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Title:	Translating Suspense: The Short Story “Rescue” by Ali Al-Kasimi as a Case Study
Author(s) & Affiliation:	Prof. Dr. Hassane Darir Department of Translation and Linguistics, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Cadi Ayyad University, Marrakech, Morocco h.darir@uca.ac.ma
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Abstract

Many elements contribute to the creation of suspense. In addition to the dramatic suspense proper, which is created through events, characterization, characters (both static and dynamic), environment (both static and dynamic), etc., there are also linguistic and stylistic elements. In the present study, which is a critical textual study of a translation that I personally completed for the short story collection *Time to Leave* and, in reference in particular to the short story "Rescue", we will focus primarily on the stylistic and linguistic elements necessary to the creation of suspense, mostly from a translation perspective. Nonetheless, we will not neglect other aspects that are not directly related to suspense but have a fundamental bearing to translation issues. It is to be noted that Ali Al-Kasimi is a master of both the suspense-building narrative style as well as the dramatic suspense.

Keywords: suspense, *Time to Leave*, *Rescue*, translation challenges, translation strategies

1. A Very Short Review of Literature

In the literature of translation, there are few dedicated studies to translating suspense, two of them are particularly worthy of being mentioned. The first study, which appeared in 2014, is a book that I haven't had the chance to read yet, as it is not available online. Judging from the publisher's website, the book seems to emphasize the importance of narrative dialogue in suspense novels.¹ The second study is a doctoral thesis defended at Newcastle University in 2017, and is available online. The thesis examines how suspense is recreated in three Chinese translations of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's novel "The Hound of the Baskervilles," one of the famous adventures of detective Sherlock Holmes. The author of the thesis questioned whether translation alters the suspense element and how.

As stated before, since translation challenges are not restricted to suspense, we will provide here a framework for analyzing narrative translations, a framework that focuses on suspense but does not ignore other equally important elements from a translation perspective.

2. The Title of the Narrative

Originally, I translated the title of the short story النجدة as *Help*, but on the writer's recommendation, Ali Al-Kasimi, and after consultation with the reviser, Richard Oakes Jr, I opted for the term *Rescue*. This turned out to be good advice. Indeed, on investigation, it turned out that there is a key difference between the two terms: rescue and help. "Helping is assisting someone to do something for themselves. Rescuing is saving someone from the consequences of their actions or the actions of another"². When someone cannot do anything for oneself, when what is needed is more than *advice, support or resources*, then someone has to come to the rescue.

¹ *The Voices of Suspense and Their Translation in Thrillers* edited by Susanne M. Cadera and Anita Pavić Pintarić (Brill, 2014)

² Helping and Rescuing: The Key Difference You Need to Understand - Sensitive and Strong (accessed December 2022, <https://sensitiveandstrong.com/helping-vs-rescuing/>).



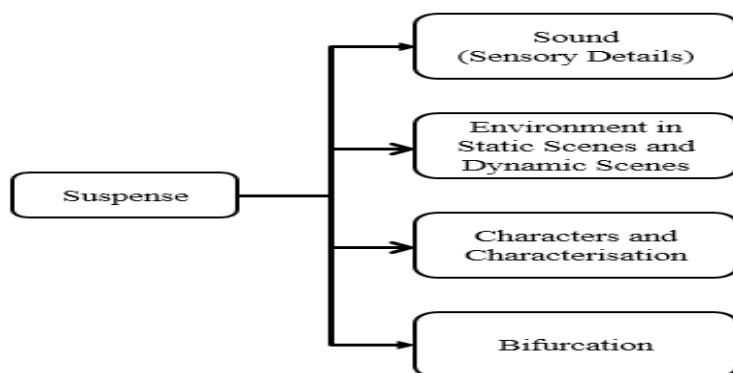
The title of this short story consists of just one word, which provides evidence of how concise the author is, or how summative he aspires to be. Since the title represents a summary of the content of the central subject of the text, this one-word title reflects the narrator's tendency to condense and focus. In its translation, the translator preserved the equivalent word in English, which has the further advantage that it does not even need the definite article as in Arabic.

3. The Plot

In terms of the dramatic plot, the short story relies excellently on the element of suspense, making it a thrilling narrative: a thriller. It shares common elements with other stories in the same collection, such as *Fear*, *Thirst*, *The Boat*, *The Gazelle*, and *The Ghost City*, weaving them together into integrated threads. These elements include horror, crime, violence, terror, mystery, and exoticism.

4. Suspense

To study suspense in the short story *Rescue*, we will adopt the theoretical framework proposed by Iwata (2008) and modified by Yi-Hsin Lin (2017) in their study of suspense. We will also incorporate additional elements that serve the translation of the short story and highlight translation strategies. It is worth noting that the aforementioned theoretical framework refers to the following elements:



Iwata's (2008) Suspense Model as Modified by Jessica Yi-Hsin Lin (2017), p. 71.

As evident, this model focuses on characters, plot, and the setting of events and scenes. It lacks many stylistic and rhetorical elements that contribute to creating suspense in a story or play. Therefore, we propose a model which we consider more important from a translator's perspective. We will only mention in passing elements related to characters or plot.

In our opinion, it is necessary to refer to the following elements in evaluating any work that involves suspense.

a. **Foreshadowing:** This consists in providing specific signals about upcoming events, such as focusing on specific details like a knock on the door, the turning of a key in the lock, the movement of a shadow in a corner, or other details that enhance suspense.



b. Setting: The place of the event, the surrounding environment, and the time of the action are collectively known as "setting".

c. Tone: The general atmosphere that is created in the work and that raises doubt, suspicion, fear, or rebellion in the reader or viewer. This serves the plot and affects the reader's or viewer's feelings.

d. Mood: The general impression the reader gets about the characters or the conflicts in the story. If the tone of a story is the feeling an author conveys in the story, mood is the feeling a reader gets while reading the story. Moods can range from bleak and depressing to hopeful or uplifting. A tone can be serious, sarcastic, wicked, proud, sympathetic, light-hearted, or hostile.

e. The intensive use of sound imitation (onomatopoeias), repetition, dialogue, and figurative images through sensory references.

f. Narrative focalization, emphasis, and repetition, which are related to thematization.

We will provide examples of these elements later on. We will also rely on Van Leuven-Zwart's (1989, 1990) theoretical framework, which is known as the "transeme model" for the analysis of the translated text with some modifications.

In studying suspense in the short story *Rescue*, in particular, or the collection of short stories, as a whole, it is interesting to observe the fact that had Alfred Hitchcock (1899–1980) and Ali Al-Kasimi met, a strong friendship would have developed between them, as each would find his counterpart in the other. Alfred Hitchcock was the master of horror and suspense on screen, while Ali Al-Kasimi excelled in the art of suspense and horror in literature. For example, when comparing the short story *Rescue* to the film *Breakdown*, by Alfred Hitchcock, we find similar dramatic elements, such as the isolation and failure of the protagonist, or rather, their inability to communicate with the outside world. This results in the impossibility of getting help, and represents the climax of the drama. The world of Alfred Hitchcock and that of Ali Al-Kasimi converge through the latter's story collection *Time to Leave*: suspense, excitement, anticipation, and horror. Events also bear similarities: a car accident, a serious injury almost leading the protagonist to death, and a lack of assistance, among others. However, the events take a happy ending in Hitchcock's film when the hero is rescued at the last moment after thinking he would be buried alive. On the other hand, *Rescue* introduces another surprise and a different twist, or in other words, another turn of the screw when it becomes clear that the person supposed to rescue the hero is nothing but a cunning thief.

We can also adopt Iwata's model to study the resolution of suspense. This model distinguishes between two main directions: resolving suspense or leaving it unresolved. In the first case, resolution may be desired, undesirable, or unexpected, while in the second case, non-resolution can be open or implicit.



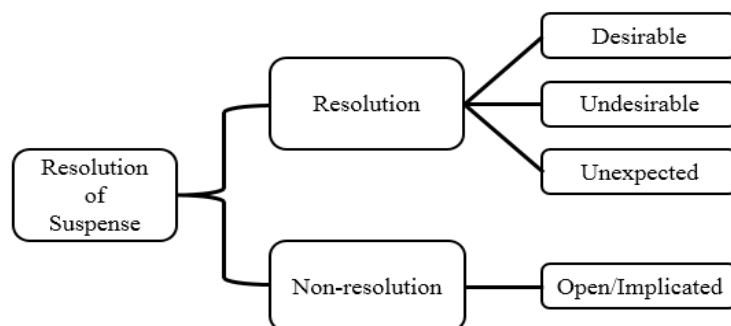


Figure 1: Iwata's resolution of suspense (reproduced from Jessica Yi-Hsin Lin, 2017: 41)

I won't dwell here on the suspense and horror aspects that characterize this short story collection but suffice it to say here that I sympathized with the reviewer to whom I sent the short stories successively, since I was the first to have experienced their terrifying worlds.

5. Syntax of the Narrative

At the linguistic level, the short story begins with very short sentences, as in much of the text, which contributes to the accelerated building of suspense in the first paragraph, with the exception of the last sentence. Furthermore, the reader is thrown into the story immediately, without the usual *foreshadowing*.

ST: فتح عينيه. لم يُبصر شيئاً. حدّق في اللاشيء، فلم يرَ، أوّل الأمر، سوى صفحةٍ من ضبابٍ كثيفٍ، أخذت تنقشع رويداً رويداً، ليتمكّن من تبيّن ما حوله شيئاً فشيئاً، ...

TT: He opened his eyes. He didn't see anything. He stared at the emptiness. At first, he saw nothing except a wall of thick fog, which was slowly dissolving, little by little, ...

The translator did what he could to catch up with this accelerated rhythm, but was only partially successful. The foreshowing proper, as a narrative device where the storyteller gives hints of what is to come later in the story, and which is part of the suspense elements, is postponed to the fourth paragraph, which starts with the following sentence:

ST: طريقٌ زراعيٌّ فرعيٌّ، نادراً ما تمرُّ منه السيّارات.

TT: Along a secondary agricultural road, where cars rarely pass, ...

Grammatically speaking, this is not a sentence proper. In translation the preposition "along" is added. This fragmented sentence reflects the desperation of the character in the short story.

In the first paragraph, for 41 words used in the source text, the translator used 59 words. This, however, is not necessarily an over-translation as word-counts differ between Arabic and English.

Overall, the short story is characterized by its short sentences, a fact that refers to the importance of time as a key element in the present story. Furthermore, punctuation is omnipresent in the text and acts as a timer, or as a stopwatch. The abundant use of



punctuation in the Arabic text is rather unusual for an Arabic text as in the following example:

ST: أحسَّ بالِّم شديد في رأسه، وفي صدره، وفي ذراعَيْه، وساقَيْه. كان مُمدِّدًا على قفاه على الأرض، بلا فراش ولا بساط. حاول أن ينهض، ولكنَّه لم يقوَ حتَّى على رفع رأسه. خَسِبَ أنَّه يستطيع النهوض إذا اتكأ على يده اليمنى، غير أنَّ ذراعه لم تستجِب له بأيَّة حركة، كما لو كانت خيوط الاتصال معها قد انقطعت بالمرَّة.

TT: He felt severe pain in his head, chest, arms, and legs. He was lying on his back on the ground, with no bed or rug. He tried to get up, but he couldn't even raise his head. He thought that he could get up if he leaned on his right hand, but his arm did not respond to any movement. It was as if the lines of communication with it had been totally severed.

The sequence of short sentences continues to reflect the man's surprise at his new condition: being injured and on the verge of dying. The majority of the narrative is written in short sentences, as mentioned above. Even the primarily descriptive paragraph no 5 includes narrative elements. The suspense is partly achieved through this accelerated rhythm.

6. The Writer and Encyclopedism

The writer demonstrates an encyclopedic profound knowledge. He is equally at ease talking about the art of painting and photographing, or the science of diagnosing and healing. Consider the following examples:

Example 1:

ST: كما تتمظهر مسودةُ صورةٍ فوتوغرافيةٍ بعد وضعها في محلول كاشف الألوان في المختبر.

TT: ..., just as a draft photograph appears after being placed in a color reagent solution in the laboratory.

We have here some very technical terms for which the use of a dictionary is a must. The picture behind the simile in the latter example may not be clear at all for a young person who has never seen such a process and who is only used to digital photography.

Example 2:

ST: لشدَّت الجرح بخرقه من قميصه فينقطع هذا النزيف. ما أيسر الأمر... كانت تُضمِّد له ذقنه بلصوق صغير، ...

TT: she would have bandaged the wound with a rag from his shirt, and the bleeding would have stopped. How easy this is... She used to bandage his chin with a little medical Band Aid, ...

The reference here is to a very simple action, with a technical term لصوق. Actually, the Unified Medical Dictionary has the term عَصَابَةٌ لَصُوقَةٌ for adhesive bandage.

Example 3:

ST: يضع أناملَ يده اليمنى على الجانب الأيسر من صدره، تحت .



سترتة. من المؤكّد أنّه يجسّ نبضه، ليتأكّد من بقاءه حيًّا... يحسّ بالرجل يُمرّر يده على صدره، تتعثر بجيب سترته. لا يُدّ أنّه يريد تمسيد قلبه لتنشيطه. وبعد قليل تنتقل أنامل الرجل إلى معصم يده اليسرى. يضغط على المعصم قليلاً. لا شك أنّه يجسّ نبضه من معصمه بعد أن امتنعت عليه دقات قلبه.

TT: ... and places the fingertip of his right hand on the left side of his chest, under his jacket. Sure enough, he's feeling his pulse, to make sure that he's alive..... He feels the man passing his hand over his chest, stumbling over his jacket pocket. He must have wanted to stroke his heart to energize him. Shortly, thereafter, the man's fingertips moved to the wrist of his left hand. He slightly presses the wrist. Undoubtedly, he is sensing his pulse from his wrist, since he could not detect his heartbeat.

Apart from the detailed description of feeling the pulse, etc., this section is highly sarcastic.

The writer is also an expert on human psychological nature as in the following example:

ST: حَوَّلَ بَصَرَهُ إِلَى ذِرَاعِهِ، فَرَاغَهُ مَنَظَرُ بَقْعَةٍ مِنَ الدَّمِ عَلَى كُمِّ سِتْرَتِهِ. دُعِرَ، فَصَرَخَ بِأَقْصَى قُوَّتِهِ، يَبْدُو أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَسْمَعْ صَرْخَةً، وَلَا صَوْتًا، وَلَا مَجْرَدَ نَافَاةٍ. أَغْمَضَ عَيْنَيْهِ.

TT: He turned his eyes to his arm, and he was shocked by the sight of traces of blood on the sleeve of his jacket. He panicked. He cried out as loud as he could, but he heard no response, no voice, not even a faint sound. He closed his eyes.

This does remind us of how weak we are, how keen we are on life and how fearful we are of death.

7. Al-Kasimi: The Terminologist and the Lexicographer

It follows from the previous section that the vocabulary is at times technical as in: مسودةٌ (the emptiness). Thus, Al-Kasimi proves that he is not only a great writer and novelist, but he is also a great lexicographer and terminologist. The fact that Al-Kasimi has a rich vocabulary stock ثروة لغوية is shown by the following examples:

Example 1:

ST: إذا ما انجرح أثناء حلاقة الصباح

TT: if it was wounded during the morning shave

It is to be noted here that the verb انجرح, which is molded on the morphological pattern انفعَلَ, conveys a more accurate meaning than the more usual form (جرح), and has been translated as be wounded; be injured. The form انجرح, which is perfectly regular, is not attested in *Lissan al-Arab* or in the classic Arabic dictionaries, but is attested in معجم اللغة العربية المعاصرة.³

Another example of how careful Al-Kasimi is about the words he selects is provided by the following example:

Example 2:

³ انجرحَ يُنْجَرِحُ، انجرحًا، فهو مُنْجَرِحٌ • انجرح السائقُ بعد الحادث: مُطَاوَع جَرَحَ: أَصِيبَ بِشَقٍّ فِي جِسْمِهِ (معجم اللغة العربية المعاصرة)



ST: بَيِّدَ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَسْمَعْ صَرْخَةً، وَلَا صَوْتًا، وَلَا مَجْرَدَ نَأْمَةٍ.

TT: but he heard no response, no voice, not even a faint sound.

According to *Assihah fi Allugha* and *Lissan Al-Arab*: الصوت is النَّأْمَةُ⁴، بالتسكين. *Lissan Al-Arab* further adds:

النَّأْمَةُ [الصوت] وهو كالأنين وقيل هو كالزَّجِير وقيل هو الصوت الضعيف الخفي أيًّا كان.

It is this last meaning of the word that is meant in this context.

It is interesting to observe how these terms: صرخة, صوت, and نأمة follow a decreasing order in their degree of loudness from صرخة, which is a loud shrill piercing cry, i.e. scream, to نأمة, a faint sound. In light of this analysis, I am thinking of replacing the selected contextual word *response* with the literal equivalent of صرخة, which *scream*. Sounds play an important role in suspense narratives. We will say more about this in connection with onomatopoeia.

Another example demonstrating the large terminological stock of Ali Al-Kasimi is the following:

Example 3:

ST: وَلَمْ الْإِحْسَاسَ بِهَذَا الْوَجَعِ الْمُمِضِّ فِي الرَّأْسِ؟

TT: Why is there this feeling of agonizing pain in the head?

Concerning الْوَجَعِ الْمُمِضِّ, الْوَجَعِ is مُضِضٌ, اسم فاعل (active participle; agent, nomen agenti) from مُضَضٌ, whereas الْمُمِضُّ is مُمْضٌ, اسم المفعول (noun of patient) from the same root. In *Mukhtar Assihah*, we find:

أَمَضُّهُ الْجُرْحُ: أَوْجَعَهُ وَمَضَّهُ لُغَةً فِيهِ وَالْكُلُّ يَمُضُّ الْعَيْنَ أَيُّ يُحْرِقُهَا (مختار الصحاح)

In *Lissan Al-Arab*, we read:

مَضَّنِي الْهَمُّ وَالْحُزْنُ وَالْقَوْلُ يَمُضُّنِي مَضًّا وَمَضِيضًا وَأَمَضَّنِي: أَحْرَقَنِي وَشَقَّ عَلَيَّ، وَالْهَمُّ يَمُضُّ الْقَلْبَ أَيُّ يُحْرِقُهُ (لسان العرب).

It is this tormenting and burning pain that has been translated as “agonizing pain”. It is true that the translator had to use dictionaries to check the meaning of الْمُمِضِّ, even though its meaning is evident from the context. الْوَجَعِ الْمُمِضِّ = agonizing, tormenting, burning pain. Other examples that demonstrate the rich terminological stock of Ali Al-Kasimi can be found in his reference to فِيرْقًا الدَّمِ, i.e. bleeding would stop, and أَصَابِعَهَا الْبُضَّةَ, i.e. her thin-skinned; tender-skinned fingers.

8. Ali Al-Kasimi: The Multi-cultural Scholar: Intertextuality:

The narrator resorts to intertextuality and cultural references. Luckily for the translator, the intertextual elements and cultural references in the present narrative originally belong to the Western literature. Therefore, English readers would have no problems identifying them. We give here two examples of intertextuality:

⁴ <https://www.maajim.com/>



Example 1:

ST: إنَّه في حالته هذه أشبه ما يكون برجل كافكا الصرصار، غير أنَّه لا حراك به.

TT: In this state, he is similar to Kafka's cockroach man ...except that he is motionless.

The reference here is to Franz Kafka's novel *Metamorphosis* where the hero, Gregor, wakes up one morning that is like every other morning, except for the fact that he has been inexplicably transformed into a giant bug, which is usually depicted in popular culture and adaptations of the novella as a large cockroach. This is, in itself, an example of *Absurdist* fiction and existentialist literature, and it contributes to the present theme of the short story *Rescue*.

It is to be observed that *Metamorphosis* has been translated at least three times into Arabic, consecutively by إبراهيم وطفي (2014) as الانمساخ; مبارك وساط (2015) as التحول and الدودة الهائلة as الدسوقي فهمي.

Example 2:

ST: وهو ساكنٌ هناك في انتظار غودو،

TT: and he is still there waiting for Godot.

This is another intertextual cultural reference. This time the reference is to the play known by the title of *Waiting for Godot*. In this play, by Samuel Beckett, two characters, Vladimir (Didi) and Estragon (Gogo), engage in a variety of discussions and encounters while awaiting for the so-called Godot, who never arrives. Representing the theatre of the Absurd, the play considers the absolute absurdity of the existence in lack of any intrinsic purpose. Therefore, both fictional and cultural references are pertinent to the theme of the short story at hand. The play has been translated into Arabic by بول شاوول (2009).

Example 3:

ST: و (لم) نصال الألم المغمدة في أطراف الجسد كلِّه؟

TT: And why are the blades of pain stabbing in the extremities of the whole body?

Blades, swords, daggers, and palm trees constitute the privileged images of Ali al-Kasimi. At the lexical level, there is not much change between the ST and the TT. At the syntactic level, however, there are a lot of interesting shifts. *المغمدة*, which has the form of the noun for patient is rendered as an -ing participle, which is a more vivid picture and a case of gain.

Example 4:

ST: استجمع شظايا فكره.

TT: He collected his fragmented thoughts.



The term شظايا, whose singular is شظية, means fragments, pieces split off. It normally refers to something concrete such as bone, wood, etc.⁵. Therefore, this is another metaphor. Besides the image behind it, the metaphor is interesting from the translation perspective because it represents one of the instances where the translator found it necessary to resort to transposition. In back translation, “his fragmented thoughts” translates as فكره المنشطر أو المشتت.

Example 5:

ST: لَمَلَمَ شتات ذاكرته،

TT: He recalled his memories.

The term شتات is a deverbal noun from شَتَّ, in the sense of تَفَرَّقَ to separate, disunite, or disperse. لَمَلَمَ means to gather up, or collect. ذاكرة, here, is understood as ذكريات memories, not the physical memory. Therefore, literally, لَمَلَمَ شتات ذاكرته means he collected his dispersed memories. It is evident that the translator preferred to render this metaphor in a more natural way in the TT. It is to be noted that this last sentence, together with the previous one, namely استجمع شظايا فكره form two very brief, parallel and syntactically similar structures and, as such, contribute to narrative focalization and emphasis.

Example 6:

ST: قبل أن ينفد زيت الحياة.

TT: before the oil of life runs out.

The metaphor of the oil of life seems to be universal and stems from the fact that, in the remote past, lamps used oil as fuel. Furthermore, “There appears to have been a tradition in certain circles according to which the tree of life in the Garden of Eden was an olive tree (a tradition which is not found in Talmud or Midrash, cf. Ber. 40a; Gen. R. 15:7)”⁶. As a universal metaphor, the image did not raise any problem in the course of translation, especially that its origin might be biblical.

Example 7:

ST: كفاتل يرتدي طاقية الإخفاء.

TT: like a masked killer

⁵ According to E. W. Lane's *Arabic English Lexicon*, شُظِيَّة is “A splinter, or piece split off, (T, S, M, Mgh, Msb, K,) of a staff, or stick, and the like, (S,) or of wood, (T, Mgh, Msb,) and the like, (Msb,) or of a reed, or cane, (T, Mgh,) or of silver, (T, TA,) or of bone, (T, Mgh,) or of anything: (M, K:) pl. شُظَايَا (S, Msb, K, &c.) and شُظَى (K,) [or rather this is a coll. gen. n.,] like as رَكِيَّة is of رَكِيَّة (TA,) or a quasi—pl. n., like غَبِيَّة, improperly said by IAar to be pl. of شُظَى (ISd, TA,) and شُظَى (K, TA, [in the latter as omitted in the K, with kesr to the ش on account of the same vowel—sound following,]) mentioned by Sgh, from Ks. (TA.) AO terms the إِبْرَة [q. v.] at the head of the elbow [of the horse] a شُظِيَّة adhering to the ذِرَاع, but not [forming a portion] of it. (TA. [See شُظَى.])” (London: Williams & Norgate 1863, retrieved from <http://www.tyndalearchive.com/TABS/Lane/>).

⁶ <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/oil-life>



In classical mythology, as well as in Arabic folk literature, *طاقية الإخفاء*, in literal translation ‘cap of invisibility’, was a helmet or cap that can turn the wearer invisible. This has been rendered in a modern way as a “masked killer”.

Example 8:

ST: سيفه المسلول ذلك الدم الهارب خارج الجسد مع النبض، قطرة فقطرة.

TT: its unsheathed sword was that blood escaping out of the body with each pulse, drop by drop.

This segment describes the character’s weakness as he is struggling with bleeding, which is compared to an enemy or sword. This image of a sword as an enemy has been conveniently preserved in the TL. Swords, daggers and palm trees are preferred images or symbolic devices that the writer takes from the local culture⁷, while at the same time being intellectually open to all cultures, as in his references to Kafka's cockroach man, or to waiting for Godot.

9. Narrative Focalization, Emphasis and Repetition

This focalization⁸ by the omniscient narrator on the main character in the narrative, who is referred to throughout the narrative as “he”, and emphasis on his critical condition is clear from the presence of 75 narrative sentences as opposed to the existence of only 12 descriptive sentences that relate to the immediate environment (in the present short story the static scene) in which the character in the story finds himself: namely a secondary agricultural road, which adds to the suspense, given the man’s critical health condition.

The emphasis on the man’s critical situation is achieved through the continued reference to the fact that the person is bleeding as in:

- a. بقعة الدم تتسع وتتسع (The blood stain was incessantly spreading),
- b. الدم الهارب خارج الجسد مع النبض، قطرة فقطرة (that blood escaping out of the body with each pulse, drop by drop),
- c. بقعة الدم تتسع وتتسع (The blood stain was incessantly spreading),
- d. وبقعة الدم تكبر وتكبر (And the blood stain grew wider and wider),
- e. بقعة الدم تتسع وتتسع (But the spot of blood is ever-expanding),
- f. وبقعة الدم تتحول إلى الأرض بجانبه (The spot of blood was dripping to the ground beside him),
- g. وبقعة الدم على الأرض تتسع (And the spot of blood on the ground expands),

⁷ Cf. also in this short story: “ونصل الألم المغمدة في أطراف الجسد كله”، or elsewhere in the same short story collection:

- “سأعيش رجلاً منكسراً في داخلي، مثل نخلة أصابت جذعها طعنة فأس قاصمة” (الخوف)،
 - “ما فائدة انغراز جذور النخلة في أعماق التربة، عندما ينقصم جذعها، وتهوي إلى الأرض” (المدينة الشبح)
 - “أما نحن، فجذورنا جذور نخلة تضرب بعيداً في أعماق التربة، وليس في مقبورها أن ترحل مع الريح كالأشنيات (المدينة الشبح)،
 - “أجبتُه قائلاً إنَّ سعفات النخلة قد تهتز مع الريح، ولكنَّ جذورها ثابتة في الأعماق” (المدينة الشبح).

⁸ Focalization is a term coined by the French narrative theorist Gerard Genette. It refers to the perspective through which a narrative is presented.

(<https://www.definitions.net/definition/focalization>).



But, quite interestingly, this reference to the ever-larger spot of blood is achieved in diverse ways. This creative emphatic repetition challenges the translator. In the example (a), the repetition of تَنْسَعُ وَتَنْسَعُ is replaced by an adverb, *incessantly*, in (d) the repetition is reproduced in the TL, in (e) the repetition is replaced by another adverb (i.e. *ever*). Even though repetition is also possible in English, it seems less tolerated than in Arabic. Narrative focalization, emphasis and repetition, which are related to the issue of thematization in fiction, represent real challenges to the translator.

10. Sound Elements in the Narrative

Concerning sound elements in the narrative, we have already given examples of how careful Ali Al-Kasimi is in his selection of words with respect to the terms: نأمة, صوت, and صرخة. In this section we would like to focus specifically on onomatopoeic words. First, it is evident that just as no suspense movie is ever complete without sound effects, no suspense story is complete without some onomatopoeic words. In the present story, there is a fair number of onomatopoeias or sounds in general as in the following examples:

ST: وعصافيرٌ بيضاء لا تكف عن الزرققة التي تنتاهى إلى أذنيه: دويًّا متصلاً كدويٍّ منبعثٍ من خلية نحل.

TT: and white birds ceaselessly *chirping*. It comes to his ears as a continuous *thump* of a beehive.

ST: فصرخ بأقصى قوّته

TT: He cried out as loud as he could

ST: ترتفع ضربات قلبه قليلاً

TT: His heartbeat rises slightly,

ST: حتّى إن لم تتناه إلينا دقات قلبي.

TT: even if you cannot feel my heartbeats⁹

ST: ثمّ يسمع خطوات الرجل تبتعد عنه في اتجاه السيارة

TT: Then he hears the man's footsteps moving away from him in the direction of the car.

ST: ولا هدير لسيارةٍ قادمة.

TT: nor the roar of an oncoming car.

11. Dialogue

There is a close relationship between the elements of suspense and narrative dialogue. Evidently, dialogue creates suspense, contributes to the credibility of the plot, and gives characters their voices and distinctive features. In this short story, however, Ali Al-Kasimi replaced direct dialogue with monologue.

⁹ Note incidentally at the grammatical level that the addressee is a patient in Arabic but an agent in English.



12. Reconstructing Suspense in Translation: Gain and Loss

Before talking about gain and loss in the translation of this short story in the technical sense, it is necessary to refer to a type of gain that is usually not mentioned in the literature of translation because it does not fall within the technical concept of gain. In fact, the translator always gains something, at least at the level of enhancing and deepening his or her understanding of the ST. There is also the advantage that translation “gains” new readers to the ST. Nonetheless, the translator's understanding of the ST text is not enough, he or she must render the translated text with the most accurate techniques and convey its meaning in the best possible way. Evidently, this is difficult to achieve due to reasons that have been repeatedly detailed in the literature of translation. This is why translation critics often focus on the issue of loss in translation. Although translation loss is almost a granted matter, it is most salient when the author of the ST is fluent in his or her language, when the translator is unable to match the original writer, and when the TL lacks the characteristics of the SL. There is no doubt that the reader will find many cases of loss in the present translation. Therefore, we suggest to focus here on only one case of profit.

The denouement signaled by the following:

"نَسْمَةُ عَلِيَّةٍ تَمَسُّ وَجْهَهُ مَسًّا خَفِيفًا. يَفْتَحُ عَيْنَيْهِ بِجَهْدٍ بَالِغٍ. يَلْمَحُ شَيْئًا طَوِيلًا دَاكِنًا يَتَحَرَّكُ مِنْ بَعِيدٍ. بِصُعُوبَةٍ يُبْقِي جَفْنَيْهِ الثَّقِيلَيْنِ مُوَارِبَيْنِ. يَرَى إِنْسَانًا يَسِيرُ. نَعَمْ، إِنَّهُ إِنْسَانٌ"

turns out to be false. In fact, this is another turn of the screw in this short story. The long-awaited relief never comes and the moments of hope are short. The previous Arabic sentences are very short, probably suggesting that the man is now very weak. The translator did try to follow the original writer in using short sentences, but he also tried to exploit the many references to the coming person to make it clear that the main character was unable, at first, to recognize whether the coming person was male or female: “He perceives a person walking. Yes, s/he is a human being. S/he is moving towards him. S/he is heading towards him, no doubt. S/he's getting closer (...) with his eyes closed, he feels that the next man stops for a little while (...).” In light with the feminine doctrine, the translator preferred to refer to the person as s/he till the reader is given clear evidence that the coming person is a male, which occurs in the following paragraph: “(...) he feels that the next man stops for a little while, (...)”. The story came to an end as the main character bitterly realized that no help was coming, and that what he took for help was the work of a thief.

Conclusion

In Arabic, the whole short story consists of 645 words and runs through 2 pages, which is within the ideal size of a short story (Hussein Sarmak, 2016: 11). Its translation consists of 931 words and runs through 2 pages. This fact seems to imply that the translation is longer, i.e. it is an overtranslation. In fact, there are two things to be considered here. First, word counting differs between English and Arabic. Second, by definition, translations tend to be longer and act as explanations (the explicitation hypothesis). Also, in light with similar suspense stories, the characteristics that were found to be salient in the present story are very short sentences for the narrative components, and the rich presence of images for the descriptive part.



Hussein Sarmak (2016) summarizes the story in 5 words: "man is an evil animal". According to the writer himself, this is more than the story of a single man or individual men. The Writer once passed to me the remark that this short story is a parable of the American invasion of Iraq. Those who expected all the problems of Iraq to be solved by the invasion were quickly deceived. The short story portrays how selfish, opportunist, and evil man can be. It leaves the reader with bitter feelings about the human condition, in general, and that of Iraq, in particular. Compared to the short story *Fear* by the same writer in the present short story collection, the horror in *Rescue*, is of a different type. It is the same horror of a pilot dropping bombs on unidentified people and thinking that his/her conscience is at ease.

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