CHAPTER 7

Hegemonic Discourse in Orientalists' Translations of Moroccan Culture

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From the 1980s onwards, cultural as well as postcolonial turns in translation studies have had a considerable influence on literary translation and have marked a turning point in the field. The theory of translation has expanded from normative to descriptive studies, from dealing with translation as a purely linguistic transfer to viewing it as a metonymic transfer which involves cultural perspectives. According to Lefevere and Bassnett,[1] the study of translation has moved from a formalist approach toward larger issues of context, history, and convention. Literary translation, as they explain, has to be established in a certain context; this contextualization brings culture, politics, ideology, and power into view. In fact, the cultural model in translation studies has demonstrated that translation is not merely a matter of a linguistic transfer or a substitution of a source text by another target text, but rather a more complex cultural transposition of the translated text. Catford has described literary translation as a complex negotiation between two cultures.[2] Subsequently, all translation theories developed within the cultural paradigm have emphasized both the textual and extra-textual dimensions of translation; some of these theories have even highlighted the priority of extra-textual effects on the translator's strategies and decision-making in the process of translation. This approach enables translation theorists to relate translation to the historical, social, and cultural systems within which it occurs.[3] Translation, traditionally considered a secondary activity, turns out to have important functions in both the source and target cultures; translators are seen as powerful agents in the process of translation. The roles of the translator in cultural mediation, including questions regarding intervention and impartiality, are more recognized than before. Most importantly, the cultural turn introduces concepts such as patronage and ideology as major factors that may interfere, not only with the production and distribution of literary texts, but also with their rewriting and interpretation via translation. The cultural approach opens,

then, new perspectives in understanding and analyzing literary translation by showing how:

> Complex manipulative textual processes take place: how a text is selected for translation, for example, what role the translator plays in the selection, what role an editor, publisher or patron plays, what criteria determine the strategies that will be employed by the translator, how a text might be received in the target system. For a translation never takes place in a vacuum, never in a void, and there are all kinds of textual and extra-textual constraints upon the translator.[4]

On another level, the postcolonial paradigm has widely shaped translation studies in the last decade and has given birth to a new trend in the field of translation: postcolonial translation studies. The postcolonial approach suggests that intercultural translations are to a great extent constrained by the manipulation of power relations between dominated and dominating cultures. Within this paradigm, the focus is more on the representations this discipline produces, the powers it serves, the cultural hierarchies it constructs, and the inequalities it consolidates. Accordingly, literary translation is seen as an important discursive means of maintaining and disseminating the imperial powers. In *Sitting Translations: Post-structuralism and the Colonial Context*, the prominent postcolonial critic Tisajwini Niranjana explains how asymmetry and inequality of relations between people, races, and languages have been widely maintained via Western literary translation and interpretation:

> The rethinking of translation becomes an important task in a context where it has been used since the European enlightment to underwrite practices of subjectification, especially for the colonized peoples. Such a rethinking – a task of great urgency for a postcolonial theory attempting to make sense of 'subjects' already living in 'translation,' imaged and re-imaged by colonial ways of seeing – seeks to reclaim the notion of translation by deconstructing it and re-inscribing its potential as a strategy of resistance.[5]

In 1978, Edward Said's ground-breaking work *Orientalism* promoted challenging views about the Western cultural encounter with the Orient, and Said powerfully redirected literary criticism and cultural studies.[6] Edward Said highlights the relationship between literary translation and representation of the Other: he explains that Western knowledge of the Orient relies primarily on the traveler's and Orientalist's textual construct of the native culture, and he argues that the hegemonic

discourses that feed such accounts are also reflected in the Orientalist's textual translations of local culture.

It is almost impossible to study literary translations without considering the culture of translation and its politics, since they ultimately inform and shape both the production and reception of literary translation. Moreover, translation is not only a process of intercultural exchange and understanding between distant cultures but also a process of manipulation and submission to the hegemonic power of images and images of power created and nurtured by the Western culture during the colonial era as the only authentic representation of the Other. Drawing on Talal Asad's metaphor of "cultural translation," we can begin to see how Orientalists' and travelers' cultural and textual translations of Morocco are inscribed in a system of homogenizing and domesticating Moroccan culture so as to fit the discursive parameters of the dominant power and its poetics.[7] The foreignizing strategy Paul Bowles applies in his translation of Mrabet's tales, by emphasizing their exotic nature, does not preserve the foreign characteristics of these stories, but rather domesticates them according to his romantic representation of Moroccan culture. Analysis of Paul Bowles' translation shows that the selection of material that he chose to translate into English from Moroccan culture is highly manipulated to respond to his Orientalist and ethnographic conception of Morocco and its culture. His translation of Mrabet's oral stories *The Lemon*[8] and *Love with a Few Hairs*[9] demonstrates a hegemonic depiction of Tangiers and its natives and reflects the same romanticized and exoticized images of the barbarously primitive and decadent Morocco which Bowles invests in his own fiction and travelogues.

The Interaction of "Self" and "Other" in Cross-cultural Translations

Translating from culture to culture means, first and foremost, bringing to the receptors of translated texts from the target culture new facts and ideas inherent in the source culture. Accordingly, the receptor's cultural knowledge of the Other is significantly enriched, and the ability to comprehend and understand its cultural difference increases considerably. On another level, Abdessalam Ben Abdel Ali in his book في الترجمة (*On Translation*) explains that translation not only guarantees survival and continuity to the translated text, but also assures the survival and the growth of both language and thought.[10] This may also explain why translation increases substantially during the most flourishing eras of thought and literature, something evident in both Western and Arab cultural histories. During the eighth century CE,

translations increased considerably during the rule of the Abbasid's Caliph of Baghdad, Al Mamoun, who built the famous Bayt al-Hikma or House of Wisdom where philosophers and scientists translated from Greek and Persian. A similar experience took place in Europe in the Renaissance Era; George Steiner explains the importance of translation in a time that was marked by significant political and social upheavals:

> At a time of explosive innovation … translation absorbed, shaped, and oriented the necessary raw material. It was … the matière premiere of the imagination. Moreover, it established a logic of relation between past and present, and between different tongues and traditions which were splitting apart under stress, nationalism, and religious conflict.[11]

Similarly, Anuradha Dingwaney's article "Translating 'Third World' Cultures"[12] highlights the importance of translation in cross-cultural exchanges and considers translation as the primary means "by which cultures travel": translation can open broader horizons for intercultural exchange and avoid us being confined "within the bounds of our own culture."[13] Anuradha recommends that translation enables alien cultures and languages to "interrogate" and allow the "Self" to be affected by the "Other" and thus "to be transformed and rendered more open to the claims of other languages and cultures."[14] Translation is then a fertile space where the "Self" culture encounters and interacts with the "Other" culture. Anuradha conceives of this reciprocal exchange as a necessary foundation for a successful translation between and across cultures.[15]

However, the cultural turn in translation studies has demonstrated that translation is a constraint-driven process in which different factors interfere at both the micro and macro levels. In addition to the difficulties encountered by translators in the linguistic transposition of a source text into a target text, because of the phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactical, pragmatic, and rhetorical differences that exist between languages, the cultural transposition of the source text can never be impartial or objective; rather, it is influenced by the cultural, ideological, and political affiliations of the translator and his/her subjectivity. What is more, it is believed that cross-cultural translation is never innocent and can, indeed, be manipulated to reinforce hegemonic discourses about cultures, especially in colonial and postcolonial conditions.

Viewed in this way, literary translation yields enormous power in constructing representations of foreign cultures. The intercultural encounter taking place through cross cultural translations between the West and its former colonies is con-

ceived as the prime domain whereby the tensions of differing groups are manifested through the different modes of representation and different discourses. It shows how culturally defined discourses affect translation and how hegemonic discourses, especially in their discursive forms, become violent means of demarcating the Self from the Other. Accordingly, cross-cultural translation must be studied in connection with the target system and its poetics, with the cultural, ideological, and political discourses that feed it and have an important impact on the selection of the texts to be translated. Such a study may raise legitimate questions like: why are certain texts selected for translation at a given time and others ignored? Why was *The Thousand and One Nights* translated by Orientalists such as Antoine Galland, Richard Burton, and Edward Lane? Why did Fitzgerald choose to translate *Rubaiyat of Omar al-Khayyam* instead of any other Persian poetry? Why does Paul Bowles translate the oral tales of marginalized Moroccan story tellers? Edwin Gentzler tries to provide an answer to these inquiries as he points out:

> Subjects of a given culture communicate in translated messages primarily determined by local culture constraints. Inescapable infidelity is presumed as a condition of the process; translators do not work in ideal abstract situations or desire to be innocent, but have vested literary and cultural interests of their own, and want their work to be accepted within another culture. Thus they manipulate the source text to inform as well as to conform to existing cultural constraints.[16]

Edwin Gentzler mentions an inherent characteristic in literary translations, that the translated texts are strongly embedded in the cultural environment of the target culture and that the translator necessarily abides by prevailing aesthetics and ideologies, attempting to domesticate his translations to the needs of the receiving environment. Instead of domesticating foreign texts, some translators choose a foreignizing strategy in their translation; their alibi is preserving the foreign characteristics of the text, whether they are linguistic or cultural. The eighteenth-century German translator and philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher, as André Lefevere explains in *Translation, History, Culture*, defends this strategy of foreignization because, according to him, if the translator "Moves the reader towards him … his translation should therefore sound 'foreign' enough to its reader for that the reader to discern the workings of the original language … the culture of which the original was a part."[17] However, the issue of domestication and foreignization in literary translations gains further prominence in Laurence Venuti's book *The Invisibility of the Translator: a History of Translation*.[18] According to Venuti, the translator's invisibility is the

result of a domesticating strategy which the Anglo-American translators apply in order to "[a]chieve the linguistic and cultural adaptation of the source text in the target language, and hence produce a fluent and transparent text which will be easily read by the target public."[19] This domesticating strategy then dissolves the foreign characteristics of the translated text and makes it read coherently as if it were not really a translation. Venuti adds that any foreign text, before it crosses the cultural frontiers of the greeting system, has to submit to a "domestication revision"; this domestication also means that the selection of any source text has to conform to the domestic cultural values and aesthetics of the target culture, which usually entails a process of exclusion or admission of certain texts. Venuti argues that the domestication of literary translations is "[s]ymptomatic of a complacency in British and American relations with cultural others," a complacency which he describes as "imperialistic abroad and xenophobic at home."[20] Most importantly, Venuti believes that such translations are powerful enough to "[re]constitute and cheapen foreign texts, to trivialize and exclude foreign cultures, and thus potentially to figure in racial discrimination and ethnic violence, international political confrontation, terrorism, and war."[21]

Venuti's negative attitude towards Anglo-American tendencies in domesticating translations, and his preference for a foreignizing strategy instead, are contradicted, however, when we read him in a more recent publication, *Translation As Cultural Politics*, where he explains his stand clearly:

> What I am advocating is not an indiscriminate valorisation of every foreign culture or a metaphysical concept of foreignness as an essential value; indeed, the foreign text is privileged in a foreignizing translation only insofar as it enables a disruption of target-language cultural values, so that its values is always strategic, depending on the cultural formation into which it is translated.[22]

Venuti's focus is on the target culture, therefore, and his foreignized translation does not aim at preserving the foreign text as such, but his ultimate objective is to unsettle and subvert dominant values and patterns in the target context. Moreover, Venuti's foreignizing ethics in translating the Other can be achieved only in "domestic terms" and "domestic discourses and styles"; and "the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text can only be signaled through domestic difference into the values and institutions at home."[23]

Actually, the idea of affecting cultural change by means of translating foreign texts is also highlighted in Edwin Gentzler's article, "Translation, Counter-Culture,

and the Fifties in the USA."[24] Gentzler explains that Bly's creative modern poetry, which he nourishes with "The trauma of the unconscious" and "The daring, the sensuousness, and savagery characteristics" of his images, is inspired by his translation of foreign poetry, and his innovative style in poetry enables him to disrupt the North-American verse which he finds "Rational and sterile."[25] Most importantly, Gentzler inscribes "The counter-cultural movement in the Sixties" led by Bly in the new tradition some American poets, writers, and translators adopted widely in translating foreign cultures and wonders:

> Why does Langston Hughes translate Lorca before most white Americans have heard of him? Why is Bly reading Spanish poets in the library at Oslo? What is Merwin doing in the mountains of Spain and Portugal, translating oral tales told by medieval *juglares* and passed on in ballad/oral form for centuries?[26]

Gentzler notices that the period of the sixties in the United States was marked by the American translators' interest in foreign oral cultures, fables, ballads, and tales which are "[t]empered by a folk tradition."[27] As a matter of fact, it is not a mere coincidence that Paul Bowles' translation of Moroccan oral stories happened in the same period to which Gentzler refers in this article, as well as in his book *Contemporary Translation Studies*, in which he argues that the new American tradition of translating foreign cultures is vividly encouraged by publishers in the United States, who prefer to publish "[a] Mayan/Guatemalan or North African/Berber text." Because, as Gentzler explains, " 'It is open to interference' and contains 'foreignizing' elements."[28]

Cross-cultural Translations in Colonial/postcolonial Conditions

Edward Fitzerald, The English poet and translator of *Rubaiyat Al Khayam*, wrote to his friend E.B. Cowell in 1857: "It is an amusement to me to take what liberties I like with these Persians, who, as I think are not poets enough to frighten one from such excursions, and who really do want a little art to shape them."[29] André Lefevere relates this boastful declaration of Fitzerald to the Western treatment of texts originating from cultures which they conceive of as peripheral. Susan Bassnett, for her part, considers Fitzgerald's statement within the "master-servant relationship" existing between the source text and the translator; this hierarchical relationship, she argues, enables the translator to take total liberty in rewriting and shaping the translated text,

simply because it originates from an "inferior" culture.[30] In fact, the asymmetry in power relations in the translational encounter between imperial cultures and the colonies' culture constitutes the core of the postcolonial approach to translation studies. Because, as Bassnnet and Trivedi assert in *Postcolonial Translation: Theory and Practice*, the postcolonial approach to literary translation perceives Western translation as a "one-way process" which targets the translation of native texts for "European consumption, rather than as a part of a reciprocal process of exchange."[31] Most importantly, Bassnett and Trivedi recognize that colonialism and translation go hand in hand and that they are "[t]he central act of European colonization and imperialism in America."[32] As a matter of fact, the emergence of a postcolonial theory in translation is quite justified:

> In the postcolonial period, when the empire writes back it is not surprising to find radical concepts of translation emerging from India, from Latin America, from Canada, from former colonies around the world that challenge established European norms about translation.[33]

The reconsideration of literary translation in colonial and postcolonial conditions is, in fact, unavoidable since these translations constitute an interesting component of the Western literary canon that is highly exploited to produce and maintain the hegemonic colonial discourses of the West vis-à-vis the natives. Moreover, translation, as demonstrated by postcolonial translation studies, is manipulated to reinforce colonial rule. In this respect, Edward Said argues that translation serves colonizing policies in two ways: On the one hand, it makes strategic knowledge about the colonies and their inhabitants available to officers and militaries, and on the other hand, the West relies on translation to legitimate its power and enhance the hegemonic cultural representation of the natives as a means to contain them and subjugate them under colonial rule.[34] Said argues that translation has widely misinterpreted and misrepresented Oriental cultures, especially Islamic culture, and has caused what he calls "cultural antipathy." Accordingly, Said inscribes Orientalists' literary translation in the Western project of domesticating the Orient to "[t]hereby turn it into province of European learning."[35] Translation, according to Edward Said, helps Western Orientalists to "gather in" and "rope off" the Orient.[36]

Talal Asad draws the same relationship between British ethnographers' cultural translation and their textual translations. Asad considers these translations through the unequal relations of power existing between "[t]he anthropologist, who typically belongs to a powerful culture, and the natives he or she writes about and

'translates,' who are typically illiterate or at least belonging to less powerful cultures than the anthropologist's."[37] Asad argues that the ethnographer in such conditions of power is "accorded authority to uncover the implicit meanings of subordinate societies" in the process of his cultural translation.[38] What is more, Asad believes that "[t]he representation/translation that the ethnographer as a 'cultural translator' produces of a particular culture is inevitably a textual construct."[39] He adds that this textual construct, usually presented as scientific text, gains privilege and may be retranslated in a third world language "and influence the mechanism of self-representation within that language/culture."[40] This intricate relationship between translation and ethnography and its power in constructing the image of the Other also underpins Niranjana's analysis of literary translation within the colonial project. Niranjana suggests that translation both shapes and takes shape "within the asymmetrical relations of power that operate under colonialism";[41] and argues that in the postcolonial context, translation has become a significant site for raising questions of representation, power, and historicity. Niranjana explains that the asymmetry and inequality in relations between people, races, and languages has been widely maintained not only in Western translation and interpretation but also in other disciplines such as history and anthropology: "The practice of subjection / subjectification implicit in the colonial enterprise operate not merely through the coercive machinery of the imperial state but also through the discourses of philosophy, history, anthropology, philology, linguistics, and literary interpretation."[42]

To admit that the politics of stressing the hegemonic image about the Arabs in the Orientalists' translations belong to the past is, indeed, a big illusion because, as Edward Said points out in *Culture and Imperialism*,

> Appeals to the past are among the commonest of strategies in interpretations of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty about whether the past is really past, over and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms, perhaps.[43]

Translation is a process of manipulation and submission to the hegemonic power of images created and nurtured by the target culture as the authentic representation of the Other. Unfortunately, what Orientalists started in the nineteenth century CE and continued through the twentieth century CE and even now in the twenty-first; Paul Bowles' translation of Moroccan oral tales provides strong evidence for this reality.

Inhabiting the Exotic in Paul Bowles' Translations of Moroccan Culture

Tangiers played a major role in Paul Bowles' actual birth as a writer. However, he was by no means the first traveler to Tangiers, and no doubt the experiences of the writers and artists of different nationalities who visited Morocco affected him. Contextualizing the experiences of Bowles alongside those of other travelers suggests that he did not arrive innocently upon the scene. Rather, he was attracted by the mysticism and exoticism in the portrayals of the city by other foreign travelers, ethnographers, writers, and artists. Actually, what demarcates Tangiers from the rest of the Moroccan cities is its history as an international and cosmopolitan city, colonized by several nations at once. It was known to fascinate Western visitors. Speaking about what attracted the majority of Westerners to this beautiful city, Mohammed Laamiri says:

> Tangier is the place where dreams of exotic pleasures are realized and fulfilled … Tangier is a place for the gratification of the senses, ranging from wandering in tortuous narrow streets, to drinking mint-tea and smoking illegal substances in old cafes, to visiting exotic spaces and lingering along its beach.[44]

Laamiri argues that Tangiers' image has been widely affected by the generations of tourists, especially artists of various media, who have "[c]ulturally transformed the city into an exotic space." According to him, "Tangier made Paul Bowles, but Paul Bowles contributed to the making of international cultural fame of the city."[45] Laamiri points out that what is interesting about Paul Bowles' choice of spaces in his narratives is their distinctive, exotic attraction.[46] Likewise, Allen Hibbard asserts in *Paul Bowles, Magic & Morocco* that Tangiers for Bowles was a place of novelty, surprise, and magic, and that he was somehow "under the spell of Tangier."[47] Hence, Bowles' curiosity was triggered by the charm of this Moroccan city and its inhabitants; Allen explains that Bowles was like an anthropologist who enjoyed watching the behavior of the Moroccan natives because he considered them like "[a]ctors performing a theatrical play; Each Moroccan gave the impression of playing a part in a huge drama."[48] Moreover, Bowles' awareness of the exotic and his desire to inhabit it are clearly expressed in his autobiography *Without Stopping*: "My curiosity about alien cultures was avid and obsessive. I had a placid belief that it was good for me to live in the midst of people whose motives I did not understand."[49] Bowles' statement echoes what his compatriot, Mark Twain, had written on his first visit to Morocco. Sixty years before Bowles' first visit, Mark Twain wrote this: "Tangier is the spot

we have been longing for all the time … we wanted something thoroughly and uncompromisingly foreign … and lo! In Tangier we have found it."[50]

Talking to Daniel Halpern about his interest in Tangiers, Bowles says, "I'm merely trying to call people's attention to something they don't seem to be sufficiently aware of"[51] and to make them question their basic assumptions. The aim is to "[a]ffect the reader's dislocation," as Bowles states. The dislocation of the reader is realized, then, by the tropes of kif, magic, spells, and trance dances which are recurrent elements in Paul Bowles' short stories and novels. All of these defamiliarizing tools are, in fact, what enable the romantic writer to free his mind from the interference of reason and to journey far away into the magic of Tangiers. As a matter of fact, it is almost impossible to consider Bowles' artistic experience in Tangiers without invoking his Orientalism. Indeed, Bowles' attempt to "disclose" the secrets of Tangiers boosted his literary talents and inspired most of his abundant literary productions during his stay in that city. *The Delicate Prey, A Distant Episode*, and his first novel, *The Sheltering Sky*, which hit the bestseller list, are all organized around the experience of living in Tangiers. Bowles' narratives take readers to places and experiences beyond the ordinary. He presents Tangiers as "an Arabian poem." It is, indeed, an "Orientalist fantastic dream." Bowles' romantic and orientalist attitude towards Tangiers is further consolidated by his desire to retain the primitive natural beauty of Moroccan cities and keep them undamaged by Western modernization.

Bowles, in his preface to his novel *Spider House*, implicitly objects to the government interest in the modernization of Fez. He fears that the Moroccan cultural forms he admires will be eradicated by the nationalists' desire to be European and modern.

> I wanted to write a novel using as backdrop the traditional daily life of Fez, because it was a medieval city functioning in the twentieth century. If I had started it only a year sooner, it would have been an entirely different book. I intended to describe Fez as it existed at the moment of writing about it … I soon saw that I was going to have to write, not about the traditional pattern of life in Fez, but about its dissolution.[52]

Bowles' obsession with the traditional and primitive features of Moroccan cities is no doubt a romantic obsession with everything that is raw and not transformed by modernity. This may lead one to think that if Bowles translates the oral stories from recordings of oral performances in Moroccan dialect and not from written sources, it is because he believes that the illiteracy of the storytellers with whom he collaborated protects the primitive and exotic ambiance of the oral stories and keeps them as if they had been handed down from past memories of popular culture in Morocco.

Bowles collaborated with a number of illiterate Moroccan storytellers and writers such as Larbi Layachi, Mohamed Mrabet, and Mohamed Choukri. The relationship Bowles had with these Moroccans was not only based on friendship and cooperation; these cultural contacts were on some level also sexually charged and connected to their collective enjoyment of kif and hashish. Layachi, Mrabet, and Choukri were raised in desperate poverty and deprivation and survived the drudgery of miserable jobs before they began to earn their living as writers. All of their narratives relate to their experiences of surviving at the periphery of Tangiers' economic and intellectual life. They all speak from the margins of Moroccan society, sites of interest for Bowles. According to the works of these authors, kif, magic, and trances are alienating and powerful agents that produce lonely and criminal subjects. The presence of kif reinforces altered states of consciousness, a trip outside time and space to free their minds from the interference of reason; kif is used as a means to move outside the ties of the real world. Abdeslam, one of Mrabet's protagonists in *The Lemon*, is depicted under the effect of kif:

> The kif was making him feel very heavy, and he heard a roar like the sea in the back of his head. He wanted to stretch out on his bed … As he lay there looking upwards with his hands folded over his chest like a dead man, he lost track of time as it went by, and he forgot where he was.[53]

Why does Bowles direct his interest to translating the oral stories of an unknown Moroccan story teller such as Mohamed Mrabet? Of course, no one can deny that this collaboration might satisfy the egocentrism of Bowles vis-à-vis the marginalized storyteller and the economic power he has over him, but in reality this is not the only thing that attracts Bowles' attention to the oral narratives. Rather, it is the image they reflect about Moroccan culture and its people. These oral stories depict Moroccan society as a place of magic, sorcery, prostitution, hashish, sexual deviation, and violence. Most of Mrabet's protagonists are attracted to kif-smoking, drinking, and sex. They meet women, residents of brothels, and European men with whom they live as lovers. In many of the stories, prostitutes attempt to poison the protagonists, who use violence to take revenge. In *The Lemon*, Abdeslam meets a dockworker named Bachir who takes Abdeslam to his house. Later, however, Bachir becomes an adversary when, in a drunken frenzy, Bachir tries to force Abdeslam into his bed. Abdeslam tries to get away, and he slashes Bachir's face open with razors embedded in a lemon in his hand.[54] Perhaps not coincidentally, Mohamed Mrabet's voice matches that of Bowles in his own fiction: Mrabet confirms the strange, violent, and erotic

aspects of Paul Bowles' Tangiers, and seems to justify Bowles' own characters' preoccupation with kif-smoking, sexuality, indolence, witchcraft, and spells.

Paul Bowles' literary collaboration with Moroccan storytellers was greeted with strong criticism among Moroccan intellectuals. His translation of Laarbi Layachi's autobiography *A Life Full of Holes* was strongly criticized by Moroccan intellectuals. Abdellah Laaroui writes that "Bowles may have thought he had grasped Moroccan life at its most authentic, but what has he grasped other than his own fantasies?"[55] Tahar Ben Jelloun published an attack on Bowles'collaboration with Mrabet in the French daily *Le Monde* and described it as a violation: Ben Jelloun suggests that the translations are Bowles' "own writing in disguise," and that everything is wrong in this enterprise.[56] In this regard, Brian T. Edwards points out:

> Bowles' interest in and devoted representation of folk culture, Berber musical forms, and the underbelly of Moroccan society troubled many Moroccan intellectuals. The very themes that drew many American readers to Bowles's work – especially magic, danger, and the primitive – were the themes that frustrated Moroccans, who apparently saw in Bowles's attention a devaluing of the Moroccan nationalist project.[57]

Edwards confirms the idea that these stories are aimed at the Anglo-American audience, yet at the same time the stories suggest that Moroccan storytellers are also aware of the audience, whether Bowles himself or the wider audience in the United States, and that this awareness has shaped their stories significantly. However, we cannot be certain about stories delivered orally to the translator: we have lost the original story-telling situation and cannot reconstruct it from the traces in the text. Actually, much suspicion has been triggered by the literary collaboration of Mrabet and Bowles not only because of Mrabet's illiteracy, which affects communication between him and Bowles, but also because of the power relations between them. The illiteracy of Mrabet gives Bowles more power in interpreting, reconstructing, and rewriting his stories, and thus gives him more control over the translated texts. Moreover, Bowles' ambivalent attitude towards his role as a translator and editor of the stories gives rise to yet more doubt about their authorial authenticity: in *Love with a Few Hairs*, Mrabet's first collaboration with Bowles is listed as being translated and edited by Paul Bowles. Their second novel, *The Lemon*, is described as having been translated from the Moroccan dialect Arabic and edited by Paul Bowles in collaboration with Mohammed Mrabet. Similarly, the title pages in all these books ignore Bowles' efforts to tape and then transcribe oral tales into written language.[58]

Issues of authority and communication in Bowles' literary collaboration with Mrabet are indeed controversial. Bowles translates Mrabet's stories from tapes recorded in Moroccan dialectal Arabic, Riffian, and Spanish which Mrabebt usually used while recounting his stories; this means that Bowles would have had to do much work to produce the final translated written version of Mrabet's oral stories. Bowles' translation then evolves through a process of recording, transcribing, and translating. In this case, the act of transferring the oral text to a written one is strongly mediated by the translator, and Mrabet's stories had certainly undergone many modifications, omissions, and additions before Bowles could edit them.[59] This aspect shows the authority Bowles had over Mrabet's stories and enhances the inequalities in the power relations between an American translator and a Moroccan storyteller. The incommunicability of the literary collaboration of Mrabet and Bowles is further reinforced by the untranslatability of certain Moroccan Arabic words which Bowles retains in their original form, including "mahal," "jotia," "Mejdoub," "Fqih," "haik," "mandoubia," "Oukil eddoula," "taifor," "fasoukh," "djaoui," and "tsouk." The same terms also figure in Bowles' own stories. This suggests either that their cultural meaning cannot be rendered adequately in English or that Bowles, by allowing the Moroccan colloquial word to figure in the standardized American text, wants to challenge the mainstream language by introducing foreign vocabulary. In sum, Bowles' translation of Mrabet's stories does not guarantee the communicability of their literary collaboration, on the one hand because it operates within unequal cultural power relations and on the other hand because the intercultural exchange between Bowles and Mrabet is obstructed by their disparate linguistic backgrounds.

Love With a Few Hairs / The Lemon: A Site for Hegemonic Representations of Moroccan Natives

Love with a Few Hairs is the first product of Bowles' collaboration with Mrabet, published in 1967. The protagonist of this short novel, a young Moroccan named Mohammed, develops an interest in a young woman named Amina with whom he falls in love at first sight. Unfortunately, after he behaves unacceptably towards Amina at the cinema, she rebukes him and ceases to trust him. Mohamed then goes to a witch in Bni Makada for a magic potion that will make Amina reciprocate his interest and affection. For the potion, the witch says, "You will have to bring me a piece of something she's worn or a few of her hairs. One or the other."[60] When Mo-

hammed returns with a few of Amina's hairs, the witch pulls out a cloth sack and begins to search through it for things: packets of herbs and envelopes full of fingernails, teeth, and bits of dried skin. She shakes these things out onto a sheet of paper, along with Amina's hair. Mohamed, following the instructions of the witch, pours the powder in front of the door of Amina's house. The effect of the spell soon manifests itself, and Amina succumbs to Mohammed's advances; eventually they marry. Unfortunately, this plotted happiness soon transforms into an unpleasant drama. Amina's mother seeks help from a witch named Lalla Mariam who, to undo the spell, prepares a powder that Amina's mother sprinkles on the coals of the brazier in Mohammed and Amina's home. The spells are undone, and Mohammed separates from Amina. In revenge, Amina calls upon her women friends to aid her in a plot to poison Mohamed. On discovering Amina's plan, Mohammed enters a state of despair, but with the help of David, the English Nazarene with whom Mohammed lives and has a homosexual relationship, he decides to give up his love for Amina completely.

The Lemon is the story of a twelve-year-old Moroccan boy, Abdeslam, who wanders through his village after his father throws him out of the house. First, Abdeslam is invited by a welcoming Nazarene family, but after few days of living with them, he decides to lead his own life and goes to Tangiers. There he meets a drunkard longshoreman, Bachir. Still an innocent child, Abdesalam is not mindful of Bachir's homosexual advances. It is Aicha, the prostitute Bachir often brings home, who warns him of Bachir's intentions. Upon listening to the warnings of several women, Abdesalam becomes aware of Bachir's dangerous and aggressive tendencies; Abdesalam then leaves Bachir and gets a job in Si Moukhtar's café. When Bachir persistently pursues Abdesalam, the young boy takes a terrible revenge upon him. With a razor fixed in a lemon, he slashes the face of Bachir, who finally collapses under this determined attack.

The coexistence of Moroccans and Europeans in Tangiers is one inherent feature of this postcolonial city. However, the hierarchical organization of social relations between "Nazarenes" and the Moroccans in Mrabet's stories is highly informed by an hegemonic dichotomy: while the European citizens are associated with wealth, education, and rationality, Moroccan natives are on the contrary depicted as illiterate, irrational, poor, dirty, and dependent on the Europeans to earn their living. For some Moroccans, the Europeans are held up as exemplary models to follow, as in the example of *Love With a Few Hairs*, where Mohammed, the protagonist, works in the bar of an English settler, and his father ironically advises him: "You should be like the Englishman … He doesn't go out in the street drunk."[61] Mohammed, in his

state of despair, reflects this same attitude when he claims that without his European companion, David, he would have been lost. "He would say to himself, I'm lucky to have a friend who understands the world. He pulled me back when I was at the edge."[62]

The translated stories of Mrabet are exotic wares created for export and cultural artifacts for Bowles to exploit. The detailed descriptions of Moroccan cultural phenomena, the exaggerated sensuality of Moroccan figures, and the religious fanaticism of the characters are dominant aspects of the novels. In *The Lemon*, Bowles reports in detail a scene with the smell of incense, the sound of frenetic drumming, and the sight of a woman dancing for a crowd: an atmosphere of exotic behavior for Bowles' intended audience:

> The man had pulled off his Jellaba and shirt and was jumping up and down, naked to the waist. The other Aissaoua were busy bringing in armloads of cactus and thorn bush, pilling them in the centre of the courtyard. Soon there was a great mound. The man rushed over to the plants and began to trample them down, and then to dance on top of them. Then he lay down and rolled back and forth. In the end most of the needles were broken off in his flesh. Then he stood up, and they brought him fresh cactus to chew on. When his mouth was full of blood he began to growl and bellow like a camel, and froth ran down his chin. The leader stood up with a cudgel in his hand; he waved it at the man as if he were a camel, crying out the words a camel driver uses when he wants to keep a camel from walking into a crowd of people.[63]

A similarly exotic scene is depicted in Love With a Few Hairs during a ceremony for Driss, Mohammed and Amina's newborn baby. Mohammed is shown as an exorcist or a vampire who enjoys drinking animals' blood:

> The fqih seized one of the rams by its horns and Mohammed took hold of its body. Bismillah! Allah o akbar ala Driss! The fqih cried. He ran the knife across its neck, and the animal fell. Mohammed had set a glass nearby. Quickly he put it besides the sheep's neck and filled it with the blood that was coming out. While the ram was still living he drank it.[64]

Moreover, Paul Bowles' narratives show the beliefs of his characters in the supernatural, magic, and sorcery. In these stories, magic is used to interpret all of the behavior of Moroccan characters. It not only influences the course of events but also shapes

their lives and destinies. To win Mina's love, Mohammed in *Love With a Few Hairs* seeks the help of a witch in Beni Makada whom his friend Mustapha introduces to him, an old woman wrapped in rags who prepares a love potion:

> She pulled out a cloth sack and began to search through it for things: packets of herbs and envelopes full of fingernails and teeth and bites of dried skin. She shook things out onto a sheet of paper, along with Mina's hair. Then over it all she poured a powder that looked like dirt. She folded everything inside the paper and put it into a tin. A long string of words kept coming out of her mouth. She threw benzoin onto the hot coals of the brazier and she put the tin in the center of the fire, stirring it for a long time until it all had become a black powder.[65]

Furthermore, both of the translated novels are overcharged with the sensuality of Mrabet's characters, including erotic heterosexual and homosexual scenes. In *Lemon*, Mohammed becomes a constant companion to Mr. David: "Mohammed had decided that during the next few days he would spend all his time with Mr. David, eating with him, drinking and sleeping with him, and going with him wherever he wanted him to go."[66] Whether or not Mrabet intended to provide a sexually-charged image of Morocco by portraying the sexual lives of his Moroccan characters remains debatable. However, Bowles' interest in translating Mohamed Mrabet's stories seems to be based primarily on an Orientalist perception of Moroccan culture and people.

Conclusion

Bowles' focus on Moroccan oral culture in these works reflects his essentialism towards Moroccan culture. The negative charge behind it is that it assumes a fixed and ahistorical essence of identity for the other. Such a fixed and ahistorical essence or identity of the other is pervasive in ethnographic writing. Even if Bowles has mastered Moroccan traditions, he is still a carrier of English language and American authority which is "[i]nscribed in the institutionalized forces of industrial capitalist society, which are constantly tending to push the meanings of various Third World societies in a single direction."[67] Bowles performs the role of mediator between the oral and the written, Arabic and English, but he does not contextualize the meaning of Mrabet's stories nor the alien culture in their Postcolonial environment. Instead, the heterogeneous aspect of Moroccan identities is jeopardized and homogenized

by Paul Bowles' essentialism. The literary collaboration that Bowles engaged in by translating a Moroccan postcolonial storyteller's stories makes his work a rich source for a discussion of cross-cultural translation and asymmetry of power.

Notes

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4 Susan Petrilli, *Translation, Translation* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003), 433.

5 Tisajwini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structualism, and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 4.

6 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

7 Talal Asad, "The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology," in *Critical Readings in Translation Studies*, ed. Mona Baker (London & New York: Routledge, 2010).

8 Mohamed Mrabet, *The Lemon*, trans. Paul Bowles (Fez: Moroccan Cultural Studies, 2006).

9 Mohamed Mrabet, *Love with a Few Hairs*, trans. Paul Bowles (Fez: Moroccan Cultural Studies, 2004).

10 Abdessalam Ben Abdel Ali, في الترجمة (Casablanca: Toubkal, 2006), 32.

11 Bassnett, 1980, 58.

12 Anuradha Dingwaney, "Translating 'Third World Cultures.'" *Between Languages and Cultures: Translation and Cross-Cultural Texts*. Eds. Dingwany Anuradha & Carol Maier. (Pittsburg: Pittsburg Press, 1995).

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14 Ibid.

15 Ibid, 6–7.

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26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., 132.
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29 Lefèvre, 1992, 3.
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31 Susan Bassnett & Harish Trivedi, eds, *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 1999), 5.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., 3.
34 Said, 1978, 2.
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36 Ibid., 78.
37 Asad, 27.
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52 Preface, 1.
53 Bowles, 95.
54 Ibid., 179–181.
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63 Mrabet, 2006, 57.
64 Mrabet, 2004, 65.
65 Ibid., 9.
66 Ibid., 36.
67 Asad, 1986, 163.