Exploring Cultural Expressions in Translations' Paratexts: A Comparative Study of Some English and Arabic Literary Translations

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Abstract:
The present paper aims to analyse how paratextual elements in translation shape the image of the source culture and inform the general context of translation production and circulation. The study is restricted to the analysis of the *peritext* and aims to determine how cultural differences between Arabic and English can affect the use of paratextual elements. For these objectives, the analysis is divided into two parts. The first one uses a corpus of twenty English and Arabic translations of varied literary works to discuss the publisher's paratext. The second part is limited to ten books and investigates the translators' prefaces. The study found that English translations conform to certain publishing norms, which can be interpreted as a hegemonic attitude. In contrast, Arabic translations showed less systematicity in following similar norms.

Keywords: English-Arabic/Arabic-English literary translation, paratext, cultural approaches in translation.

Introduction

Paratext's stated function is to introduce the text to its readers. In a sense, this function represents the material connection between the text and the real world (Genette, 1987/1997, 1-2). This definition alludes to the importance of the paratext in interpreting the texts themselves. Paratexts are located at the periphery of the text, but the latter unfolds and reveals all its secrets only after a paratextual *traversée*. The crossing of the paratext should not be neglected or taken lightly, as it frames the text's reception.

Genette (1987/1997) offers an erudite, scholarly, and detailed categorisation of the components of the paratext, which has proved very useful to academics. The research works on paratext in translation explored for this study use his book as a fundamental reference. Several scholars (Tahir-Gurcaglar,2002; Gil-Bardaji, Orero, and Rovira-Esteva, 2012; Pellat, 2013) argue that translations are significant cases in which the paratextual function is further developed, with an additional cross-cultural mission. Most of them, however, reject the assumption concerning the paratextual status of translation (Tahir-Gurcaglar, 2002) in relation to the original and offer a more translation-related explanation.

The present study is no exception; it relies on Genette's classification and definitions but is more concerned with the particularity of the use of paratextual elements in translation. The study restricts itself to the *peritext* (Genette, 1987/1997, p. 5), that is, the analysis of the paratext directly found on the text's periphery (title, cover, and preface). The research has two main objectives: first, to investigate how the paratext can shape the reader's understanding of the source culture and inform about the circumstances of the production and circulation of translations in two different cultures. Second, to examine the impact of cultural differences between English and Arabic on the way paratexts are used. English represents a hegemonic culture; an assimilating attitude towards translated literature is thus expected to be observed. Arabic, on the other hand, does not represent a minor culture, but is still in no position to compete with English, which is supposed to reveal a weaker hegemonic position towards translated literature.

I. Paratext in translation theory

With the emergence of Descriptive Translation Studies, and later on Cultural Approaches, Translation scholars (Venuti, 1995; Lefevere, 1992) found in the paratext an interesting source of information for a proper understanding of the history of translation. Also, paratextual analysis played a pivotal role in discussions about the role of context in shaping translations' reception and, in the long run, in constructing and even changing the target culture. André Lefevere opens his *Translation, History, Culture* (1992) with an epigraph from a translator's preface. His discussion of the importance of re-evaluating the place of translation in literary history was based on many prefaces from Western cultural heritage.

A very famous example discussed by Lefevere (1992) and Bassnett (2002, 2014), among others, is that of Edward Fitzgerald's translation of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* from Persian, partially because of the significance of his commentary on the translation in informing about the cultural context and the domesticating translation practices of the imperialistic age. Fitzgerald's commentary is understood as a sign of Western culture's superiority and its attitude towards other foreign literary traditions (Lefevere, 1992, pp. 3-4). It could also be interpreted as a domesticating stance towards Islamic poetry (Bassnett, 2014, p. 95). An authoritative position of the translator within the context of imperialism is apparent through the marginalisation of minor cultures (Bassnett, 2002, p. 14). These examples clearly demonstrate that translation theory benefited from the investigation of paratexts, thereby expanding its scope.

It is safe to say, however, that research interest in paratextual analysis was motivated by the work of Genette (1987/1997*). The possibility of approaching texts in their extended form and giving them a social dimension inspired researchers in various areas, timidly, however, as regards translation (Gil-Bardaji, Orero, and Rovira-Esteva, 2012, p. 7). The latter tackles the paratext in relation to history, documentation, the publishing industry, reception, and ideological impact. Genette's classification of translation as a paratext is generally rejected (Tahir-Gurcaglar, 2002, p. 46). It implies an outdated understanding of translation as a subaltern of the original text and restricts the possibilities of investigation.

Paratext is "a discourse that is fundamentally heteronomous, auxiliary, and dedicated to the service of something other than itself that constitutes its raison d'être" (Genette, 1987/1997, p. 12). Thus, paratexts are interesting because they are not part of the text yet crucial to its reception, contextualisation, and interpretation. In translated works, this role is endowed with a cross-cultural mission. Unlike the fictional nature of the text, the paratext consists of factual information about the author, the work, and the context in general. It is consequently a space where several ideologies, discourses, and narratives can reside and compete. Accordingly, there is no reason for translations' paratexts to have less significance than those of the original texts.

Paratranslation is a relatively new field in Translation Studies, created with the ambition of investigating the role of paratexts in translation. It attempts to understand how paratexts contribute to the construction, reception, and consumption of the translated text's meaning. Indeed, it is assumed that aesthetic and ideological manipulation of texts so that they can be received in a given way, suitable for the publisher or any other 'patron', is likely to fully exploit all paratextual possibilities (Frias, 2012, p. 118). In a way, the importance of paratextual analysis stems from its complementary role to any text translation analysis (Kung, 2013, p. 51). The habitual exclusion of the paratext from translation analysis may lead to partial or even wrong interpretations.

Paratexts can choose to reveal the text's foreign origin by mentioning the translator's name or the language of origin, or to keep it hidden. These choices are related to publishing strategies and can partially reveal the nature of the dominant cultural policy. Tahir-Gurcaglar (2002) observed the coexistence of these two strategies in 1940s Turkey. They represent either an author-driven strategy or a genre-driven one. In this precise context, paratexts of translations related to a national policy of importing Western intellectual heritage explicitly specify the translated status of the texts. A more commercial attitude of downplaying translation status was also observed in popular literature in this same period, where the story, not the author, is the main focus (57). Thanks to the paratext, it is

*The book was published in French as *Seuils* in 1987; this paper uses its English translation of 1997

possible to discern the existence of these two conflicting views about translation and its status.

While traditionally marginal and sometimes undesired, the translator's preface and commentaries are perceived as a fundamental pillar in postcolonial translation. Edwin Gentzler (2002, p. 198) points out that if it were not for Gayatri Spivak, the reception of Derrida's work and propagation of his ideas in the Anglo-Saxon world would never have been the same. Spivak's introduction and commentaries helped in a better understanding of Derrida's deconstructionist philosophy. The paratext offers the translator the possibility to speak up and make his intermediary position in translation visible. Within the postcolonial theoretical framework, translators are expected to help empower translation status and position it as an important tool for successful cross-cultural communication.

Thus, paratexts are power-related in various ways. They could be motivated by a vision, a project, or an ideology. They also enable the translator to be more visible and to show some authority on the text he translates. In a way, he participates in shaping policies and discourses, and may even contribute to bringing about change (Tymoczko and Gentzler, 2002, p. xviii). Paratexts' impact on texts' reception means that their power may equally alter the image of the source culture. The latter is presented and shaped through the different discourses at work in the paratext. A case in point is the translation of some political texts about the Iraq-Iran war into Persian, in which the publisher uses the prefaces and footnotes to challenge the text's main narrative (Yalsharzeh, Barati, & Hesabi, 2019, p. 109). The already very negative image of the West in Iran is intensified through this kind of intervention.

In literature, even a reconfiguration of the author's function (Summers, 2013, p. 13) is possible through the paratext. While authors of original works cannot avoid the affinities between the person and the public figure, this is quite possible in translation through what Baker (2006) refers to as "framing through selective appropriation" (5). Consequently, the author's reception may differ in the target culture.

Research on paratexts in translation has benefited both translation theory and paratext studies. On the one hand, approaching paratexts from a translational perspective offers a larger and deeper understanding of their social and cultural implications on the text and its reception. On the other hand, extending translation investigation to include more elements than just the text itself helps better understand the translation phenomenon in its sociocultural dimension.

II. The dynamics of paratextual functions between English and Arabic translations

For practical reasons, the study has divided the analysis into two phases. In the first phase, it will use a group of 20 translated literary works divided into two subgroups of 10 translated books each (English and Arabic) and will discuss

the publisher's paratext. In the second phase, the corpus will be reduced to include only 10 literary translations, five in each language subgroup, and will discuss the translators' prefaces.

English translations, ET in the text, were published in the period between 1932 and 2009, while Arabic ones, AT in the text, cover a span from 1983 to 2015. The works were chosen to reflect the cultural diversity existing in both languages. ET include Egyptian, Algerian, Sudanese, and Lebanese original works. AT include British and American original texts, from different historical periods. The table below (Table 1) shows a list of the translated works investigated:

Novels translated into English	**Original Arabic titles**	**Novels translated into Arabic**	**Original English titles**
The Earthquake (1971) by T. Wattar, trans. W. Granara (2000)	*الزلزال* *Azzilzal*	*أوليفر تويست* *Oliver Twist*	*Oliver Twist* (1838) by Ch. Dickens, trans. M. Balbaki (2007)
An Egyptian Childhood (1929) by T. Hussein, trans. H. Paxton (1932)	*الأيام1* *Al Ayyam 1*	*الصخب والعنف* *Assakhab Wal Ounf*	*The Sound and the Fury* (1929) by W. Faulkner, trans. D. I. Djabra (1983)
The Stream of Days A Student at the Azhar (1940) by T. Hussein, trans. H. Wayment (1943/48)	*الأيام2* *Al Ayyam 2*	*محبوبة* *Mahbouba*	*Beloved* (1987) by T. Morrison, trans. A. Al Ayoutti (1989)
A Passage to France (1972) by T. Hussein, trans. K. Cragg (1976)	*الأيام3* *Al Ayyam 3*	*الكفارة* *Al Kafara*	*Atonement* (2001) by I. McEwan, trans. M. Darwish (2012)
Aunt Safiyya and the Monastery (1991) by Bahaa Taher, trans. B. Romaine (1996)	*خالتي صفية والدير* *Khalti Safiyya wa Dyr*	*عُولس* *Awles*	*Ulysses* by James Joyce (1920), trans. M. L. Djoumaa (2007)
Gate of the Sun (1998) by Ilias Khoury, trans. H. Davis (2006)	*باب الشمس* *Bab Ashams*	*نثريات مختارة* *Nathryyat Mokhtara*	*Selected Prose* (1900) by O. Wilde, trans. D. Asouleiman (2008)
Season of Migration to the North (1966) by T. Saleh, trans. D. Johnson-Davis (2009)	*موسم الهجرة إلى الشمال* *Mawssim Al Hijra ila Ashamal*	*مزرعة الحيوان* *Mazraat Al Hayawan*	*Animal Farm* (1945) by George Orwell, trans. A. I. Ismaail (2015)
Medaq Alley (1947) by N. Mahfouz, trans. T. le Gassick (1991)	*زقاق المدق*	*الفوضويون* *Al Fawdhawiyoun*	*Vera; or, The Nihilists* (1880) by O. Wilde, trans. A. El

	Zouquaq Al Midaq		Kaissi (1989)
Utopia (2008) by A. K. Tawfik, trans. C. Rossetti (2009)	يوتوبيا *Utopia*	ثلاثية نيويورك *Thulathyatou New York*	*New York Trilogy* (1987) by P. Auster, trans. K. Y. Hussein (1993)
The Thief and the Dogs (1961) by N. Mahfouz, trans. T. le Gassick (1989)	اللّص والكلاب *Alliss Wal Kilab*	شيفرة دافينتشي *Shifrat Da Vinci*	*The DaVinci Code* (2003) by D. Brown, trans. S. Abd Rabou (2004)

Table 1: List of books translated into English and Arabic (my own production)

II.1. Publisher's paratext and cultural manifestation

By publisher's paratext, Genette (1987/1997) refers to the book's formal components that are the direct responsibility of the publisher, namely "the cover, the title page, and their appendages" (16). This section will explore how covers and titles are dealt with in translated literary texts.

II. 1.1. Analysis of the covers' cultural function:

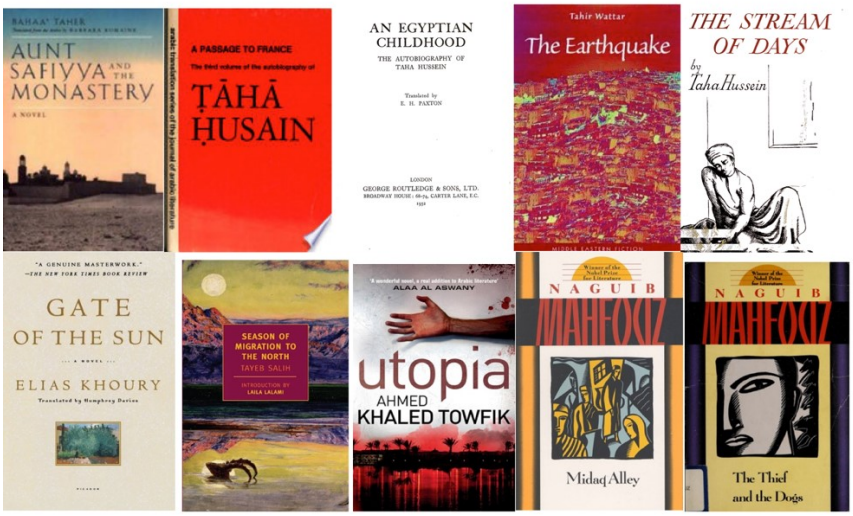


Fig 1: Front Covers of English Translations (my own production)

The front covers of ET (Fig 1) tend to incline to similar publishing strategies, with the title occupying the most prominent space, then the author's name in a smaller size, and finally the translator's name, if present, in the smallest size. Exceptions can be found when the author's reputation or achievements are more important than the work (Genette, 1987/1997, p. 39). They may contribute to the work's success, as in the cases of Taha Hussein and

Naguib Mahfouz here. Knowing that the latter is a Nobel Prize winner will doubtlessly have an impact on the reader.

Similar strategies are found in AT (Fig 2) regarding the hierarchy, suggesting agreement between the two cultures on the translator's marginal status. An exception is found in Djabra Ibrahim Djabra's name, on the cover of the translation of *The Sound and the Fury* (1929/1983). It was given more space due to the prominent position of the author in the Arabic literary scene. Also, Arab translators with academic status tend to be more concerned than their British or American counterparts about the use of their titles; for example, Dr. Amine Al Ayouti in Mahbouba and Dr. Mohammed Darwish in Al Kafara.



Fig 2: Front Covers of Arabic Translations (my own production)

For the cover art, it is possible to distinguish between the use of photographs and that of illustrations. On certain occasions, none is used, and the cover is kept sober. More often than not, these covers reveal something about the story or the source culture, unlike the covers of original texts, where marking cultural differences is less important (Gerber, 2012, p. 54). Due to technological advances and the picture's central place in the world's cultures today, fiction books were obliged to align with market demands, such as offering attractive covers.

In the case of the investigated ET, emphasis on cultural differences is evident in a photograph of Upper Egypt or a picture of a typical Egyptian peasant from the early twentieth century. These hints alert the reader and frame him at the same time. Sometimes, however, the artwork on the cover is more difficult to discern, as is the case with *The Earthquake* (1974/2000), where a city, soaked in a vivid red color, occupies the entire cover. It is possible to interpret it as the city of Constantine, the setting of the novel, and all the dangers surrounding it from

the protagonist's viewpoint. The latter example seems less common, suggesting a general tendency to foreground cultural differences through the covers' art.

It is possible to reach different conclusions once the research is pushed further. The cover art reflects an emphasis on cultural differences, but the type of difference conveyed needs careful consideration. The above analysed covers, with an obvious focus on the source culture's traits, rely on a rather existing (mis)conceptions the readers have, an imaginary already there about the East. No serious attempt to change the cultural vision is engaged. These stereotypical modes of portraying the Other's culture reduce the reader's chances of a more authentic understanding of the specific cultural moment narrated in the story. A literary text is about a particular time and place, and this should be highlighted; any simplistic approach leaning towards generalisation would certainly be of little help (Gentzler, 2002, p. 211). From this perspective, the artistic cover of *The Earthquake* (1974/2000) can be seen as an effective cultural transmitter. The dense buildings of the city and the red color on the cover are significant in the sense that they reflect the overcrowded city of Constantine and its chaotic situation just after the Algerian independence. This cover attempts to reveal an Other's culture realistically and highlights the precise moment the story recounts.

AT adopted the same strategy, pictures show two British boys of the eighteenth century, an Afro-American young woman behind bars, and a movie actress (Fig 2). In recent years, it has been common for publishers to use pictures from movie adaptations of fictional works, especially when the movie is successful, for promotional purposes (Gerber, 2012, p. 54). Though no systematic reduction of the Other to a set of ready-made images in a Western fashion is evident, it cannot be said that the cover's art fully succeeded in marking cultural differences. However, compared to the ET, it is fair to say that the AT covers were more precise and better aligned with the cultural moments the stories are about. The two cultures, then, have different views on how cultural differences should be communicated to enable efficient cross-cultural understanding.

It is also quite common to find biographic material about the author of the original text on the back cover, but it is less frequent to find similar information about the translator. This situation can be explained by publishing policies that consider the success of the original literary work as an added value in the marketing process. A different attitude is observed when it comes to singling out the work's foreign origin. While AT have no problem in indicating the translated status of the text through the use of expressions like: "World Literature", "Translation Heritage", or "Great Contemporary American Literature", ET seem to be more reserved on the issue, and this specificity is usually found inside the book or on the back cover. Seemingly, translations have to be invisible; the revelation of their status can be an obstacle to sales (McRae, 2012, pp. 70-71). In

this case, another well-established publishing strategy, domestication, is observed in ET.

II. 1.2. Strategies of titles' translation and their cultural implications

The title of a literary work is the author's message, intended to reveal, in part, the book's content or moral. In the case of translation, as the sender of the message changes, the original title may equally change. Genette (1987/1997) defines titles as an "artificial object, an artifact of reception or of commentary" (pp. 55-56). Interestingly, he observes that the public to whom the title is addressed is much wider than the readers of the text. The title is perceived as an object of the book's circulation, and not only its reading (75). In his discussion about the title, Genette did not include the case of translated titles. It is his translator (70, footnote 16) who observed that a whole study about the topic could be conducted and would reveal the paratextual effects of the practice.

The analysis shows that the majority of the titles (17 out of 20) were literally rendered. The exception is the three-volume autobiography by Taha Hussein *Al Ayyam*, which was given new titles in translation. The three books in question opted for a more subject-matter function of the title (Genette, 1987/1997, p. 76), each attempted to describe an episode of the author's life. The first two volumes alluded to the text's foreign origin through terms such as 'Egyptian' and 'Al Azhar'. It was only Kenneth Kragg, the translator of *A Passage to France* (the third volume of the autobiography), however, who explained his translation choice, stating that the Arabic title "does not readily go into English" (Hussein, 1972/2006, p. 238). A choice approved by his two predecessors. The literary motivation behind the choice lies in its similarity with *A Passage to India*, a famous English novel, which would certainly have an impact on the reader (Hussein, 1972/2006, p. 241). While the translated title fulfilled the translator's stated communicative objective, it failed to reflect the book's subject; Hussein's journey in France was the focus of only the second part of the book (Haywood, 1979, p. 235). The titles in the three volumes framed the reader and prepared him for a reading experience following Western norms.

As to what extent this choice was dis/advantageous to the original title and its cultural reference, one needs to analyse additional elements. A 2006 edition titled *The Days* exists and includes the three volumes. The three above-mentioned titles were kept as they were, but appeared as subtitles. The Arabic term 'Al Ayyam' has a cultural reference, referring to famous Arab tribes' battles or conflicts, such as 'Dahis wal Gabraa' (Mouadjam Al Maani, n.d.), which seems relevant to the book's content and context. The first volume of the autobiography was published amid a huge controversy over another book by the author, *Fi Al Adab Al Jahili* (في الأدب الجاهلي). As a public figure, Hussein was known for his intellectual battles, especially with more conservative thinkers. So, more than a very basic Arabic word, 'Al Ayyam' accounts for early twentieth-century Egypt

and its cultural atmosphere (Sharaf, 1992, p. 64). The English literal rendering, *The Days*, does not evoke the same image of conflict the Arabic term suggests. Thus, whether literal or not, the rendering of the title prioritises the reader's reception over the visibility of the source culture. This conclusion includes *The Earthquake* too, the literal rendering offers an image of disaster and chaos suggested by the natural phenomenon. While the Arabic term is deeply rooted in Islamic religious narratives, it evokes Judgement Day and all its horrors, summons the Quranic chapter 'Azzalzala' and Quranic verses from 'Surat Al Hadj', and conveys a sense of uneasiness and anxiety. Thus, the translator's (publisher's) desire to prime the readership would inevitably reduce the visibility of the source culture.

The remaining titles of the corpus were rendered literally, but the implications of this translational choice differ depending on the situation. To render a title literally does not necessarily mean a failure of the cultural transfer. In the case of ET *Utopia*, *Gate of the Sun*, and *Season of Migration to the North*, the subject-matter function of the titles was successful to a great extent. The first title has an English origin. The symbolism in the second title needs the reader's collaboration, and a similar effort is expected from the reader of the English text. In the last title, the North refers to Western culture. The reader of the translated text will not perceive the North as an Other, still, this is not supposed to hinder his reception.

AT, on the other hand, relied in certain situations on transliteration: *Oliver Twist* (*تويست أوليفر*) or semi transliteration: *Shifrat Da Vinci* (*شيفرة دافينتشي*). All remaining titles were literally rendered. More often than not, the subject- matter function of the titles was relatively achieved. The reader would not find any difficulty with Oliver Twist, the story's main character. Arab readers would activate their prior knowledge of Da Vinci, a famous painter, and New York, a famous city, in a way similar to their Western counterparts. For *Mahbouba* (*محبوبة*), the reader has to wait and read to 'fully' grasp the meaning of the title, just like the reader of the English text. *Awles* (*عولس*) and *Mazraat Al Hayawan* (*الحيوان مزرعة*) are considered classics, and average readers of literary works would be acquainted with them; if not, the English original titles were added as a reminder. In *Nathryyat Mokhtara* (نثريات مختارة), the focus is on the text form, and consequently, no cultural loss is observed. *Al Fawdhawiyoun* (الفوضويون) as an equivalent for *Vera, or the Nihilists* seems questionable. The English word "Nihilist" refers directly to an ideology: the uselessness of all political and religious institutions (Cambridge, n.d.). The Arabic word is general and may describe many situations, but one of them is related to Nihilism.

Though no general conclusion could be drawn based on this small number of books, it was observed that better visibility of the source culture was found in AT titles compared to ET. Surprisingly, this situation is partly due to the

hegemonic status of Western culture. Western classics or bestsellers are known to Arab readers, but prominent Arab authors need to be introduced to Western readership. The necessity to protect Arab culture from potential Western danger, in a glocalised Turkish fashion (Kansu-Yetkiner & Oktar, 2012) is not observed. Even though the publishing industry in Egypt and Lebanon has a long history, one can feel a certain amateurism in how cultural impact is perceived and measured, compared to the very methodical and professional approach applied to ET.

II. 2. Framing readers' reception through translators' prefaces

According to Genette (1987/1997), an authorial preface is important because it introduces the reader to the text and frames the reading experience. The author has the privilege of well knowing his/her subject matter, and the kind of ideas s/he wants to convey (197). Genette distinguishes between authorial and allographic prefaces; the latter is a preface written by a person other than the author (263). According to this classification, the translator's preface falls under the second category. Tahir-Gurcaglar (2002, p. 52) refutes this conclusion and insists on the translator's authorial status. Even Genette's translator noted that a translator's preface ceases to be allographic when it discusses the translation performance and challenges (1987/1997, 264, footnote 22). For this research, translators' prefaces are considered authorial.

Many translation scholars (Venuti, 1995; Tymoczko and Gentzler, 2002) pointed to the importance of the translator's visibility through his translation, preface, and footnotes. But apparently, the publishing industry is not yet ready to take the plunge. In ET, in particular, translators' prefaces remain rare (McRae, 2012, p. 64). According to McRae (2012), the main functions of translators' prefaces are: "1) foregrounding differences of cultures and languages, 2) promoting understanding of the source culture, and 3) promoting understanding of the translator's role and intervention" (65). These functions will be discussed in both AT and ET, then compared.

ET prefaces attempted to promote an understanding of the source culture, each according to his/her perception of how this promotion is meant to be. In *An Egyptian Childhood* (1929/1932), Hilary Paxton explained that not only Hussein depicted with great mastery scenes from his early childhood, but he also offered an interesting portrayal of provincial Egypt at the closing of the nineteenth century (v). He, then, commented on the author's controversy:

> "During the storm which was aroused in Egypt by his book on Pre-Islamic Poetry, he was described by a popular English daily as "The Martin Luther of Egypt". The comparison is hardly fair, since he does not claim to be a religious reformer. However, he has shown Luther's dauntless courage in the face of persecution and like Luther has survived it." (Hussein, 1932, pp. vi-vii)

This heroic image of the author is linked to his Western leanings. It is further reinforced by another comment about the positive impact of his European teachers who initiated him to Western modern literary criticism (v-vi). This type of commentary is quite in line with the prevailing imperialistic discourse of the period. Mejdell (2011) found in the translator an "inside commentator siding with the liberal Egyptian middle class, and a sympathetic and respectful cultural broker" (161). However, if the writer represents the good and the right, it is precisely because it alludes to the appropriateness and universality of Western values.

In a similar vein, the translator of *The Stream of Days* (1940/1948) expressed the usefulness of the information included in the preface for the "English reader" (v). His preface was more concerned with the cultural history of Egypt as a pivotal element in understanding the author's world and vision. The preface was educational, and, probably because of its relatively neutral tone, managed to promote a certain understanding of the source culture. As for fostering of the translator's role and intervention, only few lines were devoted to the explanation of his approach. The translator did not attempt to imitate Hussein's style because it would result in a fake local colour and hinder the understanding of the English text (xi). In the mid-twentieth century, a discourse favouring domesticated translation as a rational choice would shock very few.

It was in *A Passage to France* (1972/1979) that the translator's voice was the loudest; he offered a detailed account of how he treated the text. He first explained the reasons behind the title's choice (Hussein, 1972/2006, pp. 238-9). Then, he clarified his problematic decision to modify the third-person narrator of the original text to a first-person narrator in translation. He stated that "the English translation takes the liberty to make Taha Husain speak with the pronoun "I". Any other course would seem stilted in a translation" (Hussein, 1972/2006, p. 242). The particularity of Hussein's autobiography, however, lies in his deliberate choice of a third-person narrator. A choice, as the translator himself explains, related to his blindness, an obstacle that forced him to perceive the world and narrate it through a veil (242). The distinction between the author and the narrator allows the text to acquire a fictional dimension and liberates the writer from any obligations imposed by other forms of writing. The translator was quite aware of all these peculiarities. Still, having in mind a typical English reader, he opted for an alteration of the point of view, which would affect the text's reception. The preface permitted the visibility of another aspect of the source culture with a literary flavour, this time.

A similar focus on the literary characteristics of the text was found in *The Earthquake* (1974/2000). William Granara offered a thorough analysis of Cheikh Boularwah, the novel's protagonist. To do so, he first gave examples from Western literature of similar characters and then explained the character's

singularity within Arabic literature (Wattar, 1974/2000, p. 15). He also described the novel's narrative techniques that open the text to multiple interpretations. Likewise, the religious background against which the story was told was explained and simplified. More complex issues such as Algeria's linguistic diversity, terrorism, and history were also considered, but in a very subtle way. The numerous footnotes in the preface were meant to orient the reader to 'objective references' for further information about Algerian history (20). The translator avoided the use of mainstream discourse and offered a personalised description of the Algerian cultural scene instead. His preface is a good example of how a foreign culture could be introduced in translation.

Aunt Safiyya and the Monastery (1991/1996) is an example of a different situation. The cooperation between the translator and the author, whose "endless, patient assistance on the translation itself" (Taher, 1991/1996, p. ix) helped in the production of a translation that would relatively meet both the author's and translator's expectations. Barbara Romaine, the translator of the novel, provided a historical account of Egypt's minor and major religious groups, and of the political regimes in power after the fall of the monarchy in 1952. The author's art was tackled in the light of his culture, that is, the translator examined how several events were implicitly or explicitly discussed in his works. The translator recognised the presence of a permanent Western misunderstanding of the Arab-Islamic world (13) and offered a balanced reading of a foreign culture, correcting some widespread misconceptions about the East.

In the last two prefaces, a serious endeavour is undertaken to understand and explain the Other. More recent translations, and due to important cultural changes, seem more concerned about the accuracy of the cultural image conveyed through translation. For questions related to culture, there are no right/wrong answers. The way they are dealt with, whether superficially or in depth, reveals the importance of these issues to the translator and in his world. In all the above-discussed prefaces, translators attempted to reconstruct images of Egyptian and Algerian cultures. One may fully or partially agree with these contents. Still, it is not possible to deny their usefulness in introducing readers to different cultures in foreign countries. Given the choice between the absence of a preface and its relative partiality, the second option sounds more relevant. As a result, the tendency not to preface literature in translation is likely to hinder successful cross-cultural communication in ET.

AT prefaces, on the other hand, are more varied. In *Mahbouba* (*Beloved*, 1987/1989), the preface was divided into several parts. It tackled issues such as the author's style and language, as well as her prominent position within the American literary scene. The whole preface was devoted solely to the author and her novel, and the translator seemed more concerned with preparing his reader for the text. Nothing about the treatment of the text is revealed, though it was clear

that the narrative style would create significant translation difficulties. The academic background of the translator may explain the educational nature of his preface, especially since it is not an isolated case; it was observed in many of his translations[†]. The information included in the preface would also raise awareness about cultural differences between the Arab world and the United States.

For الكفارة (*Atonement*, 2012), the preface was similarly literary but much shorter. The translator wanted his readers to understand how the author's ideological affiliation shaped his writing. The literary devices used in the novel were also explained. *Atonement* is a complex novel that requires careful consideration for any appropriate reception. The author's life and the novel's subject matter together provide insight into the British historical, political, and literary contexts. In this sense, the preface promotes Arab readers' understanding of this foreign culture. The translator did not comment on the treatment of the text and the choices made to solve stylistic and cultural difficulties. The two prefaces discussed so far share many characteristics; they tend to offer efficient cultural and literary backgrounds judged useful to the reader, suggesting that their target readership is students, especially since both were university teachers. The translators tend to be low-profile translators; they don't comment on their translation performance.

A different situation is illustrated by الفوضويون (*Vera; or, The Nihilists*, 1989), where two prefaces by the translator are found: his preface to the first edition of late 1960 and that of the second edition. Al Kaissi is an Iraqi translator who, according to his narrative, was engaged in several political and intellectual battles. He used the preface of his second edition to explain retrospectively the political context in which the translation appeared, some twenty-five years earlier (أ). He stated that the decision to translate Wilde's play was intended to challenge the corrupt political regime in power at the time. He also expressed his awareness of the unusual nature of his preface, which focused on the translation's political context (د). The remaining part of the preface was devoted to the author and his works (ح-ي). He nevertheless insisted on relating the play's subject matter to his country's reality (43) and saw many shared aspects between the two situations.

Another Iraqi translator, Daad Assouleiman, used her preface to نثريات مختارة (*Selected Prose*, 2008) to address concerns about her translator's status. She dedicated her work to those whose worth is never recognised, regardless of their sacrifices. The preface was entirely devoted to the topic of translation. Assouleiman perceived the translator as a second author and criticised the publishing industry, which, for this reason, would favour the translator's

[†]See for example: Joyce, James. *Stephen.D & Exile*. Trans Amine Al Ayyouti, 2001
جويس، جيمس. *ستيفن.د منفيون*. ترجمة أمين العيوطي. وزارة الإعلام، الكويت، 2001.

prominence over his skill. She viewed the publishers' message conveyed through the use of translators' titles as pressure on the readers to receive the text positively, even before reading it. This situation does not benefit young creative translators who aspire to prove their talent. The translator urged the reader not to look for big names, but for good translated texts (5-6). The content of this preface is unique in that it does not concentrate on the original author or text. Also, the focus on translation is not addressed in terms of how translation is handled; rather, it describes a state of discrimination among practising translators in Iraq.

Prefaces of both AT and ET tend to promote certain aspects of the source culture. The process, however, is highly selective and depends on the translator's convenience. Certain aspects are more evident in ET, such as commenting on translation performance and explaining translation choices. The selected material and how it is delivered inform about the circumstances in which translations circulate and hint at the prevailing narratives. The prefaces of the ET differ in the way the source culture is introduced, but they share a similar vision of the preface's general structure. AT don't seem to be under the same controlled situation. Some prefaces follow the Western model and focus mainly on introducing the source culture as efficiently as possible. Others are pragmatic and concise; they tend to prime the reader without annoying him. In addition, certain political and cultural issues are addressed. The methodical approach observed in ET is not applicable in the AT. Also, the visibility of the translator is not perceived in the same way; while ET focus on the topic of translation concerning the text, AT tackle translation as an issue related to the context of the target culture.

Conclusion:

This paper discussed the various possibilities of cultural manifestation through paratextual elements in translation. The results of the analysis of covers and titles confirm the agreement of both cultures on a marginal status of the translator, but Arab translators/publishers seem to be more concerned than Westerners with the appearance of the translator's title on the cover. It was also observed that Arabic translations may use titles in English but not the opposite.

For the covers' art, it necessarily unveils certain aspects of the source culture; certain English translations reinforced already existing (mis)conceptions the readers may potentially have with no serious effort to correct them, while others were more successful in reflecting the intended cultural moment. Arabic translations' covers were relatively better, and succeeded in echoing the narrated tales. The two cultures, then, seem to have different perceptions of how to convey otherness in translation. In addition, Arabic translations showed more readiness to indicate the translated status of the texts compared to a reserved attitude in English translations. Finally, a tendency to render titles literally was found in both cultures, but the few modified English titles attempted to prepare the reader

following a Western tradition. Arabic titles were relatively better at allowing cultural visibility.

Prefaces of English and Arabic translations promote the respective source cultures, but, depending on the included information and the way it is expressed, one can draw conclusions about the receptor's cultural context too. English translations tend to comment on the treatment of the text, which allows the translator's visibility. More recent English translations tend to spend more effort on the accuracy of the image of the source culture it conveys compared to older ones. Western publishing norms seem firmer than Arab ones, which resulted in more diversity in Arabic prefaces. Some followed Western models, others took the translator's visibility to a different level and addressed many of their political and professional concerns in the prefaces.

The results of this research remain relatively general. It is possible to expand the corpus, and work on the paratextual elements separately to reach more precise results. It is also possible to work on smaller cultural groups, Algeria vs. the United Kingdom, for example. Comparative paratextual research in translation can offer a better understanding of the dynamics of cross-cultural communication. However, studies in this area that include Arabic are very few. The investigation of paratextual elements separately would certainly offer more precise results and enrich this research field.

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