

Translating Mohammed Dib's style in *Who Remembers the Sea*: A cognitive stylistics-based assessment

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Résumé : Le style d'un auteur représente sa manière singulière de créer sa littérature. Du point de vue de la stylistique cognitive, le style révèle aussi ses pensées, son point de vue et sa révolte contre les phénomènes qui le contrarient. En ce qui concerne la traduction littéraire, la focalisation sur l'importance de la reproduction du style original se justifie par le fait que c'est à travers le style qu'on transmet non seulement une information mais aussi une attitude. En le reproduisant dans le texte cible, on rend justice à l'individualité de l'auteur maghrébin en tant que créateur à respecter. Cet article propose une évaluation de la traduction anglaise du roman de l'écrivain Algérien Mohammed Dib, *Qui se souvient de la mer* au niveau de sa fidélité au style original. Dib est un écrivain complet et un fondateur de la littérature algérienne. Il se distingue en étant poète et romancier dont les œuvres oscillent entre réalisme et surréalisme. Cette oscillation a pour résultat une 'contamination' des genres l'un par l'autre et permet une poétisation de sa prose romanesque¹. Cet aspect dibéen doit être pris en considération pour le traducteur pour le bien traduire. Selon la théorie de l'intégrité artistique Jin Di (2003) et la stylistique cognitive telle qu'elle est conçue par Boase-Beier (2010), cette étude démontre que les échecs résultent notamment de la mauvaise application d'une des étapes suivantes : la pénétration, l'acquisition, la transition et la présentation, car c'est au niveau de celles-ci que tous les éléments littéraires sont révélés, notamment l'esprit du texte, le génie de la langue, le ton et la saveur du texte, etc., et tout cela se constitue principalement dans le style de l'auteur.

Abstract

Style is every author's distinctive manner of using language and achieving literariness. From a cognitive stylistic viewpoint, an author's particular style does reflect their own unique view of the world. As far as translation is concerned, authors' attitudes and visions verbalized through their individual styles need to figure prominently in whatever language they appear in. This article assesses from a cognitive stylistic perspective the English translation of Algerian Mohammed Dib's novel *Qui se souvient de la mer* in terms of its faithfulness to original style. Dib is 'un écrivain complet' and a key founding figure of Algerian literature, excelling in prose and poetry, and masterfully oscillating between realism and surrealism. This rare oscillation results in different genres getting 'contaminated' by one another in a way that poeticizes Dibeian prose. Awareness of this unique Dibeian literary trait on the part of the translator is a necessary starting point for a quality translation. This paper takes as a framework for judging a 'good' translation the work of Chinese Jin Di's theory of artistic integrity (2003) and German Boase-Beier's cognitive stylistic model. (2010). The assessment will demonstrate the ways translating failures, if any, would result directly from failures in applying one or more of the hermeneutics-inspired four stages proposed by Jin Di (2003): penetration, acquisition, transition and presentation, as these are processes meant to scrutinize every aspect of the literary text, namely its spirit, substance, overtone, flavor and imagery.

¹ Khadda, N. (1996). Mohammed Dib. Retrieved from <http://limag.refer.org/Textes/Manuref/DIB.htm>

Introduction

1. Matters of style and methodological issues in literary translation quality assessment

Literary recognition is dependent on the popular appreciation of certain typical styles. However, besides of the aesthetic appeal of individual styles, cognitive stylisticians (e.g. Parks, 2007; Boase-Beier, 2010) tend to equate every style with 'a certain vision of reality' and affirm that styles are essentially 'clues to the author's mind'. They therefore insist that literary translators should focus on reproducing the stylistic character of original texts and their associated individual visions in the target languages. Technically, a given style represents an 'original deviation from normal language usage to express an emotion and generate an aesthetic effect' (Herrmann, Dalen-Oskam & Schöch, 2015, p. 34). Features of a given style may stand out at such a wide range of levels as 'the choice of words, the use of tropes, sentence structure and composition, structure, tone of voice, connotation/association, narrative technique, etc' (Ghazala, 2018, p. 37). Wales (1989) warns that translators should not 'regard style decoratively' but look at it as 'some kind of expressive emphasis added to an utterance' (p.399). With respect to literary writing in particular, Ghazala (2018) also noted that a given style represents the 'genius' and 'spirit' of the literary text and a reflection of the author's mind' (p. 15).

This paper takes as a framework for judging a 'good' translation the work of two geographically distant but theoretically related scholars Chinese Jin Di (2003) and German Boase-Beier (2010). Jin Di theorizes about 'artistic integrity' in translation as being a holistic view of what a quality translation looks like. The term integrity is intended by Di to mean both completeness and principled professional practice. Completeness indicates that the various aspects of a text's 'message', namely its substance, spirit, and flavor, are to be preserved in the translation. Similarly, because artistic integrity is inextricably linked to intellectual integrity, justice should be done to the original author's sense of individuality, which is simply reflected in their own unique style. Artistic Integrity is thus said to be attained when a translator moves beyond word-for-word or sense-for-sense solutions and seeks to regenerate the effect of the message. The concept of 'the *message*' is of paramount importance since it is '*more than information*'. It covers not only the substance of the communication, but also the manner, the tone, and the subtleties that help the communication to produce its desired effect (Di, 2003, p.52). Boase-Beier (2010), one of the prominent researchers who have strongly advocated a cognitive stylistic approach to translation assessment, maintains that 'by attempting to reconstruct the style of a text, the translator is attempting to reconstruct states of mind and thought processes, always with the awareness

that individual states of mind are affected by social and cultural influences' (p.54). In this sense, faithfulness to style is essentially faithfulness to the genius or spirit of the literary work and through it to the language and culture it comes from.

The point is that translation proper is one that is sensitive to the essence of the source literary text, namely to its style- 'its formal linguistic characteristics, its contribution to what the text means' (Boase-Beier, 2010, p.58). Along the same line, Gutt (2010) insists that 'faithfulness in matters not only of content but also of style is demanded' and so considers that a good translation is one that reestablishes 'the relationship between features of style, as communicative clues and the meanings to which these clues point'. (as cited in Boase-Beier, 2010, p.59).

The coming section in this article assesses from a cognitive stylistic perspective the English translation of Algerian Mohammed Dib's novel *Qui se souvient de la mer* in terms of its faithfulness to original style. Dib is 'un écrivain complet' and a key founding figure of Algerian literature, excelling in prose and poetry, and masterfully oscillating between realism and surrealism. This rare oscillation results in different genres getting 'contaminated' by one another in a way that poeticizes Dibeian prose. Awareness of this unique Dibeian literary trait on the part of the translator is a necessary starting point for a quality translation. This paper takes as a framework for judging a 'good' translation the work of Chinese Jin Di's theory of artistic integrity (2003) and German Boase-Beier's cognitive stylistic model. (2010). The assessment will demonstrate the ways translating failures, if any, would result directly from failures in applying one or more of the hermeneutics-inspired four stages proposed by Jin Di (2003): penetration, acquisition, transition and presentation, as these are processes meant to scrutinize every aspect of the literary text, namely its spirit, substance, overtone, flavor and imagery.

2. Mohammed Dib's *Qui se souvient de la mer* by: Contextualizing remarks

2.1 About the author

Algeria is by far the land of the most prominent and most prolific francophone Maghrebian novelists. Critics refer to the different developments in the life of Algerian literature as 'manières' [literary manners] that have been adapting to the changing realities of the Algerian society. In almost every commentary about Francophone Maghrebian literature, the name of Algerian author Mohammed Dib constantly stands out as 'un écrivain complet' [a versatile writer] (Bonn, 1988), and a key founding figure of Algerian literature, excelling in prose and poetry, and masterfully oscillating between realism and surrealism. This rare

oscillation results in what Khadda (1996) calls 'la contamination des genres l'un par l'autre et la poétisation croissante de la prose romanesque ainsi que la "narrativisation" de la poésie dibienne'² (para. 8).

After he had made fame with a trilogy of predominantly realist novels, *La grande maison* (1952), *L'incendie* (1954) and *Le métier à tisser* (1957), portraying the details of the Algerian society under colonization, Dib entered a new phase of surrealist experimentation represented by his subsequent novel *Qui se souvient de la mer*, which marked a shift of thought that Maghrebian narratives should no longer simply be 'un instrument de connaissance' [a mere source of worldly knowledge] but should contribute to a new form of universal 'interrogation sur l' homme et expression de la difficulté d'être dans un monde hostile' [questioning of the human condition in a contemporary hostile world] (para. 33).

This transition is a result of a new consciousness of the limitations of realist novels in trying to draw a faithful picture of the horrors of the Algerian war of Independence. Bonn (1988) quotes Dib's postface statement in the novel that 'Un récit linéaire, documentaire, réaliste de l'événement risquait de se dissoudre dans l'enfer de banalité dont l'horreur a su s'entourer et nous entourer'³ (para. 65). A confirmation of this reasoning was also stated by Smail (1991) who viewed that Dib did actually realize that, 'if he were to portray the war in the same realistic fashion as his earlier trilogy, the outcome would be a simple documentary account of the events of the war (...) The cruelties experienced by men in the twentieth century are greater than any realistic description; so that only a revolutionary manner of expression could convey the apocalyptic horror of the Algerian war' (p.233).

Qui se souvient de la mer was therefore a rupture with Dibbian realism and an initiation of his new career into what Khadda (1996) referred to as 'l'esthétique fantastique' [the aesthetics of fantasy], which technically consists in 'la création d'un mythe collectif, 'un monde symbolique, et la fusion totale de l'imaginaire et du réel, du monde objectif et subjectif' [the creation of a collective myth, a symbolic universe that subsumes a total fusion of real and imaginary, subjective and objective worlds] (Trifu, 2000, p. 30).

Like most modernist writing, a shared characteristic among Dib's volumes of novels, poetry and stories is, according to Adjemian (2016), the synergy established between the

² This rare oscillation results in different genres getting contaminated by one another in a way that poeticizes Dibeian prose and somewhat 'narrativizes' his poetry.

³ A realist, documentary as a linear text runs the risk of dissolving into "the hell of banality with which we are surrounded.

'visible', the immediately given details of life [...] and the 'invisible' larger structures or processes that link disparate elements without being themselves describable'(p. 2). The novel's translator into English, Tremaine (1988), praised Dib's unprecedented success in drawing an open-ended allegorical picture of the war.

Francophone Algerian fiction has nowhere captured the Algerian revolution with as much intensity or immediacy as it has in Mohammed Dib's Qui se souvient de la mer, and yet the words "Algeria" and "revolution" are conspicuously absent from the text, as is, in fact, any specific historical reference to colonialism or the struggle for independence in North Africa. Instead, we find an expressionistic tableau of fantastic creatures, moving walls, underground cities, and people metamorphosed into statues, all seen through the eyes of an unnamed narrator-protagonist whose major concern is the whereabouts of his wife (p.282).

2.2 Notes on the novel

Commenting first of all on the significance of the original French title, Still (2016) discusses at length the meaningful homophony associating the word *Mer* with *Mère*, showing that in times of war what one only needs is the quietude and peace of mind that both the sea and the mother figure are capable of offering. Dib symbolises 'La mer' as 'un élément protecteur, aux fonctions essentiellement maternelles, ou du moins féminines. Elle est enveloppement et mémoire, car elle a porté l'homme comme une mère' [a protective element, with essentially maternal functions, or at least feminine functions. It is the nest and memory that embraces man like a mother] (Bonn, 1988, para. 118). The feminine role as a comforting element is a major theme embodied in the person of Nafissa, the narrator's wife, who in tough times is always there 'to console her tormented husband' (Smail, 1991). Her presence represents the dual mental image of both *La mer* and *La Mère*,

In terms of plot, the novel features a couple living in an unnamed war-torn city which gradually becomes their 'piège tragique' [tragic trap] where 'L'enfermement, la clôture, entraînent le manque, le désir [de trouver] des espaces ouverts [...] et d'autre chose avec quoi communiquer, car la communication a besoin d'espace où fleurir, alors que dans la ville les habitants pétrifiés sont captifs de leurs propres murs'⁴ (Bonn, 1988, para. 92).

Dibbien style constructs a sympathetic universal picture of 'trapped inhabitants' caught in war zones. His whole narrative is structured around 'an apocalyptic nightmare

⁴ Where confinement and enclosure cause a desperate feeling of void, and a desire for open spaces, be they the countryside or the sea, a desire for something with which to communicate, because communication needs space for it to flourish, while in the city the petrified inhabitants [...] are captives of their own walls.

vision of life' (Poole, 1997, p. 89). The assessment of the English translation of this novel will seek to evaluate the extent to which the translator manages, as does Dib, to break down the barrier between realistic prose and poetic surrealist writing (Adjemian, 2016, p. 29).

2.3 About the translating body

An English translation of a Maghrebian novel is provided by Three Continents Press (now Lynne Rienner Press), which has a long history of publishing works from 'Third World' literatures. The novel is translated by Louis Tremain who reportedly had contact with Mohammed Dib prior to the translation. However, Tremain admits to the difficulty of dealing with this novel which differs tremendously from all the preceding Dibbean works and which, together with Kateb Yacine's *Nedjma*, constitutes an outright breakaway from traditional documentary realism which characterized most Maghrebian novels at the time.

3. Four-level assessment of the translation

3.1 Penetration move assessment

The initial penetration stage in the translating process, as its name suggests, dictates that a translator should fully 'enter the linguistic and cultural environment of the source text in order for him to understand 'the *whatness* of things and feelings' (Di, 2003, p. 67). A first positive indication of the success of the penetration stage appears in the translator's acknowledgement statement in which he expresses indebtedness to his specialist informant for helping him 'unravel various linguistic and cultural ambiguities'. This suggests that the translator had legitimately sought assistance in understanding the core particularities of the source context. Louis Tremain was also greatly helped by Dib's explanatory post-face which the author adds to clear up the many ambiguities of his 'hallucinatory' narrative, and explain why he uncharacteristically opted for such a 'legendary framework' to treat the horrors of the Algerian war.

Because a translation is after all a reflection of a given reading of the text, based of course on a necessary accumulation of relevant linguistic and cultural knowledge, the translator here comes to the view of *Who remembers the sea* as being a metaphor of a bleak life 'in a strange and hostile city whose inhabitants are ruled by *minotaurs* and *mummies*, gravely deafened by the explosive rising of new constructions, chased and trapped by serpentine walls, transformed into stone statues, mocked by bird-like creatures called *spyrovirs* and *iriace* and abandoned by once a maternal sea now gone deep underground'. The

words in italics are all invented by Dib to fit into the fantastic world he created. These have been subject to some ‘allegorical interpretations’ taking the *minotaurs* to stand for the French Army, the *spyrovirs* for the French aircraft, *the new constructions* for the French secret Army Organisation and the *underground city* for the National Liberation Front. Therefore, what readers get, he adds, is not ‘the glory of the revolution but its psychic horror’ as experienced by those who neither choose nor understand the revolution, however desirable the outcome may be’.

Keeping track of the author’s career development is a requirement for a professional translator and an assurance of quality, particularly in the case of an ‘écrivain complet’ such as Mohammed Dib whose multi-genre oeuvre typifies all the core characteristics of Maghrebian literature one finds scattered in the works of individual writers. Termaine’s introduction suggests he did exactly this. He begins by evoking Dib’s own reflections on his developments as a writer consciously and willingly shifting to an ‘aleatory’ mode of writing in which meaning shifts endlessly [...], is not enclosed within a word or a sentence [...] and it strolls at will’. This proves that from the start the translator is aware that the ‘random unfolding of the events’ has in it a certain underlying ‘logic that is beyond the control or understanding of both the narrator-protagonist himself and his readers, who will only continue seeking answers they know exist but should remain hidden from them’.

The assessment with regard to the penetration stage and in subsequent stages looks into the extent to which the target text demonstrates the translator’s awareness of this work’s three core aspects: The blurring line between poetry and prose in Dib’s writing, his aleatory mode of writing as well as his hallucinatory tone.

Dib is originally a poet, and imprints of his poeticity should still be present in his prose. In studying the translator’s initial act of penetration into the source text world, the aim should be to examine the ways he has dealt with the dimensions of the ‘monde fantastique’ to which Dib wished to invite his readers. One feature of this fantastic world is, among other things, the tremendous animacy attributed to the *mer/mur* elements in Dib’s innovative style. Attempts at concretizing this world would undermine the spirit of the original. It will be shown that Termaine’s translation has its overall merit for generally reading similar to the original in terms of its surrealist spirit despite the differences between the author’s and translator’s stylistic characteristics.

A further requirement of the penetration stage relates to the importance of barring the interference of the translator’s native language and developing a ‘sensitivity’ to the structures and associated meanings of words (Di, 2003, p. 55). Translation is after all a linguistic activity

and the good command of the language into which the text is translated. Louis Termain is to be praised first of all for ensuring naturalness through effective transpositions between French and English. As in the following examples, he respectively translated a noun by means of an adjective in such a way that makes the English passage sound more natural to the target reader.

Se carrait dans l'encadrement > stood framed

and a prepositional phrase by an adverb

En silence > silently

In both cases we could imagine the awkwardness of translating those elements otherwise.

Original French Text	English Translation
L'homme se carrait dans l'encadrement de la porte. <i>Qui se souvient de la mer</i> (p. 21)	The man <i>stood framed</i> in the doorway <i>Who remembers the sea</i> (p. 3)
Les gens clopinaient en silence , à pas prudents. <i>Qui se souvient de la mer</i> (p. 136)	People shambled along <i>silently</i> at a seemly pace. <i>Who remembers the sea</i> (p. 71)
Les murs ne cessaient d'improviser des nœuds...sans souci de ce qu'il advenait de leurs captifs. <i>Qui se souvient de la mer</i> (p. 31)	The walls were constantly tying themselves into inextricable knots, mindless of what became of their captives. <i>Who remembers the sea</i> (p. 9)

At a next level relating to the poetic flavor of Dib's prose, Termaine pays a great deal of attention to the assonance of certain clauses and finds a way of maintaining it in the target language. In this example, the assonance realized by the 'er' endings in the first group verbs⁵ in French is clearly impossible to maintain in English unless the translator creates a reformulation. Termaine beautifully creates similar assonance by means a series of rhyming question forms.

Où pouvait-on aller ?	Where could you go?
Où se cacher ,	Where could you hide,
Où manger un morceau,	Where could you get a bite to eat? (p. 101)
Où se coucher ?	Where could you sleep? (p. 58)

Some exceptions to this are noted in some translated passages where the translation seemed to 'de-poeticize' the original text, e.g. neglect of marked alliteration, offering instead an ordinary unmarked formulation of the same idea. This could be judged as an avoidance

⁵ Note **aller** is a third group verb having in common the 'er' ending with first group verbs

strategy allowing the translator to prioritize meaning over form, as in the translation of the consonance in **s'enlacer sans souci** as **mindless**.

Original French Text

Les murs ne cessaient d'improviser des
noeuds inextricables pendant ce temps et,
sur beaucoup, de **s'enlacer sans souci** de ce
qu'il advenait de leurs captifs.
Qui se souvient de la mer (p. 31)

English Translation

The walls were constantly tying
themselves into inextricable knots,
mindless of what became of their
captives.
Who remembers the sea (p. 9)

3.2 Acquisition move assessment

The acquisition stage is the desired outcome of the previous penetration move. It is about fully comprehending the various aspects of the 'message', that is its spirit, substance and flavor'. The notion of the 'spirit' is important here; it is the totality of effects produced by the author's stylistic moves. Conveying a text's spirit may take *any, many or all* of the translation strategies studied over the years in translation theories (e.g. formal correspondence, dynamic equivalence, direct and indirect methods, to name but a few).

Therefore, instead of talking about finding an equivalent word, phrase or clause, a translator needs to look for the right strategies to produce their equivalent effects. There are, for example, many cases where a largely literal translation is all that is needed to maintain both original meaning and effect. It is simply a matter of careful judgement of what works best.

A well-informed translator of Dib's texts which contain a blending of poetry and prose would be judiciously shifting between formal and dynamic strategies to reproduce Dib's poeticity. For a concrete example, in contrast to the previously presented example in which Termaine reformulated the source passage to maintain assonance, it seems that his good grasp of the text as well as his good knowledge of the two languages helped him realize that a literal translation of passages such as the ones below would be adequate to successfully maintain their poeticity in the target version. An examination of the passages below shows that it actually is.

Original French Text

S'il fallait fuir, **où pouvait-on aller? où se
cacher, où manger un morceau, où se
coucher?**
Qui se souvient de la mer (p. 101)

English Translation

If you had to run, where **could you go? Where
could you hide, where could you get a bite to
eat, where could you sleep?**
Who remembers the sea (p. 58)

Où voudriez-vous aller, avec ces murs qui vous
épie? Ces murs qui ne changent guère de
tactique, tournant autour de vous, se jouant de
vous, et rajustant leur masque au bon moment?
Qui se souvient de la mer (p. 163)

Where else can you go, with these walls that
watch your every move? These walls that
hardly ever change their tactics, surrounding
you, playing with you, and readjusting their
mask just in time.

Who remembers the sea (p. 88)

Mais jusqu'à la veille, nous allions vivre **au milieu du même cercle ; aucune route, aisée ou difficile, ouverte devant nous. Un ancien et silencieux cataclysme nous ayant arrachés à nous-mêmes et au monde, seul un nouveau cataclysme pouvait nous y reprojeter (...)** Nous promenant dans cette simulation de la réalité, nous traversions, bien plus vivantes que nous, les choses, auxquelles nous n'offrions pas la moindre résistance.

Qui se souvient de la mer (p. 96)

But until then we were to live **within the same circle; no road, easy or difficult, open before us. An ancient and silent cataclysm having torn us from ourselves and the world, only a new cataclysm could restore us (...)** Moving about in this simulation of reality, we would come across things, far more alive than we, to which we offered not the least resistance.

Who remembers the sea (p. 47)

Contrariwise, examples abound of passages in which the translator has to do more than a literal translation. In line with the overall mood of the novel, in which the city inhabitants are caught between the cruel wall and merciful sea, Tremaine tries to emphasize this idea by foregrounding it at a syntactic level. In these first two examples, the emphasis is realized by pre-positioning the prepositional phrases, placing them in a sentence position that attracts the readers to the essence of the idea of fate being determined between walls' captivity and the relief heralded by the presence of the sea.

Nous avons fondé...notre bonheur **sur eux** [les murs]!

Upon them [the walls] we founded our happiness!

Je suis résolu **à lui** confier mon sort.

To it I am resolved to trust my fate

Original French Text

Nous avons fondé notre sécurité, notre confort, notre bonheur **sur eux** ! Nous nous sommes livrés à leur discrétion !

Qui se souvient de la mer (p. 186)

English Translation

Upon them we founded our security, our comfort, our happiness! We have given ourselves over to their discretion.

Who remembers the sea (p. 102)

Je suis résolu **à lui** confier mon sort, dût la pierre me saisir.

Qui se souvient de la mer (p. 200)

To it I am resolved to trust my fate, though the rock seize me in its grip.

Who remembers the sea (p. 111)

3.3 Transition move assessment

It is well-known among translation theorists that translators sometimes want to stand out with their own style in the target text. This gives rise to a confrontation between original author's style and that of the translator. This is legitimate as long as it serves the transmission of the spirit and overall effect of the source text into the target text. The vividness of the images presented in the following passages is as compelling in the source as it is in the target text despite their stylistic dissimilarity. What really counts as a criterion for the success of the

end product is its accommodation of a similar amount of meaningful stylistic markedness as a basis for the appreciation of the literariness of the original.

Original French Text

La nuit, fatiguée, s'éloigne. Il se forme des vides incolores que recouvre bientôt une trame blanchâtre, et quand, à la fin, le soleil sort avec fracas, la terre pousse un cri. Le matin!

Qui se souvient de la mer (p. 126)

English Translation

The night withdraws wearily. Colorless voids form, soon covered over with a whitish canvas, and when, finally, the sun comes crashing out, the earth utters a cry. Morning!

Who remembers the sea (p. 65)

This confrontation is not to be understood as a stubborn act of trying to impose one's style but rather as a covert negotiation about what expressive manners would best generate an equivalent effect. The structures of the phrases in bold below are simply stylistic variants opted for by the translator to maximize target reader appreciation of the image presented.

Original French Text

Unique point sombre, les vastes rassemblements d'iriacs dans le ciel indigo. Aucune joie ne saurait être parfaite, et la mienne **ne s'inquiète pas** de ces oiseaux inaccessibles à l'amitié mais qui, d'eux-mêmes, se sont faits les compagnons **de notre population isolée de tout.**

Qui se souvient de la mer (p. 127)

English Translation

A single dark point, the vast gathering of iriace in the indigo sky. No joy can be perfect, and mine **is not upset** by these birds that are inaccessible to friendship but that, of their own accord, have become the companions of our population **in its isolation from all else.**

Who remembers the sea (p. 65)

The reason why this should particularly be mentioned at this point with regard to the transition move is that once the message has been acquired, the translator begins an 'empathetic re-creation: creating new imagery that may carry the closest possible message in the new environment' (p.84). This involves finding 'natural ways' of expression with which native speakers communicate with each other' (p85).

A translator is first of all a privileged reader having access to both languages and cultures, and it only natural that he has a better understanding of the implicit and explicit messages conveyed by the text. For fear of a potential misunderstanding on the part of the target reader, the translator resorts to a strategy of amplification whereby he adds a certain element to the text to supplement its meaningfulness. Many a time, adding only a small word to the text does fill a comprehension gap. The French word *traqué* (hunted) is translated by means of an amplified phrase **a hunted animal** to convey the intended idea of the narrator's gradual loss of his humanity.

Je vécus **traqué** dès le premier jour
I lived as **a hunted animal**

Original French Text

Notre château, qui figurait pour moi l'image de la continuité, abandonné, le domaine démembré, je vécus **traqué** dès le premier jour, l'existence ne fut plus qu'une mascarade absurde. Si je m'efforçais de lutter, mes difficultés s'accroissaient, quelque iriace oublié venait me saluer d'un sarcasme, il crachait sur moi puis repartait à tire-d'aile.

Qui se souvient de la mer (p. 150)

English Translation

Our castle, which for me had been the very image of continuity, abandoned, the land broken up, I **lived as a hunted animal** from that day on; existence became nothing but an absurd masquerade. If I tried to struggle, my problems only increased; some forgotten iriace would come up and greet me with sarcasm, spit on me and then take off at top speed.

Who remembers the sea (p. 79)

In literature, as LeoSpitzer once interestingly remarked, even the smallest detail of language can unlock the 'soul' of a literary work (as cited in Leech & Short, 2007, p.19). That is, when a translator favours one word to another, he is causing a different mental picture to be created. For example, though the phrases **sans bouger** and **without stirring** are synonymous, they do not necessarily match in terms of the degree of hardships they convey, neither do **rompus de fatigue** and **exhausted**. It is therefore wiser to hope for approximation rather than identity.

Original French Text

Apprendre à vivre **sans bouger** dans un espace restreint, de plus en plus restreint, un trou, à respirer à peine, ne pas soulever la poitrine ni faire le moindre bruit, rêver peut-être, mais non vouloir : l'anéantissement ; ce à quoi nous sommes promis dans un proche avenir.

Qui se souvient de la mer (p. 155)

English Translation

Learning to live **without stirring** in an increasingly confined space, a hole, barely to breathe, not to expand one's chest, or to make the slightest noise, perhaps to dream but not to want: annihilation; that to which we are promised in the near future.

Who remembers the sea (p. 83)

Les gens passent en hâte, le nez dans la bure râpeuse de leurs mantes. D'autres, **rompus de fatigue**, s'étant défaits de leurs fardeaux et assis à même le sol pour reprendre souffle, le regardent avec désespoir.

Qui se souvient de la mer (p. 69)

People hurry by, noses buried in the rough cloth of their cloaks. Others, **exhausted**, sitting on the ground beside their burdens, trying to get their breath back, look at him with despair.

Who remembers the sea (p. 31)

3.4 Presentation move assessment

No stylistic study is ever able to cover all the stylistic features of a literary work (Leech & Short, 2007). There are however in every author's style certain predominant features that reflect his artistic vision and state of mind. In this novel, the determined features on the basis of which the translation is assessed are: The blurring line between poetry and prose in Dib's writing, his aleatory mode of writing as well as his hallucinatory tone.

Put together, the foregoing assessment commentaries represent a favourable judgement of this English translation which generally reads similar to the original in terms of its surrealist spirit. In other words, it meets the expectations at the final presentation stage as it approximates as closely as possible the effect the original message had on source text readers. The parallel passages above and these below offer almost an identical reading experience stylistically speaking. Add to that the effective transpositions that take account of the systemic difference between the two languages, as shown in the sentence parts in bold.

Original French Text

Quoi qu'il puisse advenir, nous n'attendons plus de nouvelles. De nous-mêmes, nous avons cessé de courir aux informations : nous n'en avons plus besoin. La soif que nous montrions à être renseignés, il y a encore peu de temps, a fait place à la plus profonde indifférence. Fini le temps des journaux raflés dans les kiosques, des rassemblements devant la radio, des chuchotements colportés, de la curiosité haletante.

Qui se souvient de la mer (p. 167)

Il me faut étudier de près les structures de la ville du sous-sol, **sans quoi** je ne pourrais pas m'adapter, comme il serait souhaitable, aux nouvelles conditions de vie où me voici placé. Que les fondements mêmes de ce second état de l'existence **y** soient inscrits, j'en suis tout à fait persuadé à présent. À première vue, ces structures ne sont que la réplique de celles de la ville d'en haut, leur image renversée en quelque sorte et cachée dans les stratifications inférieures. Mais où commence à s'imposer la différence, c'est dans la découverte du fait que la ville du sous-sol ne connaît pas de limites, que ses derniers retranchements ne sauraient être atteints par l'un quelconque de ses habitants ou par un moyen d'investigation, **si puissant soit-il**;

Qui se souvient de la mer (p. 214)

English Translation

Whatever happens, we expect no more news. We've stopped running around looking for information: we don't need it anymore. The thirst for news we felt just a short while ago has given way to the most profound indifference. Gone are the days of newspapers snatched up at the kiosks, of audiences clustered in front of the radio, of whispered reports passed along, of breathless curiosity.

Who remembers the sea (p. 90)

I must study closely the structures of the underground city, **otherwise** I won't be able to adapt, as I would wish to do, to the new conditions of life in which I now find myself. That the very foundations of this second state lie inscribed **in those structures**, I am now completely convinced. At first glance, they are merely a reproduction of those of the city above, their image somewhat reversed and hidden in the lower strata. But where the difference makes itself felt is in the discovery that the underground city knows no limits, that its outermost boundaries cannot be reached by any of its inhabitants or by any means of investigation, **however powerful**.

Who remembers the sea (p. 119)

Conclusion

A clearer picture of the relative success of this translation is embodied in the way the following key poetic, hallucinatory monologue is equally beautifully reproduced in the target text. Two translator requirements are seemingly met in this translation: A good command of the working languages and an awareness of the range of existing alternative translation strategies. Nevertheless, if poetry is untranslatable, it is relatively the case here. Certain features of Dib's poeticity are either overlooked or at best 'de-poeticized' (e.g. poetic verbless sentences are rendered as complete verb-containing ones).

Original French Text

Au fond de moi, je demeure inconsolable comme un enfant perdu. Placé, de la sorte, brutalement en face de moi-même, je constate que mon attitude est d' ailleurs celle d'un enfant. Pas n'importe lequel : de cet enfant qui **avait été trop comblé**. De vivre aujourd'hui parmi les plus muets, les plus aveugles, n'y change rien ; il restera toujours ce fait que je n'ai pas d'autre expérience. Bien qu'alourdi par le manque de sommeil, et la tête vacillante, je sors aussitôt mon **café avalé**. Je ne pouvais plus tenir, à la maison. Dehors, je reçois le bonheur qu'apporte le matin, ne me doutant de rien. Les gens ont l'air uniquement soucieux de leurs affaires ; les boutiques sont ouvertes, les rues ont été fraîchement arrosées, à moins que la marée ne les eût recouvertes cette nuit, et la foule va. Des minotaures veillent aux carrefours : à vrai dire des momies, qui ont été ressuscitées et affectées à ce service. De leur sommeil millénaire, beaucoup gardent encore une immobilité, une rigidité, dont elles ont quelque mal à se débarrasser. Cela ajouté à leur regard de lézard, elles inspirent une terreur salutaire, qui se traduit par un grand respect

Qui se souvient de la mer (p. 61)

English Translation

Deep inside, I remain inconsolable like a lost child. Placed brutally face to face with myself in this way, I notice that my attitude is like that of a child as well. Not of just any child: of that child who has been **given too much to bear**. Living today among the dumbest and the blindest changes nothing; the fact remains that I have no other experience. Though heavy and nodding from lack of sleep, I leave as soon as my **coffee is down**. I couldn't take it anymore inside the house. Outside, I greet the happiness that morning brings, suspecting nothing. People seem to be worrying only about their own affairs; the shops are open, the streets have been freshly hosed down, unless it was the tide that had covered them during the night; and the crowd are milling about as usual. Minotaurs keep watch at the intersections- or rather mummies, who have been resuscitated and assigned this duty. Their millennial slumbers have left many of them with stiffness, a rigidity which they have a hard time getting rid of. That, added to their lizard-like stare, helps to inspire a healthy terror, which translates into the most careful respect.

Who remembers the sea (p. 26)

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