

## Investigating Arabic Satire with Special Reference to Translating Satirical Expressions in the Glorious Quran

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### Abstract

The present study aims at exploring the interesting genre of satire in general with special emphasis on Arabic satire which is the core subject of this research. This aim would be achieved through studying the unique language of satire and its special vocabulary, types and distinctive characteristics. The second part of the study discusses the translation of the Glorious Quran into English by analyzing excerpts from three different translations so as to be able to present an assessment of the quality of the TL version, and find out how successful, faithful and competent were the translations in reproducing expressions of satire in English. In doing so the study came to the conclusion that the main difficulty lies in grasping the SL intended meaning (both denotative and connotative). Moreover, it was found the literal translation was the favorable approach in rendering Quranic satirical expressions usually accompanied with paraphrasing, extension and commentary.

### 1. Preliminaries

In exploring the realm of Arabic literature, one would find great pleasure in feeling and tasting the beauty and aesthetic features of its different arts and genres. One of these genres is satire, (hija' in Arabic), which occupies a remarkable place in the Arabic rhetoric. The unique language, especially its vocabulary, makes it easily distinguished among other text types.

Multifarious, versatile, magical, violent, challenging, abusive, hostile, attacking, corrective, purging, curing, moral, educational, reformative and memorable, all these features, and many others, in one way or another, describe or are related to the interesting genre of satire. Indeed, satire is such a marvelous literary art that it blends wit, irony, exaggeration, understatement and other techniques as its weapons to attack its targets. When it attacks, the target or victim might be cursed, condemned, ridiculed, disgraced, insulted, despised, reprimanded, abused, criticized, etc.

Being multifarious, satire can be labeled under such synonymous terms as: invective, imprecation, vituperation, lampoon, libel, slander, innuendo, etc. Thus, it is considered as a versatile and fascinating form of human expression. It is described by one scholar as "not the greatest type of literature but is one of the most original, challenging and memorable forms" (Highet, 1962:3).

Translating expressions and texts of satire into English is problematic and implies a certain degree of difficulty in the lexical, cultural, aesthetic and pragmatic aspects, and this may result in some loss of meaning and pragmatic effect in the target

language (TL) version. Certain expressions of satire do not have proper or acceptable equivalents in the TL, due to cultural gaps, and these are the hardest to render into English. In addition, each satirical expression or text has its own context of situation that the translator should know so as to maintain fidelity in his TL version. Consequently, the translator might be obliged, on certain occasions, to resort to other techniques like paraphrasing and footnoting.

Although several books on English satire and few others on Arabic *hija'* are available, this study, to the best of the researchers knowledge, is the first that simultaneously investigates English satire and Arabic *hija'* with a perspective of studying the possibilities of translating *hija'* into English satire.

## 2. The Concept of Satire

According to The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2009), satire is defined as (a) A literary work in which human vice or folly is attacked through irony, derision, or wit; (b) The branch of literature constituting such works. In the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* Elliot (2004) defines satire as

a rhetorical strategy in which human or individual vices, follies, abuses, or shortcomings are held up to censure by means of ridicule, derision, burlesque, irony, or other methods, ideally with an intent to bring about improvement.

It can be noticed that the two definitions above share the aspect of 'irony', 'ridicule' and 'derision' which constitute the backbone of satire. Moreover, the moral and reformative function of satire grants this genre a higher prestige and credit than being a mere invective or vituperation. Fowler and Paul (1973:167) state that "satire's attempt to juxtapose the actual with the ideal lifts it above mere invective". The Art and Popular Culture Encyclopedia (2009) comments on satire in this paragraph:

Satire usually has a definite target, which may be a person or group of people, an idea or attitude, an institution or a social practice. It is found in many artistic forms of expression, including literature, plays, commentary, and media such as song lyrics. Often the target is examined by being held up for ridicule, typically in the hope of shaming it into reform. A very common, almost defining feature of satire is a strong vein of irony or sarcasm. Also, parody, burlesque, exaggeration, juxtaposition, comparison, analogy, and double entendre are devices frequently used in satirical speech and writing – but it is strictly a misuse of the word to describe as "satire" works without an ironic (or sarcastic) undercurrent of mock-approval, and

an element at least of anger. Satirical writing or drama often professes to approve values that are the diametric opposite of what the satirist actually wishes to promote.

The best definitions of satire should be formulated from a combination of its corrective intent and its literary method of execution. Thrall et al (1960: 436) point out that

"A literary manner which blends a critical attitude with humor and wit to the end that human institutions or humanity may be improved. The true satirist is conscious of the frailty of institutions of man's devising and attempts through laughter not so much to tear them down as to inspire a remodeling".

### 3. Types of Satire

It is worth mentioning that many Arab literary critics and scholars agree upon the classification of *hija'* into four main types (1):

1. Personal satire
2. Social satire
3. Religious satire
4. Political satire

It is also appropriate to illuminate that one literary piece of satire may contain more than one type of satire within the same text.

#### 3.1. Personal Satire

The personal satire is thought to be the oldest type of Arabic *hija'*. 'Ajlan (1985:162) discusses this point and puts it this way:

ربما كان الهجاء الشخصي هو أصل الهجاء ومنه نما وتطور الى موضوعات أخرى... و الهجاء الشخصي هو الشعر الذي يدور حول شخص معين لانه ارتكب اثما او مثابة او اكتسب جريرة، أو اتى ما يغضب الشاعر.

Personal satire is perhaps the origin of satire, and it grew and evolved into other topics... Personal satire is the poetry which revolves around a particular person because he committed a sin or guilt or did something that makes the poet angry. (2)

In the pre-Islamic period, personal satire was abundant with insult, rebuke, curse and imprecations. The satirist might go further to curse the tribe of his foe, the fact that had often led to actual fights or conflicts between the rivals or their tribes. Ismail (1978:346) states that these kinds of satire "were inspired by an insult or ill-treatment and competitions in a society which was built on war and feuds".

Consider these lines by Jarir against al-Farazdaq:

أهْلٌ مُصَلِّ لِلصَّلَاةِ وَكَبِيرٌ      أَلَا قَبِيحَ اللَّهِ الْفَرَزْدَقَ كَلَّمَا  
فَلَا يَقْرَبَنَّ المَرُوتِينَ وَلَا الصَّفَا      وَلَا مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ الْحَرَامَ الْمُطَهَّرًا

(Cited in Hawi, 1970: 356)

In this type of satire, various shortcomings, vice and faults could be targeted in the foe by the satirist, such as wickedness, corruption, atrocity, greed, moral faults, blasphemy, cowardice, etc.

This satire is by al-Akhtal against Ka'b bin Ju'ayl (3)

سميت كعباً بشرَّ العظام  
و ان محلَّك من وائلٍ  
و كان ابوك يُسمى الجُعَلُ  
محلُّ القرادِ من استِ الجمَلِ

(Cited in Hussein, 1948:59)

### 3.2. Social Satire

This type of satire was first developed among the pagan Arabs out of the personal satire or accompanying it. It assumed first the shape of tribal satire. In this line Jarir satirizes al- Akhtal and his tribe Taghlib:

يا ابن الخبيثة ريحاً من عدلت بنا  
و ما لتغلب ان عدت مساعيتها  
ام من جعلت الى قيس اذا خطرنا  
نجم يضي ولا شمس ولا قمر  
و التغلبي لئيم حين تجهره  
و التغلبي لئيم حين يختبر

(Cited in Hussein, 1948:59)

However, in later phases of development social satire became of direct connection with the Arab social life. It was based on the need to correct and reform the society by means of satirizing the shortcomings and vices committed by people, parties or leaders in the society and also with the aim of preventing people from falling into similar vices and mistakes.

The social satire developed during the second century of Hijra and reached its zenith with the poetic satires of al-Mutanabbi and al-Ma'arri. Here, al-Mutanabbi satirizes both people and society:

أذم الى هذا الزمان أهيلَه  
وأكرمهم كلب وأبصرهم عم  
فأعلمهم فدم وأحزمهم وغد  
وأشهدهم فهد وأشجعهم قرد  
ومن نكد الدنيا على الحر أن  
يرى عدوا له ما من صداقته بد

(His Diwan 1985:198)

The following are some verses of social satire quoted from a poem composed by Abu Firas al-Hamdani, during his captivity in Constantinople

وقد صار هنا الناس الا أقلهم  
ورب كلام مر فوق مسامعي  
ذئابا على أجسادهن ثياب  
كما طن في لوح الهجير ذئاب  
تحكم في أسادهن كلاب  
الى الله أشكو أننا بمنازل

(Cited in Hussein, 1948:59)

This poem was translated by A.J. Arberry (1965). The following is the translation of the third line.

"To God I complain, that we are dwelling in abodes  
Where dogs lord it over their lions".

### 3.3. Political Satire

Hussein (1948:124) states that the most powerful types of political satire are those bitter and defamatory ones directed against tribes or kings who try to attack or

occupy the lands of neighborhood tribes. Here is an interesting example of this kind which contains personal and political satire by Tarfa bin Al-'Abd, the pagan poet who once was well received and treated by the king of Hira, 'Amr bin Hind; but for personal and political reasons, Tarfa decided later to satirize the king:

فليت لنا مكان الملك عمرو رغوثة حول قبتنا تخور

(Cited in Al-Tamimi, 1984:24)

Translation of this line was given by Nicholson (1930:107)

Would that we had instead of 'Amr

A milch-ewe bleating round out tent!

It is worth mentioning that political satire occupies a significant place in today's cultural life. Nowadays, it is considered one of the most common types of satire.

### 3.4. Religious Satire

Religious satire was actually born with the advent of Islam and developed during the bitter confrontation between Islam and paganism and reached its zenith during the Umayyad period when different religiously oriented parties revolted against one another. Ismail (1978:356) puts it this way "it was a long battle between the new faith and Arab paganism, and when Caliph Ali transferred the capital from Hijaz to Kufa in Iraq, political satire began to take place and many parties were formed.

The Glorious Quran contains several verses that are considered as typical forms of religious satire against the unbelievers. The following are two examples of religious satire by the prophet's and Islam's celebrated poet Hassan bin Thabit. Here, he satirizes the tribe of Hudhayl who asked the Prophet to permit them to commit fornication:

سألت هذيل رسول الله فاحشئةً      ظلت هذيل بما جاءت ولم تُصِبِ

(Cited in Diwan of Hassan, p.59)

Instances of satire in the Glorious Quran are not hard to find. Here satirical expressions aim at a host of targets: the unbelievers, the hypocrites, the unjust, the arrogant and so forth. The following are selected segments of satirical expressions in different verses of the Glorious Quran:

(وظننتم ظن السوء وكنتم قوما بورا) (الفتح، 12)

Ye conceived an evil thought

For you are a people

Doomed to perish

(Mushaf al-Madina An-Nabawiyah [MMN], (1) 1989:1394)

(عليهم دائرة السوء وغضب الله عليهم ولعنهم وأعد لهم جهنم وساءت مصيرا) (الفتح، 6)

On them is a round of evil: the Wrath of Allah

Is on them: He has cursed them and got Hell ready

For them: and evil is it for a destination.

(Ali, 1979:1392)

(هذا وان للطاغين لشر مآب. جهنم يصلونها فبئس المهاد) (ص، 55-56)

Yea, such! But for the wrong- doers  
Will be an evil place  
Of (final) return!  
Hell! –they will burn  
Therein- an evil bed (indeed, to lie on)!

(من لعنه الله و غضب عليه و جعل منهم القردة و الخنازير) (المائدة، 60)

Those who incurred the curse of Allah  
And his wrath, those of whom some  
He transformed into apes and swine.  
(MMN, 1989:305)

(ادخلوا أبواب جهنم خالدين فيها فبئس مثوى المتكبرين) (غافر، 76)

Enter ye the gates of Hell to dwell therein:  
And evil is (this) abode  
Of the arrogant!

(Ali: 1282)

(ولا تطع كل حلاف مهين. هـماز مشاء بنميم. مناع للخير معتد ائيم. عتل بعد ذلك زنيم) (القلم، 10-13)

Obeys not every mean swearer  
A slanderer, going about with calumnies  
(Habitually) hindering (all) good,  
Transgressing beyond bounds,  
Deep in sin.  
Violent (and cruel),  
With all that, of a doubtful birth.

(MMN, 1989:1974)

It is worth mentioning that the Bible, (The New Testament), also contains bitter religious satire in prose. (4)

#### 4. Characteristics of Satire

The essence of satire is aggression or criticism. A person is criticized because he is below some standard which the satirist desires that he should reach. Thus, the corrective purpose cannot be separated from the concept of satire.

There are several characteristics which distinguish satire from other literary genres. The following are the most significant ones mentioned by Harris (2004:5-8)

1) It is ironic and tends to be hyperbolic in form to force recognition of vice upon the guilty. It is the mask behind which the satirist can effectively attack the target. Examples of the use of irony can be seen in almost every satirical work. Consider the following line (Hawi, 1970:291):

زَعَمَ الفرزدقُ أنْ سَيَقْتُلُ مَرَبَعًا      أبشِرِ بطولِ سلامةٍ يا مَرَبَعُ

2) It uses wit to make the attack clever, or humor to make it funny. In one way or another, this technique provokes laughter or at least makes the reader smile thus, serves the satirist in his attack. 'Ajlan (1985:322) argues:

يمتاز الهجاء بصياغة أفكاره في أسلوب يبعث على الضحك وأن بين أساليبه قاسم مشترك من فن الإضحاك... ثم أن روح الفكاهة تدعو الأنسان لحفظ أبيات الهجاء وتساعد الشاعر الهجائي على إبراز ما يرمي إليه.

The satirist is characterized by forming his ideas in a way that causes laughter, and among his tactics is the common denominator of the art of making fun. Also the spirit of humor invites man to memorize the verses of satire and helps the satirist to highlight his target.

In the line below (in Hawi, P.206), Al-Akhtal satirizes the people of his foe Jarir:

قومٌ اذا استنبح الأضيافُ كلبهمُ      قالوا لأهمهم بولي على النارِ  
فتمسكُ البولُ بخلا أن تجودَ به      وما تبول لهم إلا بمقدارِ

3) Exaggeration is one of the most commonly used techniques in satire. The satirist brings his description of a wrong to its logical extreme, or at least exaggerates by overemphasis in order to make the unseeing see, and the seeing-but-complacent oppose and expunge corruption. In this respect, Al-Tamimi (1984:405) asserts:

تنتسح معاني الهجاء للمبالغة والمغالاة والإغراق ... فالهجاء من الفنون الأدبية التي تكون المبالغة في معانيها  
أمراً مقبولاً الى حد كبير شأنه في ذلك شأن المديح والغزل.

The meanings of satire expand to exaggeration, extravagance and hyperbole ..., for satire is among the literary arts where exaggeration in meaning is acceptable to a large extent just like panegyric and love poetry.

Moreover, Paulson (1971:305) opines that "exaggeration and hyperbole are two techniques upon which satire thrives." Al-'Askari considers Ibn Al- Rumi's satirical verse against a man called 'Isa an exaggeration:

يُقْتَرُّ عَيْسَى عَلَى نَفْسِهِ      وَلَيْسَ بَبَاقٍ وَلَا خَالِدٍ  
فَلَوْ يَسْتَطِيعُ لَتَقْتِيرَهُ      تَنْفَسَ مِنْ مَنْخَرٍ وَاحِدٍ

(Cited in Al-Tamimi,

1984:405)

4) Understatement is useful in cases where the evil is already so great that it can scarcely be exaggerated. The mention of the evil by understatement serves to call attention to its true degree. In Arabic, the use of diminutive names adds more ridiculing effect that serves to detract from the reputation or the importance of the person satirized. Al-Mutanabbi was fond of employing this technique in his satirical verse. He expresses, in the following line, his irritation with the jealous contemporary poets at Sayf Al-Dawla's court:

أَفِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ تَحْتَ ضَيْبِنِي شُوعِرٌ      ضَعِيفٌ يُقَاوِنِي قَصِيرٌ يُطَاوِلُ

(Cited in Al-Mamayiz,

1977:41)

5) The use of inclusions and quotations is also effective in expressing satire, especially from the Quran and famous proverbs. In this respect, Al-Tamimi (1984:274) tackles this technique in these words:

ان التضمين او الاقتباس من الايات القرآنية الكريمة والامثال السائرة يعد احد اساليب ادب الهجاء، بل قد نجده مستخدماً كذلك في المديح والغزل وغيرها... والهجاء يلود بالتضمين حين يريد تقوية معنى أو توضيحه وتقريبه للنفس.

Allusion (literally inclusion), quotation from Quranic verses and current proverbs are considered one of satirical means, which can be used in panegyric, love poetry and other genres... The satirist resorts to allusion when he wants to strengthen or clarify the intended meaning and makes it digestible.

An Arab poet satirizes his brothers for being ungrateful and treacherous by quoting an expression from the Quran:

رَبَّنَا اني اُسكنتُ نريتي بوادٍ غير ذي زرعٍ عند بيتك المحرّم (ابراهيم/37)  
 ألا ان اخواني الذين عهدتهم أفاعي رمال لا تُقَصِّرُ عن لسعي  
 ظننتُ بهم خيراً فلما رأيتهم نزلت بوادٍ منهم غير ذي زرع

#### 5. The Unique Vocabulary of Satire

Since the vocabulary of satire is the most significant distinctive feature of this genre that gives it its peculiarity and molds its identity amongst other literary compositions, it seems appropriate to give lists of the lexical items frequently employed in the language of satire.

In the following, five lists are given of different groups of the most common lexical items (names, verbs, adjectives, verbal nouns and expressions) that constitute the unique vocabulary used in 'hija', with their nearest equivalents in English.

#### A. Adjectives Used to Describe Satirized Persons:

English	Arabic
cursed, damned	ملعون
vicious, wicked, spiteful	خبث
ominous, sinister	مشؤوم
debased, despised, base	خاسئ
mean, vile, low, wretched, vulgar	وضيع، حقير
ignoble, base-born, bastard	زني
nasty, cursed	ذميم
avid, covetous, greedy	طماع، جشع
dull, stupid, blunt	بليد
contemptible, despicable, base	خسيس، تافه
dummy, idiot, dumb	غبي، ذا الغباوة
coward, chicken	جبان، رعديد
liar, untruthful	كاذب
cheater, deceitful, imposter	مخادع
sinful, sinner, wrongdoer	أثيم، آثم
criminal, culprit, evildoer	مجرم

miser, avaricious, greedy	بخليل
wicked, malicious, foul, evil	شرير
fool, crazy, lunatic	مجنون
dumb, foolish, idiot	أحمق
filthy, nasty, foul, vulgar	بذيء
Satan, devil	شيطان ، ابليس
infidel, unbeliever	كافر
heretic, apostate, infidel, irreligious	ملحد ، زنديق
polytheist	مشرك
fornicator, adulterer	زاني
libertine, shameless, sinful, wanton	فاجر ، فاسق
dirty, foul, filthy, wretched	قذر
greedy for food, gormandize	شره ، أكل

## B. Satirical Nouns and Verbal-nouns

English	Arabic
evil, wickedness, malignancy	الشر
vice, depravity	الرزيلة
viciousness, meanness	الخبث
curse, execration	اللعة
sin	اثم ، خطيئة
stupidity, idiotism, foolishness	غباوة ، غباء
lying, deceit, untruth	كذب ، مين
greed, greediness, avidity	جشع ، طمع

However, other nouns used in hija' like: المخادعة والجبين والبلادة والشؤم والكفر والبخل etc. could be easily derived from the adjectives listed in (a) above or from other satiric verbs.

## C. Personal Features and Physical Faults

English	Arabic
baldness	صلع
small or short figure, littleness	قصر القامة
ugliness, foul smell, stench	القبح، النتانة
dirt, dirtiness, filth, wretchedness	قذارة
big belly	العنكة(كبير البطن)
huge beards	ضخامة اللحي
being black, negro or being pail, emaciated	السواد(عبد) او الشحوب والنحول
big ears, noses and lips	الاذن والانف والشفة الكبيرة
thinness, being skinny, leanness	النحول

grim look, gloominess, frown	التهمج، العبوس
ugly and big dents	قبح وبروز الضروس
raggedness, worn-out garments	رثة الثياب
greed for food, being gormandize	الشهه في الطعام

## D. People Satirized by Comparing them to Animals

English	Arabic
dog, bitch	كلب ، كلبة
pig, swine, boar	خنزير
Billy goat, he-goat	تيس
crown, raven	غراب
ass, donkey	حمار
mule	بغل
beast, animal, livestock, cattle	بهيمة، بهائم
serpent, snake, viper	الرقطاء، الأفعى، الحية
monkey, ape	القرود(الهجرس)
ram, bellwether	كبش
ewe, miltch- ewe	النعجة(الرغوثة)
riding animals, cattle	دواب

## E. Verbs, Expressions and Idioms

English	Arabic
to perish (the hand of), to be destroyed	تبت (يد)، تب
to despise, let him be debased	يخساً، فليخساً
let the debased be despised	ليخساً الخاسئون
to put to shame, to disgrace	أخزي، خزي
What a shame! Fie!	يا للخزي! يا للعار
May God disgrace, dishonor (him)	أخزاه (الله)
Shame (be) on you	خزيت
Woe to, woe be to	الويل ل
Fie upon you	أفّ لك، تحسا لك
Damn (you), may curse befall (you)!	عليك اللعنة!
Evil is (what you do)! Vicious is (what you think)!	ساء (ما فعلت، ظنك)
How dreadful (what you say) (the drink is)	بئس (القول، الشراب)
May (their) evil, ill intentions be thwarted, frustrated	خاب (فألهم، مسعاهم)
May God disappoint (them), thwart (their) schemes	خيب الله (فألهم، مسعاهم)

May (their deeds) be frustrated	حبطت (اعمالهم)
Disgrace be on you!	عار (عليك)، فلتخجل

## 6. Translation Assessment

It is fair to say that in assessing any translated text, subjectivity plays a role depending on the text type, efficiency and intention of the people conducting the assessment.

In this respect, House (1977:64) asserts the subjective and hazy nature of approaches to translation assessment. She puts it this way:

The main trends in the literature of translation assessment seem to have exhibited the hybrid and complicated nature of the translation process and foregrounded it as being the major, or the only reason behind the present failure of finding out a completely objectified theoretical approach to handle the various problems in translation.

The adopted criteria for evaluation and assessment depends on a ST- based approach, that is, to study the SL text thoroughly so as to be able later to compare its qualities with those rendered by the translators into English.

Accordingly, the process of assessment will go like this:

### 1. SL- text analysis:

a. Specifying the expressions of satire within the SL text and determining its type: personal, social, political, religious, etc. (of course our analysis will be restricted to Quranic satire).

b. Studying the overall structure of the SL text of satire: understanding meaning, style, figures of speech and the context of situation.

c. Specifying the existence of any lexical, cultural, aesthetic and pragmatic elements in the text and looking for the alternatives available.

2. Evaluating the translated version, i.e., judging how successful and competent was the translator in his rendition of the SL text of satire into English.

3. Proposing an alternative version, if necessary.

## 7. Assessment of the Translation of Satire in some Quranic Excerpts

Numerous books, articles and views have been written about the miraculous language of the Glorious Quran and about the possibility, viability and legitimacy of translating its verses. Indeed the Glorious Quran itself is a divine miracle that, according to the words of the Almighty Allah, cannot be imitated:

قل لئن اجتمعت الانس والجن على ان يأتوا بمثل هذا القرآن لا يأتون بمثله ولو كان بعضهم لبعض ظميرا (الاسراء 88)

Thus, no translation of the Quran, however good it is, would have the same impact on the non-Arab reader, like that experienced when reading the original Arabic divine words of the Quranic verses. Accordingly, all the available English versions labeled as *translations* are, in fact, mere translations of the *meanings of the Quran* rather than of the *Quran*.

There are many verses in the Glorious Quran that contain different expressions and forms of satire like: invective, vituperation and curse that denounce and condemn the unbelievers, hypocrites and blasphemous people.

For the purpose of evaluating the translations of the expressions of satire in some verses of the Quran into English, three translations will be observed and analyzed:

1. *Translation of the Glorious Qur'an* by Ali (1978)
2. *The Holy Quran: Arabic Text and English Translation* by Pikhthall (1982)
3. *The Koran Interpreted* by Arberry (2008)

As for determining the intended meanings in the Quranic verses whose translations are going to be assessed, the interpretation (Tafsir) of the meanings by Ibn Kathir (1988) will be consulted.

One important point needs to be stressed here: A well established fact is that most of the Arab readers of the Quran need at certain times to refer to books of interpretation (Tafsir) of certain verses for better understanding. This fact may explain the reason why dozens of multi-volume books dealing with the interpretation of the Quranic verses are available and frequently read by Arab Muslims. Since these books are of vital importance for native speakers of Arabic themselves, one can fairly say that these interpretations must be of more significance for non-Arabs, simply because they are culturally remote from the Arabs.

Accordingly, pitfalls, losses, and misinterpretations in translations are quite expected if the translator neglects referring to interpretation books. To avoid falling into this trap, footnoting, paraphrasing, commentary and expansions (by bracketing) must be granted special care and must constitute a vital part of the books of translations of the Quran. This is due to the fact that for the purpose of understanding the whole meaning of the divine verses, it will not suffice to read their bare renditions into English, no matter how accurate they are.

It is known that Quraysh and other pagan Arab tribes used all means available against the prophet and Islam. Satire was one of the most powerful weapons. Satirists were urged to attack the prophet and to curse Islam. The prophet and his followers realized that the unbelievers were still affected spiritually and mentally by the traditions of the pre-Islamic period and that satire was one of the means which could critically influence the cause of Islam. The early Muslims decided to

employ the same weapon against their enemy, and the prophet, therefore, permitted some celebrated and faithful Muslim satirists to defend Islam and challenge its opponents. Among those poets was Hassan bin Thabit and Ka'b bin Malik. These satirists did their best to address the foes of Islam. The Sura below, which is a good example of Quranic satire, was revealed to the prophet soon after he was publicly 'cursed' by his uncle Abdul 'Uzza, nicknamed Abu Lahab. Moreover, it contains typical forms of religious satire in a style of Saj' (سجع), that is, rhyme without meter, or as Nicholson describes it 'rhymed prose', cursing blasphemy and hypocrisy.

To proceed with the task of assessment, let us start with the Sura No. (111) in the Glorious Quran, 'The Palm Fibre':

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ \* مَا أَكْمَدَ مِنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ \* سِيَّطَى نَارًا خَالَتْ لَهَبٍ \* وَأُمَّرَاتُهُ حِقَالَةَ الْحَطَبِ \* فِي  
جِدِّهَا حَبْلٌ مِنْ مَسَدٍ. (المسد 1-5)

The rendition of this Sura into English is done like this:

1. Ali (1978:1804)

Perish the hands of the Father of Flame! Perish he!  
No profit to him, from all his wealth, and all his gains!  
Burnt soon will he be in fire of blazing Flame!  
His wife shall carry the (crackling) wood- as fuel!  
A twisted rope of palm-leaf round her (own) neck!

2. Pickthall (1982:911)

The power of Abu Lahab will perish, and he will perish.  
His wealth and gains will not exempt him.  
He will be plunged in flaming fire,  
And his wife, the wood-carrier,  
Will have upon her neck a halter of palm fibre.

3. Arberry (2008:666)

Perish the hands of Abu Lahab, and perish he!  
His wealth avails him not, neither what he has earned;  
he shall roast at a flaming fire,  
and his wife, the carrier of firewood,  
upon her neck a rope of palm-fibre

The first verse starts and ends with a typical satirical lexical item, namely, تَبَّتْ and تَبَّ. Repeating this word twice serves to ensure the intention of condemnation and curse against Abu Lahab. The equivalent used in all translations cited in this study is 'perish', which seems to be the proper correspondent, since it matches the interpretation of تَبَّتْ and تَبَّ presented by Ibn Kathir (1988, vol4:568):

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ، أَي تَحَقَّقَ هَلَاكُهُ وَخَسَارَتُهُ وَخَابَ وَضَلَّ سَعْيُهُ وَعَمَلُهُ.

Perish the hands of Abu Lahab, perish he! That is, his mortality and loss are certain, and his quest and work are astray and disappointed.

The lexical item 'perish' denotes the meaning of destruction and death and has a connotation of condemnation and curse, especially when it is used in the form of imprecation like: "Perish the ...!", or "Perdition to ...!"

In the first rendition of this verse by Ali (1978), a quite strange translation was given when he translated the nickname أبو لهب instead of simply transliterating it into English as 'Abu Lahab'. One, for example, cannot translate the nickname أبو لهب into 'the father of the slave of the king!' It is odd indeed to render a nickname by literally translating its constituents into the TT.

Now, supposing that Ali wanted to tell the reader about the literal meaning of the name, he could have achieved that goal by using the commentary or a footnote. Still stranger is what the translator did when he used a commentary to refer to this nickname, but it was done the other way round, that is, he states in the commentary: "The Father of Flame was Abu Lahab which was a nickname of the Holy prophet's uncle".

Another pitfall can be identified in the rendition of this verse by Pickthall (1982), when he misinterpreted the word يدا by rendering it into 'the power'. It seems that Pickthall had little idea about the context of situation in which this Sura was revealed, and that is why he failed to render it properly.

As for the second verse, " ما أغنى عنه ماله وما كسب ", Pickthall seems to have been the most accurate in translating the expression ما أغنى عنه into 'will not exempt him' in the sense that Abu Lahab's wealth will not be of any help for him since he was inevitably doomed to perish and to be cast into hell. Arberry (2008), was able to reflect this meaning in his translation 'avail him not', but Ali was not that successful because his rendition of the expression ما أغنى عنه is much less effective than the original. He translated it into 'No profit to him', which is the weakest of the three translations under study.

Moreover, none of the three translations gave the possible meaning of وما كسب, and they did not even hint in a footnote or a commentary that it may stand for 'the sons', or the 'offspring' of Abu Lahab. Ibn Kathir (1988, vol4:569) maintains:

قال ابن عباس وغيره (وما كسب) يعني ولده، وروى عن عائشة ومجاهد وعطاء والحسن وابن سيرين مثله... وذكر عن ابن مسعود أن رسول الله (ص) لما دعا قومه إلى الأيمان، قال أبو لهب: "إن كان ما يقول ابن أخي حقاً فإني أفتدي نفسي يوم القيامة من العذاب بمالي وولدي". فأنزل الله تعالى: ( ما أغنى عنه ماله وما كسب).

Ibn Abbas and others said that (what he earned) means his children, and the same is narrated from Aisha, Mujahid, Ata', al-Hasan, and Ibn Sirin... According to Ibn Mas'ud, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) when he called his people to faith, Abu Lahab said: "If what my nephew says was true, I redeem myself on doomsday with my money and my son", God Almighty revealed: "His wealth avails him not, neither what he has earned".

As for the other three verses, one may feel that although the general sense of satire and attack is obvious and can be felt, more commentary is needed in order to

enhance the satiric-ridiculing picture and the grotesque in this satire especially that launched against Abu Lahab's wife. Accordingly, a word must be said in the commentary about her former prestige, arrogance and pride among her people, wearing fine clothes, ornaments and putting necklaces of jewelry and now that she was condemned, cursed and disgraced with her husband, she has become such a debased and mean woman carrying firewood in hell and tied in the neck with a rough rope of palm fibre like slaves! Such picture of grotesque would enrich the sense of satire intended by the ST.

The next Quranic verse is

وقالت اليهود يد الله مغلولة خُلت أيديهم ولُعِنوا بما قالوا بل يداه مبسوطتان. (المائدة 64)

It is evident in this verse that the two expressions of metonymy اليد المغلولة and اليد المبسوطة are figuratively used to indicate avarice or greediness, and generosity respectively. A similar usage of these two expressions may also be seen in the following Quranic verse:

ولا تجعل يدك مغلولة الي مَنفُوك ولا تبسطها كلَّ البسط فتتعدَّ مَلوماً محسوراً. (الأسراء 29)

Ibn Kathir (1988, vol2:72) explains:

... قال ابن حاتم ، حدثنا أبو عبد الله أن ابن عباس قال (مغلولة) أي بخيلة ، وأن قوله تعالى وقالت اليهود يد الله مغلولة - قال لا يعنون بذلك ان يد الله موثقة ولكن يقولون بخيل، يعني أمسك ما عنده بخلاً، تعالى الله عن قولهم.

Ibn al-Hatim narrated that Abu Abdullah said that Ibn Abbas said (tied) means stingy, and Almighty God as saying “the Jews said God's hands are tied” does not mean that God's hands are tied but they say He is stingy, that is, He grabbed what He has out of stinginess. God is far above what they say.

This Quranic verse was rendered as:

1. Ali. (1978)

The Jews say, “Allah’s hand is tied up”  
Be their hands tied up and be they accursed  
For the (blasphemy) they utter.

2. Pickthall (1982)

The Jews say: Allah’s hand is fettered,  
Their hands are fettered and they are accursed  
For saying so!

3. Arberry (2008)

The Jews have said ‘God’s hand is fettered,  
Fettered are their hands, and they are cursed  
For what they have said.

Examining the above translations, one would easily say that literalness was intentionally adopted in the rendition of this verse. However, this approach would

not give the intended meaning, unless the reader is already aware of the figurative use of metonymy in اليد المغلولة.

Literalness might be appropriate here for the purpose of maintaining the aesthetic content of the ST by keeping the metonymic use intact. Nevertheless, one word added to the text, or a short footnote would have served greatly in removing any sort of ambiguity.

A suggested translation could read:

The Jews have said: 'Allah's Hand is tied up (being miser)

Their hands shall be tied up and they shall be cursed

For what they have said.

The third and last verse to be discussed is:

أَفِيءَ لَكُمْ وَلِمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ، أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ (الأنبياء 67)

1. Ali (1978)

Fie upon you, and upon the things that ye worship

Besides Allah! Have ye no sense?

2. Pickthall (1982)

Fie on you and all that ye worship instead of Allah!

Have ye then no sense?

3. Arberry (2008)

Fie upon you and that you serve apart from God!

Do you not understand?

It is clear that the expression أَفِيءَ لَكُمْ is rendered accurately by the three translators into 'Fie upon!' or 'Fie on!' The other expression of satire comes at the end of this verse أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ, which is a strong and sharp censure or reprimand uttered by Prophet Abraham against the pagan people. Ali and Pickthall seem to have succeeded, to a great extent, in rendering this expression into English: 'Have ye no sense?'. The third version by Arberry seems to have mitigated the charge of attack by rendering it into 'Do you not understand?' Moreover, Arberry missed the cultural aspect when he used the verb 'serve' as an equivalent for تَعْبُدُونَ instead of employing the more appropriate correspondent 'worship', which was used by the other two translators. It is known that the lexical item 'serve' has a connotation of Christian rites of prayer during Mass performed in church and the noun 'service' means a formal religious ceremony, which means قَدَّاس in Arabic.

Concerning the expression مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ, Pickthall was more successful in his translation, 'Instead of Allah', than Ali, 'besides Allah', and Arberry 'apart from God'.

A suggested translation could be:

Fie on you, and on what you worship other than God!

Do you not have reason?!

It seems appropriate to mention a general remark regarding the translation of the Glorious Quran and Arabic classical poetry. It is related to using archaic structures and lexical items. Some translators prefer to use some of these old , or even obsolete, syntactic structures and vocabulary items to reflect the historical flavor of the period in which the text was written or revealed ( as is the case with the Quran which is still read by millions of Muslims, maybe on daily basis) . Forms like *thou, thy, ye, nay, yea, thee, etc.* are used in a number of translations of the meanings of the Quran. On the other hand, some other translations would not prefer to use these forms and lexical items because their objective in translating the Quran is to be read and understood by non-Arab readers and for this reason they argue that simplicity by using modern structures is better.

#### Concluding Remarks

Satire has its unique vocabulary and peculiar language that make it memorable and easily recognized among other literary genres. It is characterized by two main aspects which are universal ones: the moral aspect and the aspect of attack. Satire is not just a literary art that exposes and condemns follies, vices and shortcomings of the society and individuals, but also bears a moral message.

Moreover, the culture-bound or culture-specific terms, along with some polysemous words, constitute one of the main difficulties encountered by translators. It can thus be extrapolated that when there is some kind of overlap between the SL and TL, the task of the translator would go smoother. Many texts of satirical nature have their own 'stories' or 'contexts of situation', and consequently their own pragmatic aspects.

In dealing with expressions of satire in Quranic verses, the translator may find himself obliged to resort to other techniques like bracketing, footnoting, paraphrasing and commentary. This will surely be at the expense of economy in language, that is, the translated text is expected to longer than the original. A translator of the Quran must have comprehensive knowledge about Islam and the setting in which its verses were revealed.

Finally, literalness was found to be the dominating approach that was adopted by almost all translators of the Quran. This might be attributed to the fact that many of the translators wanted to be faithful to this divine text.

#### Notes

- (1) In English there are two main types of satire: Horatian (named after the Roman satirist Horace) satire which means to delight and instruct. This type uses laughter and ridicule to highlight human foibles in a fairly gentle, non-accusatory manner. The second type is the Juvenalian satire which is harsher, more pointed, perhaps intolerant satire typified by the writings of Juvenal. While laughter and ridicule are still weapons as with Horatian satire, the Juvenalian satirist also uses withering invective and a slashing attack. (See <http://uk.ask.com/wiki/Satire> )

(2) The translations of quotations in this study are the researcher's.

(3) His name in Arabic is كعب بن جَعِيل

(4) This segment quoted from 'Matthew-23'

Woe to you, teachers of law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

Woe to you, teachers of law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, "If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets." So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers!

You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell!

(Matthews 23: 27-33)

The Arabic version of this text reads:

" الويل لكم أيها الكُتَّبة والفرّيسيون المراؤون ! فإنكم كالقبور المطلية بالكلس: تبدو جميلة من الخارج، ولكنها من الداخل ممتلئة بعظام الموتى وكلّ نجاسة! كذلك انتم أيضا، تبدون للناس أبراراً، ولكنكم من الداخل ممتلئون بالرياء والفسق!

" الويل لكم أيها الكُتَّبة والفرّيسيون المراؤون ! فإنكم تبنون قبور الأنبياء وتزينون مدافن الأبرار، وتقولون: لو عشنا في زمن آبائنا لما شاركناهم في سفك دم الأنبياء! فأكملوا ما بدأه أبائكم ليطفح الكيل!

" أيها الحيات، أو لاد الأفاعي ! كيف تُفْلِتون من عقاب جهنم! (كتاب الحياة 1992: إنجيل متى 76-77)

تقصي الهجاء في العربية مع الإشارة إلى ترجمة عبارات الهجاء في القرآن الكريم

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تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقصي الهجاء عموماً والهجاء العربي على وجه الخصوص. ويتحقق هذا الهدف من خلال دراسة الهجاء ولغته الفريدة ومفرداته وأنواعه وخصائصه المميزة. ويناقش الجزء الثاني من الدراسة ترجمة القرآن الكريم إلى الإنجليزية من خلال تحليل اقتباسات من ثلاث ترجمات مختلفة من أجل تقديم تقييم للترجمات والوصول إلى مدى نجاح الترجمات وأمانتها وكفايتها في إعادة تقديم هذه العبارات في الإنجليزية. وتصل الدراسة إلى استنتاج مفاده أن الصعوبة الكبرى تكمن في التقاط المعنى المقصود للنص الأصلي (الدالي منه والإيحائي). علاوة على ذلك، وجد أن الترجمة الحرفية كانت مفضلة في ترجمة الكثير من عبارات الهجاء القرآنية مقترنة عادة بأعادة الصياغة أو التوسع في المعنى أو إضافة التعليق.

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