

**The Rendering of the Historical Element in
Reem Bassiouney's *Al-Qata'i*
In light of Cheung's *Tuishou* Philosophy**

ترجمة العنصر التاريخي برواية القطائع لريم بسيوني
في ضوء نظرية الترجمة النابعة من رياضة التويستو.

إعداد

د/ طاهر محمود السيد أحمد حسانه

مدرس اللغويات بكلية الآداب جامعة أسوان

ملخص البحث

تعالج هذه الدراسة إشكالية ترجمة العنصر التاريخي في رواية القطائع لريم بسيوني، وذلك في ضوء نظرية الترجمة النابعة من رياضة التويشو، تلك النظرية التي وضعتها مارتا تشيونج، عام ٢٠١٢، وقد اقتبست فكرتها من أحد الفنون الصينية للدفاع عن النفس والقتال: حيث يلتقي الطرفان بأيديهما، بشرط أن تظل الأيدي متلامسة، مع محاولة كل طرف أن يدفع يد الآخر. وهذا الفن يدعو إلى الابتعاد عن اهدار الطاقة غير المبرر، ونبذ العنف والتحدي الزائد عن الحد، عند التقاء الخصم، وفي ذات الوقت يحاول كل طرف احتواء طاقة الخصم، بل واستغلالها في بعض الأحيان. ومن هنا فإن تطبيقها في الترجمة مفاده أنه على المترجم استقبال النص الذي يتعامل معه بروح من التعاون والتواصل الإيجابي، الذي من شأنه نقل الأمور المتعلقة بالتناقضات والصراعات والمشاكل بلباقة، ودون التحيز إلى ثقافة على حساب الأخرى. ومن هذا المنطلق فإن الإشكالية الأساسية في البحث هي كيفية صياغة قواعد مستقاة من هذا المنهج الفلسفي؛ وذلك من أجل تحليل المشكلات الترجمية في رواية القطائع، وخاصة تلك التي تتعلق بالأمور التاريخية. وقد اعتمد التحليل على عناصر ثلاثة، وهي: أولاً: الانتباه للظاهرة الجديدة التي يقدمها النص الأصلي. ثانياً: الاعتماد على الحوار الدائم بين الثقافتين من أجل نقل الظاهرة الى اللغة الهدف. ثالثاً: البعد عن الرفض أو الاستقصاء. وقد نتج عن تحليل العينات أن المترجم نجح في نقل بعض العناصر التاريخية، بينما لم ينتبه إلى البعض الآخر بسبب عدم الالتزام بالعناصر الثلاثة للنظرية.

الكلمات الدالة: نظرية الترجمة - رياضة التويشو - مارتا تشيونج - رواية القطائع

— ترجمة الرواية التاريخية

Abstract

This study deals with rendering the historical element in Bassiouney's (2021/2023) *Al-Qata'i: Ibn Tulun's City without Walls* in light of the pushing-hands approach—a translation metaphor borrowed from the world of Chinese martial arts. This approach guards against bias by avoiding an excessive use of force or challenge while receiving another culture. A successful translation allows a healthy pushing-hands between the reader and the text in a mood of cooperation and positive contact. It is an empirical approach to translation that allows successful dealing with problems, conflicts and contradictions. The main question of this study is how to form a pushing-hands model that may solve certain translational problems, especially as far as the historical element in *Al-Qata'i* is concerned. The study also shows how other earlier translation theories like polysystem theory and the narrative theory of translation are echoed within the pushing-hands approach in that if the translated text occupies a central position, this means submission to the target culture in the pushing-hands game. In the analyses, the three elements of the pushing-hands approach have been applied: that is, attentiveness to new phenomena, continuous dialogic engagement between the two cultures, and reacting to force not with force, but by redirecting or borrowing it. The point of view towards a historical event is the main translational problem in the novel. Sometimes the translator reflects it successfully. In other cases, he fails due to a linguistic mistake or misunderstanding a meaning, or not abiding by the three elements of the pushing-hands approach.

Keywords: translation theory, pushing-hands approach, Reem Bassiouney's *Al-Qata'i*, Tuishou, historical novel

The Rendering of the Historical Element in Reem Bassiouney's *Al-Qata'i*

In light of Cheung's Tuishou Philosophy

This study deals with the problems of rendering the historical element in Reem Bassiouney's (2021/2023) *Al-Qata'i: Ibn Tulun's City without Walls* in light of the pushing-hands approach—a translation metaphor borrowed from the world of Chinese martial arts. It is argued that this approach guards against bias by avoiding an excessive use of force or challenge while receiving another culture. A successful translation allows a healthy *pushing-hands* between the reader and the text in a mood of cooperation and positive contact. It is an empirical approach to translation that allows successful dealing with problems, conflicts and contradictions.

Researchers are all the time searching for philosophical ideas that provide intellectual resources for translation studies. *Pushing-hands* was coined by Seán Golden and Martha Cheung (Golden, 2016, p.34). It englobes both cultures within a single perspective. In the process of the interaction between the two cultures, the game continues without declaring one party as winning or losing by imposing its values or forfeiting them. This leads to mutual understanding between the parties involved even if there is a sort of conflict or competition between them. The encounter of two people echoes dialogue, social interaction and human communication. One culture is conquered or integrated with another. *Pushing-hands* is not just a technique. It is a way of life because the origin of the Chinese word *tuishou* (i.e. pushing-hands) means technique and way of life. It deals with the problem of opposites and dichotomies by considering them correlative pairs through dialogic engagement (Robinson, 2016, p.p. 32, 51). In light of this approach, words, phrases, incidents and other discourse components that have a historical flavor are dealt with in this paper.

Setting the Problem

The main translational problem this study deals with is summarized in *Al-Qata'i* heroine's words:

هو تاريخ، لابد أن تذكر التاريخ كما كان (p. 265)

“That’s all history...It has to be **remembered** as it was.”

The heroine of the story, Maisoon, wants to say that history has to be told as it was without making any changes. In the translation of the novel, the word تذكر (i.e. mention) is rendered as 'remember'. This is not the intended meaning. The writer is dealing with a historical event using two levels of language: classical and modern. How the difference between these two levels is reflected in the translation? In other words, how the pushing-hands game between past and present is going on in both the ST and TT?

The novel is a mix of historical, romantic, social and linguistic elements. The translation should reflect integration in the ST between these elements. The level of language differs from one passage to another, as if different styles are pushing hands with each other producing many voices and forces in the text. The translator has to discover and render such different voices by triggering a dialogue over the translational problems therein, with the result of providing a convincing translation that does not impose a certain interpretation on the reader who is supposed to participate in the pushing-hands game by accepting, rejecting, asking questions about the text, etc.

The past is a foreign country, the road to it is missing or hidden (Golden, 2016, p. 50). It is foreign to the native speakers themselves. Thus, Bassiouney's novel needs awareness of the past on the part of the translator before taking the endeavor of rendering it to the English reader. He does two pushing-hands games: that is, one with the past and the other with the English culture. The main problem is how to transfer the form and tone of the historical texts in the novel. How to produce a tone different from that of the modern texts in a modern novel. Thus, the main question of this study is how to form an applicable pushing-hands model that may solve certain translational problems, especially as far as the historical element in the novel is concerned.

Significance of the Study

In light of a pushing-hands approach, a new translation of a work may redirect or neutralize the force of that work by rewriting the narratives in it to be understood in a new way. The role of pushing-hands here is that it explains why ideas on villains or heroes of famous works change through time. Bassiouney's novels introduce history in a new light, exactly like the translation of an old work that introduces it to a new culture with the introduction of some changes via a process of pushing-hands. The pushing-hands approach turns any activity into an opportunity for learning how to situate oneself in an integrated way. The activity of translation may be one in which past and present, East and West, general concepts and local realities, theoretical speculations and practice-based observations, etc. are all brought together in an integral pushing-hands session. This echoes notions on a proposed theory of relations to be established in order to describe and prescribe the translational action (Okasha, 2023, pp. 110-112).

The merit of the pushing-hands is that it makes the translator develop awareness of the others' positions. He does not become enclosed within the boundaries of a certain time, place or ideas. This is very much applicable to Bassiouney's novels like *Awlad al-Nas* (i.e. Sons of the People) and *Al-Qata'i: Ibn Tulun's City Without Walls* in which she uses history to talk about the present and the past. Thus, she establishes a pushing-hands game at more than one level: culture, history, and translation. While dealing with such a text, the texture should be dealt with in light of awareness and reaction. The text should not be dealt with in the light of force and aggression that would lead to the misrepresentation of some dimensions in the ST. In so doing, the issue of fidelity and freedom is treated in a systematic way (see Upendra Baxi, 2009).

Review of the Literature

Many studies deal with the problems of rendering novels from and into Arabic. Al-Omary (2010) studied the translations of Naguib Mahfoudh's novels into English. He checks translational deviations and applies author-oriented translational approaches. Guessabi (2013) discusses problems of rendering Arabic novels into English and selects Algerian novels as a case study. She explores the best methods to be applied and examines foreignization and domestication as techniques frequently used by most translators.

Elsheemi (2014) shows some of the shortcomings related to style and culture in the translation of some of Mahfoudh's novels into English. He concludes that such mistakes are due to the translators' inability to understand Arabic and Egyptian cultures. Fethallah and Armouche (2021) deal with the problems of interpreting implicit meanings in Mahfoudh's trilogy in light of Grice theory. They conclude that there are three strategies used by the translators to render such meanings: that is, explicitation, deletion and preservation.

The studies above do not refer to new theories and notions like the narrative theory of translation or the pushing-hands approach. They only touch on traditional tools like foreignization and domestication. The present study fills this gap by discussing the problems of rendering Arabic novels into English in light of modern theories, especially as far as the historical element in the Arabic novels is concerned.

Methodology

Pushing-hands is a Chinese sport teaching the body not to react to force with force, but to yield to force in order to neutralize it and redirect it. It is a gentle, cooperative exercise. So we have two parts pushing each other by the hands; an analogy may emerge by thinking of two cultures facing each other: a foreign force attacking and being resisted not by facing it directly, but by

swerving its texts and contexts to get the most benefit without being influenced by a potential negative aspect from the foreign culture.

This swerving occurred in the Arabic edition of *Handbook of Giftedness* (Pfeiffer, 2016), where certain parts have been bowdlerized. This can be considered a sort of pushing-hands because the force of the book is redirected in a new direction that suits the Arab culture and customs. However, it may be argued that when a part of the ST is deleted or bowdlerized, this may be considered a direct clash between two cultures that leads to blocking a force from the source culture without redirecting it or dealing with it. In *Al-Qata'i*, certain parts have been overlooked in the translation: for example, بدأ يتردد على الحوانيت في الفسطاط، ويستمتع، ويقرأ عن الحكاين اليونانيين إلى مناظرات الفلسفة، is not translated. There seems no reason for deleting that part from the translation. The translator is supposed to respond to the force of the text in a variety of ways with subtle turnings to respond to force with a suitable counterforce, without taking the decision to avoid rendering a part if there is not a convincing reason that facilitates a smooth pushing-hands game. Then he directs that force and channels it to the target reader. In other words, the pushing-hands model is a sort of measurement of engagement between two cultures having a dialogue through translation. Does the translator yield to the source and follow it, stay close to it, etc. or provide a counterforce against it? For every translation, there is a source not necessarily of a material quality. If this source is understood, its transferring into the foreign culture will be made smoothly without communication clashes that would lead to distorting the message. The analogy of the pushing-hands is applied in translation studies in light of the "harmony arising from the continuous interplay of opposites, with the two parties neither losing contact nor overcoming each other" (Robinson, p. 25).

Pushing-hands regards *yin* (i.e. female principle of the universe) and *yang* (i.e. male principle of the universe) not in combat but in unison. Likewise, translation is an interplay of *yin* and *yang*: it is not confrontation between source and target, or reader and author. Applying the philosophy of the pushing-hands in translation views it as a reaction to outside forces. Applying it to translation history envisages the past and present, reader and writer, writer and translator, etc. as alternately pushing and yielding. Thus, Pushing-hands may be considered a conceptual approach rather than a methodology. It is based on coexistence of ideas. It reconceptualizes translation and translators.

The Echo of the Pushing-hands Approach in other Translation Theories:

The polysystem theory is echoed within the pushing-hands approach in that if the translated text occupies a central position, this means submission to the target culture in the pushing-hands game. If the translation occupies a peripheral position, it means the target culture is pushing hard and resisting in the game of communication or conflict between cultures in which forces, voices and hands interact. In this connection, Even-Zohar (2021) says that "histories of literatures mention translations when there is no way to avoid them" (p. 191), as if it is a kind of a game in which every party tries to be the winner or the distinguished.

It may also be argued that there is a trace of Baker's (2006) Narrative Theory within the pushing-hands approach which is much wider. Both Baker (2006) and Cheung (2012) focus on the notion of conflict. Historically speaking, there are six years between the two theories. In other words, after six years, a more comprehensive theory was born. Sorrowfully, Cheung died before crystalizing her pushing-hands approach in a book, and Robinson (2016) made the endeavor and developed a project of her theory. With the help of her disciples, he developed a pushing-hands model for analyzing and evaluating all stages of translation.

Cheung applied the theory to trace the relation between historical knowledge and translation, whereas Baker (2006) developed a narrative theory to trace the relation between knowledge about conflicts and translation.

A historical element may be rendered by using the narrative theory of translation, according to which the translator uses his point of view towards history. A better rendering may be produced by using the pushing-hands approach. According to that approach, the two cultures communicate and consume, adapt or discard energy from each other. It is a process of energy reciprocation in which a smoother contact between languages is allowed. This approach calls for putting aside one's ego and thinking of a solution without tension while being in contact with the other culture: "putting aside one's ego to follow the other's energy flow" (Chunshen Zhu, 2016, p. 64).

Unlike the narrative theory of translation, the game here has more positive implications than the negative ones involved especially in rendering the political discourse and the idea of conflict. It is correlative and dialogic rather than dichotomous: it is no longer the idea of literal vs. free or adequate vs. equivalent; it offers a more dynamic view of translation theory that depends on contact between the two cultures. This continuous contact means that the message of the ST is being conveyed smoothly via an approach of acculturation rather than ethnocentrism that insists on only one option. Thus, the pushing-hands metaphor is in line with building a translation theory that depends on establishing fixed relations without separating cultures from each other or pushing the other away. It also situates translation studies within other cultural studies as an attempt to synchronize Chinese translation theory and practice with the Western approaches (Wei and Shei, 2019).

The Three Elements of the Pushing-Hands Approach:

Cheung presents three guiding principles of *tuishou* to be followed in order to produce a text as much balanced as the ST:

- (i) **attentiveness to the incoming force**, or, in philosophical terms, attentiveness to the forces of change around us; (ii) **continuous dialogic engagement**; and (iii) **reacting to force not with force** but by displacing it and redirecting it, or even **borrowing it** to gain leverage over the other, but only if pressed by circumstances to do so (Guénette, 2016, p. 89).

If, for example, the word *ال خليفة* is translated as 'ruler' this may be considered reacting to force with force. Through dialogic engagement, the new element is introduced to the target culture: that is, 'caliph'. It is no longer a dichotomous mode in which every party sticks to its narratives. This approach helps translators and researchers see both sides of the coin and judge phenomena more subjectively. Languages, cultures and temporalities enter into a dialogue. The multiplicity of voices from past and present in this dialogue is reflected in the translation, not focusing only on one voice by applying a multi-tactic approach that increases possible options. Instead of looking to forces in translation as opposites, they are considered complementary and interactive. Such interaction can be on a micro level: for example, author-translator, source-target, etc. or on a macro level: for example, political, economic, cultural, etc. (Chan, 2016, p. 99). The pushing and yielding of different linguistic forces change the form and content of the translation. In *Al-Qata'i*, Western values are in a pushing-hands game with the old Eastern cultural and linguistic values as will be shown in the following analyses.

Analysis of Some Samples

Mastering Both Languages before Applying the Pushing-Hands Approach:

In the introductory lines of poetry at the beginning of the novel: *فلا تعشق الدنيا أحيي* is in the imperative mood, but the translator did not notice the similarity in Arabic between the verb in the imperative and declarative moods. He renders it as 'this world loves not my brother'. It had to be 'Do not adore the world my brother'. Also *ترى عاشق الدنيا بجهد وبلاء* is rendered as "it views the world-lover only through toils of misery". The translator mistook the subject of the verb *ترى* (i.e. you see) thinking that *الدنيا* (i.e. the world) is the subject. The same may be said about rendering the word *العجزة* (i.e. disabled) in p. 8. It is rendered as "indigent" which means *الفقراء* (i.e. very poor). Incorrect choice means that there is a mistake in the pushing-hands game. Such mistakes are below the level of the pushing-hands theory. Translators have to master the skills of both languages to engage themselves in the game of interaction with the other. Likewise, before people play the pushing-hands games they practice a solo exercise to learn balance and flexibility (Golden, p. 47). This solo exercise may be compared to learning the skills of the source and target languages.

Paratext as an Example of a Pushing-Hands Activity:

"To someone who read these pages and was not satisfied merely to understand them. He has eagerly prepared an excellent translation of them into a different language. I dedicate these pages and this novel to Roger Allen.

REEM BASSIOUNEY

The paratext above is an epigraph written by Bassiouney, the writer of the original text, in the English translation prepared

by Allen (2023), in which she mentions the wisdom of the pushing-hands game in translation, that is the establishment of a dialogue between the source and target cultures. She praises his translation and dedicates the novel to him. This means that the two parties in the pushing-hands game, i.e. writer and translator, are not resisting each other; they are working smoothly. Reading this paratext using the pushing-hands approach implies that there is a smooth relation between the novelist and the translator. The two forces are assimilating each other. The pushing-hands mode of thinking is practiced in all the stages of the translation production and appears in the title pages and preface of the translation.

Pushing-Hands at the Level of Vocabulary:

Choice of vocabulary in the translation process is one of the most stages in which the pushing-hands activity emerges. Dominance of a culture imposes itself by the dissemination of its vocabulary and introducing it to other cultures. The concept of *والي الخراج* (i.e. tax administrator) in the following passage is an example of foreign concepts that may travel to other languages via transliteration or explanation. If through transliteration or literal translation, this means total submission to the ST in the pushing-hands game. If explanation is applied, it means that the two cultures are in the stage of a dialogue for importing and exporting concepts.

"من يتحد والي الخراج يتحد أوامر الخليفة، ومن يتحد أوامر الخليفة يستحق نار جهنم. يا أهل مصر، الضرائب حق الخليفة، والخليفة أمير المؤمنين. أحمد بن المدبر والي الخراج له الطاعة من الخبيث والطيب"
(p. 16-17)

"People of Egypt," he yelled, "anyone who defies **the tax authorities** defies the caliph's instructions and deserves the fires of hell! Taxes are the caliph's right, and the caliph is Commander of the Faithful. Ahmad ibn Mudabbir is **the Tax Administrator** and must be obeyed by all, good and bad alike."

والي الخراج is rendered as 'tax authorities' and 'tax administrator'. The first one is not literal; there is a kind of resistance to the discourse, while the second is a bit literal or submissive as far as the pushing-hands terminology is concerned. More submission to the ST culture would happen if the translator uses the word 'wali': it is a transliteration of the ST word والي and at the same time it is a part of the English lexicon, as it is defined in *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (2024) as 'an Arab provincial governor'. شيخ الصيادين is another example, rendered as "the head fisherman". It literally means 'sheikh of fishermen'. Sheikh is already in the English lexicon. 'Head fisherman' does not submit to the ST discourse.

The job صاحب البريد is rendered as 'police chief'. Titles of jobs in historical novels are a real problem. Police chief is equivalent to قائد الشرطة but the job of صاحب البريد is collecting information. 'Intelligence administrator' is a more adequate choice. The word الوراق is rendered as "the bookseller", although his main job in the novel is copying ancient manuscripts. The historical flavor is not tasted in the word bookseller. 'Copyist of manuscripts' would be better. Metaphorically speaking, submission and resistance are techniques for those translators working pushing-hands-wise. Another technique is used when the force of the ST seems not significant. In this case, the translator follows the technique of ignoring that part of the text or not including it in the translation. For example, بدأ يتردد على حوانيت الوراقين في الفسطاط (p. 19-20) is not translated.

Smooth communication between the two cultures requires dealing carefully with some concepts like 'slavery'. In the following two examples, the word جارية (i.e. slave-girl or concubine) is translated differently according to the job she does.

"وعده أن يأتي له بجارية من اليونان اليوم" (p. 29).

"He promised to bring him a Greek slave-girl"

The context of the word جارية is about a substitute for Maysoon, the enchanting girl. "Concubine" is more suitable for its Latin origins mean 'to lie with'. In other contexts, slave-girl or singing-girl is more suitable:

وبعد أن انتهت الجارية من الغناء قال ابن المدبر: أتعجبك يا أبا العباس؟ (p. 91)

"The **singing-girl** finished her performance".

This is also applicable with words like الماشطة (i.e. hairdresser) and النطرون (i.e. mineral salt):

"حكّت عبلة الماشطة كل شيء. تدخل كل بيت" (p. 31)

"Abla the **hairdresser** told the whole story" (p. 37).

Wehr (1966) renders ماشطة as 'lady's maid' or 'woman hairdresser'. In pushing-hands terms, 'hairdresser' is smoother than 'makeup artist', for example. The pushing-hands game between the two languages gets tougher with words both alien to both readers of source and target texts as in the words النطرون (i.e. mineral salt) and بلاد البوجا (i.e. Albuja countries) in the following two examples":

فأعلن أن الضرائب ستفرض على كل المصريين، وعلى النطرون والمراعي والحيوانات" (p. 36)

"He decreed that taxes would be imposed on all Egyptians, on **mineral salt**, crops, and animals, and later on fish as well".

The word النطرون (i.e. natron) is rendered as mineral salt, although the transliteration of نطرون is in the English lexicon. This is not in line with the pushing-hands approach which calls for a smooth transition between the two cultures or between different eras in history to reflect both macro and micro historical aspects in the ST.

أليس هو أقوى رجل في مصر كلها من الإسكندرية إلى بلاد البوجا؟ (p. 40)

"Was he not the most powerful man in Egypt, all the way from Alexandria to **Albuja**?"

Historical names of places whose borders or political systems had changed pose a big problem to ST reader and translator as well because every place has a kind of power or authority on the people living there. The problem may not be crucial to the target reader because the whole ST situation is foreign to him. Albuja and natron may pose micro-historical notions that can be used to challenge macro-historical stereotypes. Such a debate between micro and macro history has to appear in the target text as well.

Translation by addition is also a technique according to the pushing-hands approach:

"تذكر القاضي أيام ابن المدبر في مصر منذ عام ٢٤٨ عندما عينه الخليفة والياً للخراج. كان لبني عباس طريقة مختلفة في الحكم وخاصة حكم مصر، فقسموا السلطات بين الرجال حتى لا ينفرد أحد بمصر، ويحاول الاستقلال. فكان الوالي هو والي الحرب والصلاة فقط. يدعون له في المساجد بعد الخليفة، ويعلن الحرب بأمر الخليفة، وتنتهي سلطته عند هذا. أما والي الخراج فهو صاحب المال والنفوذ، دوماً يكون من بلاط الخليفة نفسه" (pp. 35-36)

"The judge could recall how Ibn al-Mudabbir's time in Egypt began, when the caliph appointed him Tax Administrator in 248 AH [861 CE]. The Abbasids had their own way of governing, especially when it came to Egypt. They divided authority between several men so that none of them would have sole authority and try to declare independence. The governor was only in charge of war and prayers. People would pray for him in mosques after praying for the caliph, and, on orders from the caliph, he would declare war, but that was the limit of his authority. The Tax Administrator was the controller of money and influence. He always came from the caliphal court itself" (p. 41).

The Hijrah calendar is rendered by adding a Gregorian one. This is an act of dialogue between the two cultures. Calendar is a part of the identity; if only one calendar is used in the translation, it may be considered that one identity is hidden for the emergence of another. Using the two calendars means that the two cultures are communicating smoothly as is the case in the following examples.

الساحرة تسكن في سفح الهرم الأكبر، يهابها الرجال قبل النساء، فلم يفك سر الهرم أحد بعد، ولم يقوَ على دخوله سوى الخليفة المأمون منذ سنوات. عندما زار الخليفة المأمون مصر ليخمد ثورة القبط على بني عباس قرر أن يفتح الهرم الأكبر، فقد تأكد أن بداخله كنزاً يغمر بقية الأيام (p. 68).

"The witch dwelled at the base of the Great Pyramid, feared more by men than women. No one had yet solved the mystery of the pyramid; the caliph Ma'moon had managed to enter it just several years ago. When the caliph had visited Egypt to quell the Coptic revolt against the Abbasids, he had decided to open the Great Pyramid. He felt sure that it contained enough treasure to last for the rest of his days".

"منذ الف عام أو يزيد. آخر مرة كان لمصر جيش من المصريين، وكان ذلك أيام فرعون موسى، ثم هلك الجيش في البحر، منذ ذلك اليوم ومصر بلا جيش، يحكمها اليونانيون ثم الروم ثم جاء العرب (p. 79).

"A thousand years or more. The last time Egypt had an army made up of Egyptians was in the time of Pharaoh and Moses. It was destroyed at sea. Ever since then, Egypt has been without an army. It was ruled by Greeks first, then Romans, and then the Arabs arrived."

The rendering of the passages above gives the idea as simple as it is in the ST, but in the following example, more attention had to be given by the translator in his rendering of the sentence (i.e. come to us by yourself):

وصلت رسالة الخليفة لأحمد بن طولون، قال فيها الخليفة:

"أما بعد، فإننا رأينا أن نرد إليك أمر دارنا بالحضرة، وتدبير مملكتنا، فإذا قرأت كتابنا هذا فاستخلف على مصرك من أحببت، والبلد لك وباسمك، وأشخص إلينا لما ندبناك إليه، ورأيناك أهلاً له، والسلام".

"The caliph's letter to Ahmad ibn Tulun read: We have seen fit to restore to you the conduct of our caliphal court and the administration of our kingdom. Hand over to anyone you choose your Egypt and the city that is yours and in your name. **Come back to us** to take up the position that we have chosen for you and for which we have deemed you well qualified. Farewell".

The expression *أشخص الينا* is an emphasis that Ahmad ibn Tulun has to come by himself, and there is no option to send a deputy. This does not appear in the translation. The same semantic problem also appears in:

"نظرت إلى الخازوق الأسود الذي يستعد الحارس لغرزه في جسد الشاب" (p. 16)

"She looked at the black stake that the guard was about to insert into the young man's body".

Description of the process of impalement by using a black stake is an old method of executing. The word *غرزه* is rendered as 'insert'. It does not reflect the violence of the action. 'Thrust' would have been a better choice for it means pushing quickly with a lot of force. It is also better for it reflects the pushing-hands game between past and present in a way identical to that of the ST, especially if the voice of the past needs more amplification or reinforcement.

That voice of the past is expressed in the novel by the word *التاريخ*. It is rendered as 'history' and in some cases as 'past'. This is a sort of a pushing-hands technique of understanding the other by taking different reactions for the same phenomenon according to the context. The impact of the word 'history' differs from that of 'past'. In the pushing-hands approach, the word 'impact' is substituted by 'energy'. The energy of the ST word *التاريخ* is met, contained and absorbed by a TT word. Thus, the pushing-hands approach introduces a new concept to translation studies: that is, energy of the text. Translation becomes a travel of energy from one culture to another.

Conclusion

Application of the pushing-hands approach on some samples from Bassiouney's (2021/2023) *Al-Qata'i: Ibn Tulun's City without Walls* proves that translation may be pushing hands with the ST. Translators are also in a game of pushing-hands with texts and social forces. Sometimes there is an invisible pushing hand that influences the translatorial action for being beyond the translator's control. It is also a suitable tool for updating old texts to cope with the change of cultural references and meanings of words without being totally enslaved to modernity or completely haunted by the past. Openness and plurality of interpretation, facilitated by this approach, allow multiplicity of meanings and prevent a grand narrative to impose itself. With pushing-hands, translation deals with discourses rather than narratives that may biasedly be classified as grand or otherwise.

Avoiding the idea of confrontation while translating facilitates dealing with translational problems successfully. This study fills a gap in this connection by discussing the problems of rendering Arabic novels into English in light of the new approach in question. The point of view towards a historical event is the main translational problem in the novel. Sometimes the translator reflects it successfully as it is in the ST. In other cases, he fails due to a linguistic mistake or misunderstanding a meaning. Thus, it may be concluded that as far as the pushing-hands game is identical in both the ST and TT, the translation is more acceptable, as has been shown in the analysis at the levels of lexicon, structure, context and paratextual material.

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