ETHICS AND POLITICS OF TRANSLATING RELIGIOUS TEXTS

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Abstract
The study of knowledge genealogy indicates the central role of translation in the encounters and contacts between diverse cultures and civilisations. More importantly, translation has provided the site for the export and import of diverse opinions and discourses across cultures. As a tool for cultural exchange, translation presents researchers and practitioners alike with the thorny issue of ethics. This chapter exclusively explores the politics as well as the ethics of translating religious texts. It seems that there are three categories of cultural exchange which govern the whole translation process. Representation, transmission and transculturation are the most fundamental features and characteristics that pertain much to any translated text. The aim of this chapter is to examine the extent to which religious texts reflect this vogue. Relying on Shalabi’s (1997) book, Islam Between Truth and False Allegations: A Response to the False Allegations against Islam, I shall try to strike a balance between the requirements of the target text or language and to remain faithful to source texts taking into account the three major categories notably representation, transmission and transculturation. Above all, to stay faithful to source texts seems to be the Achilles heel of the translation of sensitive texts.

Keywords: Ethics, Equivalence, Transculturation, Representation, Transmission, Islamic Discourse.

Introduction
Translation has most of the time been conceived as a means of bridging the gap between source and target cultures. More significantly, translation has been considered as the tool for exporting and importing diverse opinions as well as discourses across cultures. As a tool of cultural interface or exchange, translation has been very much concerned with the burning issue of ethics. This chapter explores the ethics and politics of translating very sensitive religious texts and in particular Shalabi’s book (1997), Islam between Truth and False Allegations: A Response to the False Allegations against Islam. The gist of such investigation is to show and to demonstrate with textual evidence the kind of challenges and difficulties translators are confronted with while translating source texts to target audiences and how the three categories of cultural exchange notably transmission, transculturation and representation are paramount in the whole translation process.

Some Theoretical Perspectives on Translation
Translation is generally qualified as a means of bridging the gap between languages and cultures. In addition to this, it is a communicative process which basically transfers the message of a source language text to a target language. Generally, translation is defined as being neither a creative art nor an imitative art, but stands somewhere between the two. Still, it is a discipline that gives too much importance to structure and meaning. Following House (2000), “A good translation should not read like a translation at all, but like a target language original”. (p.47). It is obvious that this perfection in translation is the ultimate goal and hope of every translator. After all, the gifted translator has to be faithful as much as possible to the original text. Furthermore, Catford (1965) strongly argues that translation is essentially “the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in other
language (TL)” (p.20). Here, Catford induces the notion of equivalence which evokes some effect constrictions notably those of explicitness, implicitness, culture and language. Catford still remains unambiguous in his approach and interpretation of equivalence. He states that “Translation is an operation performed on language, a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another. Clearly, then, any theory of translation must draw upon a theory of language”. (p.1). The theory of translation and that of language are intrinsically related to each other.

From Catford words, it is clear that any theory of translation ought to be built on that of language. The interdependence between the theory of language and that of translation has long historically been debated since the advent of the langue-parole distinction backed up by De Saussure in 1913. That great achievement in linguistic science has effectively resulted in a host of attitudes and approaches toward the translation process as a whole. Hence, researchers in the field started to consider translation theory as a sort of science or rather as a science of parole which should exclusively focus on the message of the text rather than on language as a code. Fawcett (1997) staunchly supports and approves this approach by maintaining that “the view that translation must be studied as parole (communicative event) rather than langue (an abstract system) is now widely accepted” (p.4).

The translators are exposed to many challenges and problems while dealing with some legal and highly sensitive texts which require a good command of the target and source languages and cultures respectively. I think that the interdependence of the language theories and those of translation have triggered off and brought about a lot of burning issues such as ethics in translation and the role of equivalence in bridging the gap between the source and target cultures and languages. The translator has to be faithful to both cultures in order to convey the message clearly to his target audience. After all, a source text is not merely a chain of words that have to be replaced by their correspondences in the target text. It is, however, a whole mixture of different linguistic and extra linguistic features and levels that have to be taken into account and treated, therefore, on equal bases.

In the same vein, translators have to take into account both the structure and the meaning before translating a particular text. Bassnett (1954) argues that the translation process: involves the rendering of a source language text into the target language so as to ensure that the surface meaning of the two will be approximately similar and the structures of the source language will be preserved as closely as possible but not closely that the target language structures will be seriously distorted. (p.2).

From the above quotation, it is clear that there are no specific, correct, good or agreed upon definitions for translation. Each one focuses on certain concepts, but all tend to agree that the function of the translator is basically to bring about in the minds of the readers of the target language text, “as closely as possible” the same feelings as those achieved by the source language text. Translation is undoubtedly a more complicated process since the translator cannot always be viewed as George Steiner (1975) claims “Someone who invades, extracts and brings home”. (p.298). Instead, the translator should try to create an equivalent effect of the source text on the target text reader so that the text can be adaptable to its new socio cultural environment. In this respect, Basil Hatim and Mason (1990) point out that:
The role of the translator as reader is then one of constructing a model of intended meaning of source text and of forming judgments about the probable impacts of source text on intended receivers.(p.92)

This testifies to the fact that translators have to find the appropriate words and expressions in order to convey the exact meaning. The basic task of translators is to formulate a new text in which they express their intended meaning. Moreover, they have to be very effective in their
judgments in order to create an outstanding impact on readers. However, translators are often confronted with many problems while translating texts from English into Arabic. According to De Beaugrande (1994:56), one of the problems that translators face is equivalence and since translation “is a model of communication where choices are further subjected to a principle of equivalence between a source text in one language and a target text in another”, translators should be very careful if they want to succeed in producing relevant translations which produce similar effects on the reader to those achieved by the original text. In other words, for Olshtain (1996) translators ought to work within the core of the target culture and know the rules of the target language community so as to find appropriate equivalents to achieve pragmatic competence which “…consists not only of linguistic knowledge but also of knowledge of the rules of language use”. (p.16).

Above all, translators are very crucial components in any translation process. Hence, a good translator is required to produce a good and convincing translation. For researchers in the field, translators have to be gifted and highly qualified in both source and target cultures and by the same token have to be characterized by qualities such as “loyalty” and “fidelity”. The successful translator is the one who is faithful to the original source and target texts respectively. Thus, such an attempt to be faithful to both cultures seems to be difficult to attain sometimes as translators are confronted with difficulties at the linguistic, pragmatic and cultural levels. This in fact is also due to the problem of equivalence in both target and source texts. Yet, translators around the globe do their best to achieve a sort of equilibrium between the source and target languages. Translators strive to come up with an acceptable translation that really looks like the original one. To be faithful to the source text seems to be a hard task for any gifted translator. Nord (1991) concurs with this argument in his manner by pointing out that faithfulness and loyalty are the key and striking elements that translators have to take into account to achieve success. Nord further defines “loyalty” as a moral principle indispensable in the relationship between human beings who are partners in a communication process and “fidelity” as a rather technical relationship between two texts” (p.29).

Before achieving those moral principles, translators have to be highly qualified and very competent in both target and source texts. In other words, they should not only master source text and target text languages, but ought to have a good command of the subject of their translation because “the more unequivocal and definite the description of the target text recipient, the easier it is for the translator to make his decisions in the course of translation process. The translator, for Nord (1991), therefore, should insist on being provided with as many details as possible”. (p.9). The mastery of all these elements enables the translator to go beyond the surface level of the source text and to avoid reading it an intuitive way. According to Nord, the true and gifted translator has to read “every new source text in the light of his experience as a critical recipient and translator”. (p.11).

In the very challenging translation process, translators have to be both good recipients and producers. The translator is supposed to be a kind of recipient who “reads the source text instead of the initiator or some other recipient who belongs to a target culture which may be quite different from the source culture”. (p.10). Moreover, a true translator is compelled to be a good producer who “may be compared with a ghost writer who produces a text at the request, and for the use, of somebody else” (p.10). Thus, translators occupy a central position in the translation process. They are both the reproducers of the source text and the recipients of the target text. In other words, they are at the same time rewriters and readers of the texts translated.

It is obvious that the mastery of two languages is not enough for translators to be good reproducers of source text and good recipients of target text at the same time. Hence, a gifted
translator has to be bi-cultural “which means a perfect command of both the source and the target culture” (p.11). The perfect command of both languages and both cultures paves the way for the translator to be a good rewriter of source text and producer of target text. Communication is also another important criterion in the translation process. A translator is impelled to be a good communicator and his translation should really reflect that stance. Hatim (1997) states that a true translator is the one who conveys his message clearly to his target audience. He describes the translator as “a special category of communicator” (p.2). Such a description is further supported by Gutt (2000) who points out that “the translator must be seen and must see himself clearly as a communicator” (p.19).

Equivalence in Translation

Equivalence is a very important element in translation and translators are usually confronted with difficulties while translating texts for their target language audiences. In other words, the translator has to find the most suitable words in order to create an impact on his audience. Consequently, equivalence for De Beaugrande (1994) means “the correspondence of effects: those of the original on the source language audience versus those of the translation on the target language audience”. (p.56). There are many types of equivalence but the most important ones are formal equivalence, functional equivalence, ideational equivalence and dynamic equivalence.

Nida (1964) divides the notion of equivalence into two categories which are respectively, “formal equivalence” and “dynamic equivalence”. The first one exclusively “focuses on the message itself, in both form and content…One is concerned that the message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements in the source language” (p.159). Here, the main concern or the major goal of formal equivalence is to preserve all the elements of the source text. In other words, the content and the form must not be distorted in any way. The second type is completely different from the first one as there is a considerable shift from the message to the receiver. Accordingly, this concept is best “defined in terms of the degree to which the receptor’s language responds in substantially the same manner as the receptors in the source language. This response can never be identical, for the cultural and historical settings are too different, but there should be a high degree of equivalence of response, or translation will have failed to accomplish its purpose”. Nida (1969:24) argues, here, that in spite of the fact that the receptor’s response is as crucial as the target text; still the degree of the response to the target text will never be similar to that of the source text. This brought us to the notion of sameness in translation which I strongly believe can never be attained. This is further backed up by Bassnett (1991) who stresses that “equivalence in translation…should not be approached as a search for sameness, since sameness cannot even exist between two versions of the same text, let alone between the source language and the target language version” (p.29).

The notion of equivalence has actually created two opposite different views concerning the organization of the diversity of natural languages. Both the formalists and the functionalists see natural languages from different perspectives. The formalist Chomsky sees natural languages as “a system of finite rules for generating an infinite number of abstract sentences and they relegate lexical items to movable syntactic pieces or counters to be selected and manipulated by the principle of open choice: any word can serve if it fits the syntactic constraints”. Following De Beaugrande (1994:55), this is a clear indication that formalists are much more interested in the linguistic forms that ought to be arranged in an appropriate way. Apart from this, the functionalists stress the importance of natural languages. According to them, the
natural language is a very significant means of communication and its importance resides in the fact of attaining basic “communicative acts and moves”. (p.56).

The above facts are clear evidence that equivalence is an outstanding element in translation. Both Arab and European translators are exposed to the problem of equivalence while translating texts, which contain words that do not have an equivalent in the target language. A case in point here is the word: الشريعة To translate this word from Arabic into English is not an easy task because it does not have an equivalent in the target language and if a translator finds this word in a sentence or in a text, he is compelled to translate the meaning. Translators should take into consideration, the notion of acceptability and adequacy before translating a particular text. The target language audience will accept a translation if it embodies both the notions of adequacy and acceptability. This is exactly what Toury (1980) said about translation and more specifically about one of the elements of literature, which is “Haiku”,

Thus, what may be said to operate in translation is not any fact about the reception of its end product (which is not there, in the first place), only certain assumptions with respect to it, namely, assumptions as to the prospects of a text whose structure and linguistic make up follow a certain pattern which is acceptable to the target end. Being members of the target culture, or tentatively assuming the role of ones, translators are more or less aware of the factors, which govern the acceptability of texts and textual linguistic features in that culture or certain sector thereof. To the extent that they choose to subject themselves to these factors and resort to the appropriate translation strategies, the act itself is executed under the initial norm of acceptability, whether the end product will indeed be admitted into the target system or no. (Connor 1996,122).

This means that the translator should master the rules of the language and ought to come up with expressions that would be accepted by the target language audience. In other words, he must stick to the syntactic and the grammatical structures of the language of his target audience in order to create an impact on them. Likewise, Hatim and Mason (1990) have further elaborated on the effect of equivalence on the target audience. They have defined Nida’s dynamic equivalence as “the principle of equivalence of effect on the reader of target text” (p.7). In other words, dynamic equivalence is the fact of making a significant effect on the readers of the target audience. Thus, in order to attain this, the method goes for cultural transposition. That is to say, replacing items or idioms by another, which would be known to the speech community of the target language and which, would imply the adequate idea and have more or less the same idea.

Representation, Transmission and Transculturation in Translation
In her illuminating book, Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators (2010), Maria Tymoczko expounded on the three categories or forms of cultural exchange in translation, namely representation, transmission and transculturation. Hence, all sorts of translation are representations. A translation, as a system of representation, provides the readers or the target audience with “an image or likeness of another thing” (p.112). Furthermore, as a representation, translation basically aims at exhibiting and showing that object or thing in a clear and straightforward manner. In this respect, translation is essentially geared to transmit a particular message and “to convey a particular aspect of a subject so as to influence its receptors”. (p.112). The symbolical implications of translation are further explored by Maria Tymoczko when she strongly maintains that any representation aims at providing a sort of argument for the receivers within a particular society and in this sense all translations
encompass diverse representations which basically encapsulate messages to be conveyed to the target audience. As a matter of fact, translation is perceived as a means to attain “mental clarity” (p.112). In addition to the above facts, Tymoczko points out that representations in translation, most of the time, are vividly geared to suit the basic views of those translators who have been much involved in transmitting their messages from one culture to another. Like other representations, the translations of any source texts are very much governed by certain criteria and are in particular shaped by certain ideologies.

Apart from this, there is another mode of cultural exchange or interface that can actually be adopted as a means or frame of reference for any translation. This model is called transmission. In western cultures, translation has always been qualified as a means of representation which is intrinsically linked to transfer and transmission. By assessing translation from the perspective of transmission, we get a deep insight into the notion of translation as a mode of transferring and transmitting messages and meanings from source texts to target ones. Transmission in translation can, therefore, take many shapes. According to Tymoczko, like other forms or means of transfer, translation is very much concerned with “the transmission of substance on the macro levels of the text, most commonly semiotic meanings, discourses or elements having to do with the content or structure of the source text or utterance”. (p.117)

In the same vein, there are other features of transfer and these are to be traced or found on the micro levels of any translation which can therefore “take the form of word to word transference, including borrowings, which import some of the meanings of source language words into the translated text.” (p.117). In this respect, the translator’s basic or main duty is to transfer the meaning or the message clearly to the target audience. Such transmission has to take into account the lexical and linguistic tools that have to be wisely used in order to achieve the desired target production and the most accurate translation that suits both the aspirations of the source and target audiences. Tymoczko backs up her assessment of this category of cultural exchange by stating that the lexical and linguistic transfer have been considered through history as significant tools which motivated much translators in their constant efforts to transfer and transmit the most appropriate linguistic and lexical terms from source texts to target ones.

Translators are often confronted with the challenging tasks of rendering or transferring source texts in such an appropriate and adequate manner that can help the target readers to decipher the intended meaning. Manipulating source texts is essentially the key to any successful assessment or interpretation of target texts. Tymoczko concurs with this argument when she states that there are different sorts of translation. Hence, there are the ones which completely “diverge from the linguistic features of the source text” and there are other “translations that add significant contextual or supplementary materials”. (p.117). Thus, in both cases, the translator has to use the right linguistic or lexical equivalent in order to maintain a sort of balance between the source and target texts respectively. Manipulating source texts in diverse manners helps translators in their mission which is “to transmit the contents to the targeted audience most effectively and most efficiently”. (p.117).

The authenticity of representation in translation raises a whole range of burning issues. Is there really an authentic representation in a particular text? Are all translations good representations of the source texts? Can we really conceive all translations as mere examples of transfer or transmission? Is it really possible to consider translation as a means of representation, as a cultural and linguistic tool involving no sort of transfer whatsoever? Catford’s definition of translation encompasses such an attitude and perspective. According to him, translation is essentially “an operation performed on languages: a process of substituting a text in one language for text in another”. (p.1). Catford further backs up his arguments by saying that
translation can be defined as “the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL).” (p.20).

What can be extrapolated from the given definitions is that there is still the possibility of tracing some minimal transmission in the translation process and this in part is due to the meanings of equivalent. According to Maria Tymoczko (2010), transmission in translation evokes the challenging tasks that translators are confronted with in the translation of source texts and rendering them in an almost acceptable and readable way. In certain cases, a particular translation “might involve almost no transfer or transmission of content”. (p.118). Again, the process of translation here is oriented toward the use of the right equivalent in such a wise manner to keep both the source and target texts in equilibrium without taking into account the significance of “semantics, meaning or other forms of semiotic equivalence”. (p.118). Transferring the meaning or the intended message from source texts to target ones is a crucial element in the translation process. Yet, Catford’s definition of translation sets the mood for “zero transfer as a limit in the process of translation”. (p.118).

The other most important mode or means of cultural exchange or interface is transculturation which is defined as “the transmission of cultural characteristics from one cultural group to another” (p.120). This concept is very similar to the other two categories. Yet, like transmission, transculturation “goes far beyond the exchange of verbal materials”. (p.120). Such a mode of cultural exchange encapsulates things such as “the transmission and uptake of beliefs and practices related to religion, social organization and government from one people to another, as well as the spread of artistic forms, including music, the ritual arts, literary forms and even tale types”. (p.120). Transculturation does not only mean acculturation, rather this process involves many stages. Ortiz concurs with this approach when he points out that the concept “transculturation” aims both at exploring and expressing:

The different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another because this does not consist merely in acquiring another culture, which is what the English word acculturation really implies, but the process also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as a deculturation. In addition it carries the idea of the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena, which could be called neoculturation. (Cited in Tymoczko, p.123).

This quotation highlights the importance as well as the cultural significance of transculturation in translation. Illuminating the performative nature of translation seems to be the hallmark of the translator’s task and duty. After all, it is incumbent upon the translator to take into consideration all the important features of transculturation in order to accurately “insert elements from one culture into another” clearly and effectively. To support her approach, Maria Tymoczko further provides examples which really involve transculturation. One of the examples given here is the famous play, Hamlet, which was performed in Africa by Laura Bohannan with her chosen audience. The main objective was to tell “the story within the receptors’ cultural framework so they could appropriate it, even if the process meant adjusting the story to local performance norms and cultural mores”. (p.125). In the same stream, the interactive nature of storytelling that Bohannan firmly delineates has produced “a translation that epitomized transculturation with both the source and target cultures being altered”. (p.125). The translation process fully involved the active participation of the audience. Such an approach would not be conceived as ordinary bearing in mind that translation as a means of representation should necessarily and primarily aim at “the transmission or representation of Hamlet as an artifact of its own system”. (p.125) Likewise, Ezra pound’s translations of Chinese poetry fall within the same scope. According to Maria Tymocyko, such translations ought to be looked at as tools that “stress transculturation more than transmission, the aim was
to perform new literary types for the purpose of shifting the receptor literary and cultural systems toward the models being translated”. (p.125).

Equally important, dynamic equivalence translations as well as the other types of functionalism in translation are often directed toward transculturation than toward representation or transmission. The translator is not only preoccupied with the most accurate and exact representation of the source text or with the transmission of the basic literal message that is eminent in such types of translations, but it seems that the main objective is the production of “a translation that will insert the text operationally into the system of the receptors”. (p.125).

Transculturation is paramount in the new contemporary commercial translation and notably the translation of advertisements and multimodal translation where the translator’s main goal is to closely and accurately transfer the most important lexical and textual features and to be faithful as much as possible to the content. (p.126).

Above all, translation and transculturation are intrinsically interwoven as both strive to achieve a sort of exchange at the linguistic and cultural realms or boundaries. Translation is very often conceived as a metonymic process and that the manners in which gifted translators represent a source text, transmit it and transculturate it will automatically be metonymic. (p.128). It is significant to stress that representation, transmission and transculturation as modes of cultural exchange are closely interconnected and are therefore complementary. Using such models or frameworks in the assessment, evaluation and interrogation of the validity and the authenticity of our translations of source texts helps to uphold and to question the whole process of translation. Hence, in any scholarly field and in translation studies in particular, what is valued more is this cultural exchange between source and target cultures. In other words, in translation studies, cultural difference and otherness become in the long run the scope or the target of investigation and inquiry.

Religious Texts: Difficulties and Challenges

Undoubtedly, sensitive religious texts are difficult to translate and translators are often exposed to many challenges and difficulties while rendering sentences from English into Arabic. Still, equivalence is one of the tough tasks that Arab translators are confronted with. In fact, they find themselves torn between two different cultures and have to stick to the grammatical regulations of both the target and source texts respectively. Translators further find it difficult to choose the appropriate words and expressions to convey the required meaning and to come up with a new text that pretty much resembles the original one. It seems that sameness in translation is beyond the reach of gifted translators. Yet, they still strive to produce an adequate and acceptable translation to the target audience. Equivalence at the grammatical and word levels seems to haunt translators’ consciousness. Shalabi’s book, Islam between Truth and False Allegations: A Response to the False Allegations Against Islam, (1997) is a good example which encompasses key religious sensitive passages that really entail a good grasp of the source language in order to come up with an accurate and acceptable translation to be understood by the target audience. An example which could be used here as an illustration is the following passage in English:

It is required that the doctrine be indelibly established in the heart of the Muslim and deeply rooted in his mind. In this context, we should note that the holy Quran calls on every human being to make sure for himself that the doctrine is true by looking at the history and the fate of previous nations and by constantly observing the universe and contemplating its natural phenomenon so as to strengthen the faith in the heart through reasoned acceptance.(p.16).
An analysis of Shalabi’s text really entails the translator to examine the three categories of cultural exchange and see the extent to which they fit in both source and target languages. As a system of representation, we can argue that transmission or transference in translation is actually one of the tough and challenging tasks that translators are confronted with. In the English text, the terms “Established” and “Rooted” raise some problems namely at the lexical and linguistic levels. Transmission as a framework or mode of cultural interface helps translators to transfer or to transmit the intended meaning effectively and accurately to the target audience. Yet, if the translator opts for the literal translation, he will end up with an inappropriate translation. Therefore, the sentence “the doctrine be indelibly established in the heart of the Muslim and deeply rooted in his mind” can be transmitted in Arabic as:

وإنه من الضروري أن تترسخ العقيدة في قلب المسلم وعقله

Transculturization is sometimes considered as problematic in relation to source and target cultures. A case in point which illustrates with clear evidence the problematic nature of transculturization and even more transmission is the example from Shalabi’s book: “To strengthen the faith in the heart through reasoned acceptance”. (p.16). Transculturization as a category of cultural exchange favors the use of appropriate terms that suits both source and target audiences. Yet, the expression “Reasoned acceptance” would sound irrelevant if translators opted for a literal translation. The equivalence at the word level is problematic here. Transferring or transmitting the intended meaning or message from source texts to target ones seems to be coupled with a lot of challenges, norms and regulations to abide by. The expression “Reasoned acceptance” can literally be transferred in Arabic as “Kouboul Manteki”. But, neither the source culture nor the target one can accept such a transculturization and transmission both at the lexical and linguistic level. It would be preferable to opt for a sort of metonymy at the lexical and linguistic levels so that both the source culture and the target one achieve a common ground. In other words, the translators strive all the time to come up with the most adequate equivalents that can be transferred and transmitted culturally in such a way as to attain a metonymic reproduction that serves and suits both the aspirations of target and source audiences and cultures at large.

The other text that is worth investigating at length is as follows:

The Quran and the traditions have limited the elements of doctrine to believing in Allah, his angels. His scriptures, His Prophets and in destiny i.e in the good and the bad and in the day of judgement. (p.15).

Transferring words at the lexical and linguistic levels from one culture to another seems to be difficult especially when we know that each culture has got its own linguistic features and characteristics. The Arabic and English languages have got their proper grammatical norms, their own lexical and linguistic rules so much so that translators found it extremely hard to stick to one accurate equivalent to transfer, to transculturate and to convey their intended meaning. In Shalabi’s text, the term “Traditions” can be misleading and is therefore open to different interpretations. The problem of translation in the contemporary western world is that sometimes gifted translators are exposed to the thorny and challenging issue of ethics. That is to say, translators have to transculturate, transmit and to accurately represent better the source text and to render it in an effective manner. The target text should somewhat be a prototype of the source one. In other words, the translated text should reflect the original one. If for instance, the translator opted for a literal translation of the word “Traditions”, then the whole process of translation would be distorted. Hence, the categories of cultural interface or exchange would lose their cultural and linguistic value. To translate, “Traditions” as “Takalid” would be meaningless for both the source and target cultures. Target audiences in the west expect the translators to abide by the rules, norms of translation and to take into full
consideration the basic categories of cultural exchange, notably transculturation, transmission and representation. To keep the intended meaning and be metonymic in one’s approach, the translator has to be knowledgeable and to have a good command of both source and target cultures in order not to mislead his or her readers. In the case of Shalabi, the right and most equivalent of the English version in Arabic is:

إن القرآن والسنن قد حدد عنصر العقيدة في الإيمان بالله وبملائكته وكتبه ورسله وبالقدر خيره وشره وبالقدر في يوم القيامة

Apart from this, Arabic and English cultures are completely different both at the lexical and grammatical levels so much so that translators find it extremely difficult to stick to one cultural category like transculturation and say that it can be applied to convey the intended meaning. Transmitting and transferring meanings, expressions and ideas from source texts to target ones is not an easy task. Translators’ constant attempts to reveal and to transmit their intended meanings from source texts to target ones turned out to be full of astonishing and unexpected results. It seems that sometimes the authenticity of representation in translation is far from being reachable and that translators are impelled just to strike a balance between source and target languages and cultures and to salvage the metonymic nature of translation. An example that can be used here for illustration is this extract from Shalabi’s book,

The Allegation that Islam does not allow Women to Hold High State Positions. Islam does not prohibit a woman from holding important state positions as long as she is qualified. Not only is there no single Qur’anic verse which denies women important state positions but, on the contrary, the Qur’an cites the example of the Queen of Saba’ who held the highest state position in her society. As for the saying of the Prophet (MAPBUH) in which he states that:

"They who submit their matters to the care of women are doomed to failure”, (reported by al-Bukhari, at-Tarmidhi, an-Nissan and Ibn Hanbal),it must be contextualized to determine the specific situation in which it was said. The Prophet (MAPBUH) made this statement when it was reported to him that the Persians, who were then enemies of Islam, enthroned Kissra's daughter. This shows that the Prophet (MAPBUH) was primarily seeking to elevate the spirits of the Muslims and that he meant specific people. It is also a fact that the Caliph ‘Umar Ben El Khattab assigned the responsibility of the accounting department (which included the management of the El Medina’s trade center) to Shifa’a Bint Abdullah al-Makhzumia; it must be noted that this is one of the civil and religious functions which requires high expertise and firmness. If today, some societies treat women differently, this is due to the prevailing local customs and mores and not because of the dictates of Islam. The evolution that Muslim countries have been experiencing has made it possible for women to hold some of the highest state positions such as that of Prime Minister (as in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Turkey) or that of a Minister or Ambassador (as in Egypt). (p.59).

If the translator would like to achieve a metonymic reproduction and to strike a balance between source and target languages, he has to transculturate and to transmit well his intended meanings in both cultures wisely and accurately. Shalabi’s English version favors a straightforward grammatical structure. Shalabi has essentially opted for the SVO model which is totally different from the Arabic structure. One of the striking features of the Arabic language is the excessive use of different words to mean only one thing. Most Arab translators opt for the use of a whole range of linking words to clarify their intended meaning to their target audience. For this reason, there is a relatively crucial distinction between the target and the source text both at the grammatical and lexical realms. In English, the equivalence at the word and lexical levels is pretty much appreciated and is easy to discern compared to the one existing in Arabic.
Conclusion

Significantly though, there are a lot of interwoven remarks which stem from the foregoing analysis. The most crucial points that deserve further attention and close investigation are the three cultural categories, which are representation, transmission and transculturation. These elements seem to be the hallmark or the key to any successful translation. Gifted translators have to cling to these categories and to try to apply them wisely and accurately to succeed in their task. Above all, the translator is an important and essential component in the translation process. Knowing two cultures or two languages perfectly well does not really pave the way for translators to be good producers of source texts as well as excellent recipients of target texts. For translators to be good, they have to be faithful and ethical to the norms of translation and to the basic features of both target and source cultures.

References