface and some call it the new world order or it is said: the world has become one village with which national borders have collapsed to allow a global scientific, technical, economic and cultural center to prevail... and the talk is modern and meaningless when one of the parties is empty of space and idle of giving and possesses nothing but a social culture disconnected from the civilization of the age, which puts it in a position of weakness and consumption. Wherever two cultures interact and one of them is strong and the other is weak, the stronger culture absorbs the weaker and erases it from time.» (Jalal, 2022, p. 141) This means that translation requires the existence of intertwined cultures based on the language or a set of languages that are transferred to and from Arabic, which is the basis of the transition between the Arab world and the rest of the world's cultures. However, if there is only one language, this may result in a culture that we call communication with the other. It is worth noting that translation, although it was not based on writing in the past, has recently, especially with the development of modern technology, digitization has become the basic system for carrying out translation without the assistance of individuals, with the appropriate initial and methodological steps. As Taha Abdel Rahman went to in the subject, the acquired translation that seeks verbal literalism so that there is no word of the text that it did not transfer, whether it matches the words of the original text or any of them, in addition to the importance of the superiority of the transferred concepts and the most related to its communicative field. For this

reason, Abdel Rahman considers that it appears brief, as he says, from its counterparts in its foreign origins. This is only because it provides us with regard to the issues presented in these origins from the aspects of expression in our language or from the elements of knowledge in our culture, what was not available in these origins themselves. The foreign origins are not deficient, but rather-As expressed by-Because there is a difference between nations in terms of performing the objectives.

8.The experience of thinker Abdel Wahab El-Messiri in the issue of translation;

In this section, we stand on an intellectual experience that is rich in its path, distinguished in its performance, and strong in its approach. It is the experience of the Egyptian thinker Abdel Wahab El-Messiri, and it is distinguished because it attempted to liberate contemporary Arab thought from the distinguished path of Western thought and exploitation of these biases and human thought from contradictory dualities and from the Darwinian modernity of the West, as:«Al-Masry deeply believes that possessing an alternative methodological cognitive vision independent of the Western cognitive model begins, for him, with establishing what he called the critical axis of the Islamic civilizational project, the first steps of which begin with criticizing the dominant Western project and all its models and dismantling its cognitive system. He was helped in this by his experience with methodological mechanisms and his expertise in dealing with them in their various doctrinal formations.

...In light of this fact and references, Al-Masry defines the concept of methodology in scientific research... For him, methodology is a cognitive vision that is built through the cognitive model of each nation, and through it questions and premises are determined and results are obtained. In the event that we do not possess this vision and methodology, we will find ourselves asking questions that were determined for us in advance and may not help us much, and in the end we will reach results that support the point of view of the other and neglect fateful issues in the nation and are forced to enter into a linear historical movement with a single conception, vision and model, and pluralism and the right to differ are neglected.» (Akhawas, 2022, p. 179).

Because translation must have a method and intellectual and cognitive conditions and variables, and according to adherence to them, it was necessary to obtain authentic implications to obtain a sound Arabic translation that leads us to achieve the goal of cultural exchange between different races and civilizations to gain cognitive connection and achieve creative production in contemporary Arab thought.

9. Conclusion:

The revival of the translation process in the Arab world, as is known, began with the emergence of the modern state in Egypt, and with the development and intermingling of cultures, contemporary Arab projects on the subject of translation were updated according to basic controls and filters in its paper and digital form. In this regard, many researchers and those interested in translation differed in talking about its horizons, intellectual and cultural considerations, and its renewed dialectics from time to time in order to restore consideration to its publications and intellectual and civilizational products due to their importance in the quality of societies, individuals and groups, in consolidating the meanings of creativity and intellectual development, as it is the only tool that provides knowledge transmitted from other peoples and cultures, in addition to being the advanced cognitive means that generations have transmitted throughout the history of philosophical thought and keeping pace with the intellectual movement in time and space, and thus criticizing it as an important vessel for the development of thought and language together, which has gained it great importance, especially in the time of the competitive and technological scientific revolution through which it seeks to achieve a civilizational project that contemporary Arab thought still hopes for with all its challenges, howls, and intellectual and cognitive manifestations.

10. Bibliography:

- Abu Uthman bin Amr Al-Jahiz. (1969), *The Animal*, edited by: Abdul Salam Muhammad bin Harun, Dar Al-Kitab Al-Arabi, Beirut.
- Abu Ya'rub Al-Marzouqi, *Things from Criticism and Translation*, Jadawel Publishing and Distribution, Lebanon, 1st ed.
- Ahmed Alexandrian and Mustafa Anani, (1919), *The Middle in Arabic Literature*, 1st ed., Egypt.
- Akhawas Abdullah. (2022), *The Method in Contemporary Arab Thought from the Chaos of Influence to Methodological Regularity*, Hindawi Foundation, United Kingdom.
- Hafnawi Baali. (2018), *Comparative Cultural Translation: Bridges of Communication and Crossings of Interaction*, Al-Bazouri Scientific Publishing and Distribution House.
- Jalal Shawqi. (2022), *Translation in the Arab World: Reality and Challenge*, Hindawi Foundation, United Kingdom.
- Mashrouh, Ibrahim. (2017), *Taha Abdel Rahman, A Reading of His Critical Project*, Civilization Center for the Development of Islamic Thought.
- Shama Tariq. (2024), *Between Transformation and Authentication, Taha Abdel Rahman's Theory of Translation*, *Journal of Arab Studies*, 01-08-2024 <https://brill.com/article-p131-7> Accessed: 05-05-2024.