Giggers, Greeners, Peyserts, and Palliards:
Rendering Slang in *al-Bukhalāʾ* of al-Jāḥiẓ

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Traditionally studied as a window onto Arab-Muslim social reality, the medieval Arabic underworld slang found in *Kitāb al-Bukhalāʾ* (The book of misers) by al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 869 CE) and indeed *al-Bukhalāʾ* as a whole serve a number of functions and meanings at once, not just historical documentation. Such multiplicity has implications for translation, which should strive to convey the work's sociolinguistic and textual heterogeneity. With this ideal in mind, this article compares two English versions of the Arabic slang: R. B. Serjeant's *The Book of Misers* and Jim Colville's *Avarice and the Avaricious*. Serjeant uses transliteration, explicitation, and footnotes to create a "thick translation" that exposes the rich sociolinguistic and textual range. In somewhat of a contrast, Colville employs English colloquialisms and Scots canting slang to produce what might arguably be called "dynamic equivalence," which stages a natural English reading experience. The comparison raises further questions about the relationship between a translation's effects and the translator's intent, as well as between translation and a second process to which it is sometimes compared, namely, reading.

Of the many works of the ninth-century Baghdad polymath al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 869 CE), *Kitāb al-Bukhalāʾ* (The book of misers), a collection of anecdotes on stinginess, contains two scenes that offer a challenge to the would-be English translator of Arabic. Those scenes feature characters who self-identify as beggar thieves from the Banū Sāsān criminal society and who use strange jargon as part of an overall marginal identity. From one angle, their atypical speech contrasts with the rest of the text, but from another, criminal jargon represents just one of many blended discourses, genres, registers, and sociolects in *al-Bukhalāʾ*. Since this stylistic eclecticism makes it hard to locate a norm from which the Banū Sāsān jargon deviates, a question arises about how to translate it. Which method effectively conveys the real sense of contrast in slang and dialect while at the same time locating that sense of contrast among many competing voices?

I will begin first by offering an answer to this question, then using that answer to analyze two scenes in *al-Bukhalāʾ* and comparatively evaluate two English translations of them. In the first section, I introduce al-Jāḥiẓ and discuss the conceptual relevance of the discursive mixture found in his works. Al-Jāḥiẓ lived during a time of great intellectual fervor, which his writings capture in their topical breadth, polemical tone, and altogether eclecticism, including the Banū Sāsān slang in *al-Bukhalāʾ*. But the contrastive sense of that slang assumes a norm that al-Jāḥiẓ's eclecticism makes hard to pin down. Literary discourse itself further complicates the search for a discursive standard, since literature "defamiliarizes" habitual

language use. It is therefore useful to think of generic mixing in *al-Bukhalāʾ*—including the criminal slang—not in terms of norm and deviation but of many degrees of contrast. Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of "polyphony," meaning the coexistence of multiple competing voices, and on the work of Michael Halliday and Roger Fowler about the contrastive nature of speech acts, I argue that textual polyphony is a process of negotiation, one which, within the world of the text and its noncommittal stance toward reality, reflects the conflicting worldviews of characters. This oppositional aesthetic bears on translation as well, since translators should strive, when confronted with the discursive blending of an author like al-Jāḥiẓ, to reconcile norm and deviation and to portray as a process those conflicting worldviews and the varieties of language that encode them.

I use this framework of reconciliation in the second section to introduce the Arabic source text and discuss how its interpretation is impacted by discursive polyphony. In the first Banū Sāsān episode, a swindler named Khālid ibn Yazīd—also known as Khālawayh al-Mukaddī—touts his ability to recognize different classes of beggar thief, listing them with opaque underworld jargon. In the second episode, the slang of a criminal named Abū l-Fātik, "Mighty Slayer," is invoked by the narrator to explain why he does not invite refined company over for dinner. In both scenes, Arabic criminal jargon encodes an overall sense of marginal identity that contrasts with the identity of other characters. This contrastive aesthetic—in other words, textual polyphony of the kind posited by Bakhtin—serves several functions in the text, including religious satire, social commentary, and reader entertainment. Yet the sense of contrast also draws our attention to the fact that there is discursive mixing among other characters as well, creating a general polyphony in which a single discursive norm eludes the reader.

Proceeding from the perspective of criminal slang as part of an overall polyphony in the source text, in sections three and four I evaluate the effectiveness of two English renderings of the Banū Sāsān jargon: *The Book of Misers* by R. B. Serjeant and *Avarice and the Avaricious* by Jim Colville, both Scottish Arabists and both books published within two years of each other.[1] I deal first with Serjeant's *Misers*, which exposes source text structures through transliteration, literalness, explicitation, and footnotes. His *Misers* therefore looks like Kwame Anthony Appiah's notion of "thick translation," in the sense that it "seeks with its annotations and its accompanying glosses to locate the text in a rich cultural and linguistic context."[2] I then analyze Colville's *Avarice*, which strikes an informal tone, does not use many footnotes, and substitutes early modern Scots slang for that of the Banū Sāsān. Colville's methods thus echo a concept from the Bible translator Eugene Nida, namely, "dynamic equivalence, [which] aims at complete naturalness of expression, and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture."[3]

In conclusion I offer an evaluative comparison between the two approaches. Both portray something of the criminal slang's strangeness, whether in Serjeant's exposure of source text structures or Colville's nonstandard English substitutes, even as they both struggle to match an English register to the constantly shifting discourse in Arabic. These differences

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1. R. B. Serjeant, trans., *The Book of Misers: A Translation of* al-Bukhalāʾ (Reading, UK: Garnet, 1997), henceforth *Misers*; J. Colville, trans., *Avarice and the Avaricious (kitâb al-bukhalâ')* (London: Kegan Paul, 1999), henceforth *Avarice*. I am grateful to the *JAOS* reader who pointed out that *bukhl* connotes unwillingness to part with what one has in contrast to *jashaʿ* and *ḥirṣ*, which indicate a desire for more of what one has already. Serjeant's title is therefore closer to the Arabic than Colville's.

2. K. A. Appiah, "Thick Translation," *Callaloo* 16.4 (1993): 808–19, at 817.

3. E. A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1964), 159.

also stage diverse reading experiences. Serjeant invites a slower, deliberate approach aimed at university students and other specialists, while Colville seeks a nonspecialist audience of pleasure readers. These results follow from conflicting translation ideologies. Serjeant's wide-ranging documentation of context—stemming from a desire to equate the text to social reality, which is an outmoded view that brackets important questions of rhetoric, audience, and convention—does more justice to the source culture and textual polyphony. On the other hand, Colville's stated approach balances cultural context with the very real distortions of that context by literary discourse, yet his translation in practice glosses over cultural difference by emphasizing the universality of human experience. In my view, this approach falls short of conveying textual polyphony, more fully concealing the contrasted worldviews of *al-Bukhalāʾ*. The fact that approaches to translation may have unintended consequences demonstrates that translation is relatable to but separate from another process to which it is often compared, namely, that of reading.

I. A LIFE AND AN AGE OF MANY VOICES

Abū ʿUthmān ʿAmr ibn Baḥr al-Kinānī is better known in Arabic literary history as al-Jāḥiẓ, "bug eyes," whose life and works embody the dynamism of his time.[4] Born in Basra in the southeastern corner of modern-day Iraq, he was self-taught in language, philosophy, and theology, frequenting for this purpose the market of al-Mirbad and the city's mosque-centered study groups (*majālis*). Eventually he studied with al-Naẓẓām, a Muʿtazilī scholar, as well as the lexicographer al-Aṣmaʿī, then came to public distinction after penning a treatise on the imamate sometime before 817.[5] He moved to Baghdad and enjoyed the patronage of the vizier Ibn al-Zayyāt, the qadi and Muʿtazilī spokesman Aḥmad ibn Abī Duʾād, and the courtier al-Fatḥ Ibn Khāqān. Rubbing shoulders with these and other notables, he witnessed the period's energy, but also its upheaval; he lived during the reign of ten different caliphs, with two of his own patrons falling out of favor. Al-Jāḥiẓ spent his last years back in Basra, where he is said to have been crushed to death under the weight of his own tomes, a story that, accurate or not, attests to his legacy of bookishness and broad learning.

So too does his surviving corpus speak to an active mind at work. While estimates vary, al-Nadīm lists nearly 140 titles attributed to al-Jāḥiẓ,[6] of which seventy-five are extant. The best known are *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* (The book of living), a seven-part compendium on an array of subjects with animals as their point of departure;[7] *Kitāb al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn* (The book of eloquence and exposition), a wide-ranging work on human communication;[8] and *Kitāb al-Bukhalāʾ*, the subject of this article.[9] Al-Jāḥiẓ also wrote on robbers (*al-Luṣūṣ*); sowing and palm trees (*al-Zarʿ wa-l-nakhl*); the difference between prophets and would-be prophets (*al-Farq bayn al-nabī wa l-mutanabbī*); the craft of speech (or theology) (*Ṣināʿat al-kalām*);

4. Much information in this section comes from D. S. Richards, "al-Jāḥiẓ," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, ed. J. S. Meisami and P. Starkey, 2 vols. (London: Routledge, 1998), 1: 408–9; J. E. Montgomery, "Al-Jāḥiẓ," in *Arabic Literary Culture, 500–925*, ed. M. Cooperson and Sh. M. Toorawa (Detroit, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 231–42, at 234; idem, *Al-Jāḥiẓ: In Praise of Books* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2013), 23–51.

5. A topic of note among his contemporaries. See also ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muslim Ibn Qutayba, *Kitāb al-Imāma wa-l-siyāsa*, ed. Ṭ. M. Zaynī (Cairo: Muʾassasat al-Ḥalabī, 1967). All dates are CE.

6. Abū l-Faraj Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, 2 vols. in 4, ed. A. F. Sayyid (London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2009), 2: 582–88.

7. 2nd ed., 8 vols., ed. ʿA. M. Hārūn (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1965–69).

8. 3rd ed., 4 vols., ed. ʿA. M. Hārūn (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1968).

9. Ed. M. Ṭ. al-Ḥājirī (Cairo: Dār al-Kātib al-Miṣrī, 1948). Both translators (*Misers*, xxvii; *Avarice*, xiv) state that this is the best critical edition.

the vaunting contest of slave-girls and slave-boys (*Mufākharat al-jawārī wa-l-ghilmān*); and much more.[10] Due to his staggering range, al-Jāḥiẓ is often considered emblematic of a certain definition of *adab*, that is, broad learning in service of refined character. Whether one accepts this definition,[11] his works do capture the intellectual vitality of the age, including the Greco-Arabic "translation movement" inaugurated by the caliph al-Maʾmūn (r. 813–833), and an appetite among the public for watching live intellectual debate.

Such eclecticism, dialogism, and intellectual verve are present in *al-Bukhalāʾ*. Written near the end of al-Jāḥiẓ's life, this work presents anecdotes about tightfisted characters that, according to the author's preface, are meant to condemn stinginess as a moral vice. The misers themselves come from all walks of life, although the people of Marv, east of the Caspian Sea in modern-day Turkmenistan, are singled out in particular. This eastern focus has led some to classify *al-Bukhalāʾ* as a polemic against Persians, although such a view overlooks the variety of characters presented and the overall tenuousness of ethnicity in pre-modern Baghdad.[12] Several layers of narrative enfold the miser tales, and al-Jāḥiẓ himself does not stint on commenting through paratexts, that is to say, secondary writings such as titles, prefaces, and glosses.[13]

A great number of passages in *al-Bukhalāʾ* feature food, animals, clothing, and other tropes drawn from contemporary society. Due to such local color, scholars have in the past taken the work as a clear window onto daily Muslim life. However, this oversimplified "*Bukhalāʾ*-ism" (James Montgomery's term)[14] brackets the impact of rhetoric, audience, and genre on literary representation. To address these neglected issues, others emphasize it as a work of belles lettres—stylish writing that, by extension, maintains a noncommittal relationship to reality. Fedwa Malti-Douglas is a proponent of this view, as is Jim Colville, with his feeling that "Jāḥiz is not served by literal translation."[15] Recently, Montgomery and also Michael Cooperson have tried to balance the two perspectives by stressing the intricacy and contradiction of al-Jāḥiẓ's writings. Montgomery notes the "audacity of his intellectual system—of how, as with other great systematizers such as Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine or Montaigne, the integrity of the system is at its most vibrant when evidence of its development is most conspicuous."[16] Cooperson, arguing that miserliness in *al-Bukhalāʾ* is a parody of proto-Sunni asceticism, admits how the text defies neat categorization.[17]

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10. Al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, ed. Sayyid, 2: 583–88.

11. This is but one of several associations that accrue to this word. It can also mean invitation to a banquet, etiquette training, inherited customary norms, decorum, compilations of sayings by sages, and in the Abbasid age, the "sum of knowledge existing in this period." For further discussion, see N. Alshaar's introduction, "The Relation of *Adab* to the Qurʾan: Conceptual and Historical Framework," in *The Qurʾan and* Adab*: The Shaping of Literary Traditions in Classical Islam*, ed. eadem (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2017), 1–58, at 6–11.

12. For discussion of how miserliness in *al-Bukhalāʾ* characterizes a range of peoples, see *Avarice*, xiii; M. Cooperson, "Al-Jāḥiẓ, the Misers, and the Proto-Sunnī Ascetics," in *Al-Jāḥiẓ: A Muslim Humanist for Our Time*, ed. A. Heinemann et al. (Würzburg: Ergon, 2009), 197–219, at 198–99.

13. For further explanation of this term, see G. Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. J. E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997).

14. J. E. Montgomery, "Beeston and the Singing-Girls," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 36 (2006): 17–24, at 17.

15. F. Malti-Douglas, *The Structures of Avarice: The Bukhalāʾ in Medieval Arabic Literature* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985), 154–56; J. Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth: A Selection of the Shorter Writings of al-Jāḥiz* (London: Kegan Paul, 2002), 3. In addition to Malti-Douglas and Colville, the editor of *al-Bukhalāʾ*, Ṭāhā al-Ḥājirī (*al-Bukhalāʾ*, 18), considers it to be "a purely literary work."

16. Montgomery, "Beeston," 21.

17. Cooperson, "Proto-Sunnī Ascetics," 219.

To signal my own recognition of literary ambivalence, I will speak here of the "textworld" of *al-Bukhalāʾ*. On the one hand, its characters and society are notional ones, while on the other, the text draws on real people, places, and events for its effects.[18] Likewise, all reader comprehension is predicated on the idea that speech acts communicate a message, however ambiguous or deceitful, that is worth bothering to process.[19] My view of a textworld thus accounts for commonsense impressions of language, history, and culture that support reader interpretation while acknowledging the equivocal way in which those impressions can be summoned by a text.

The fact that *al-Bukhalāʾ* resists easy classification has much to do with its conspicuous mixing of topics, characters, genres, registers, sociolects, and even idiolects (language style associated with individual characters)—i.e., mixing at all levels of language use, from the single word to social discourse broadly construed. One finds, for instance, the cohabitation of food talk with wise sayings[20] or of animal nicknames with quranic exegesis.[21] Such discursive blending marks al-Jāḥiẓ's works as a whole, a point that challenges the customarily neat division of those works into "polemics and *belles lettres*."[22] Appearing to be just about rhetoric, *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn* has lately been revisited as a politico-religious commentary that champions Arab rule, evangelizes the view of Muʿtazilism, and attempts to prove God's existence.[23] *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, once seen as a tract responding to Aristotle's *De Anima*, mixes poetry, folktales, philosophy, history, and gnomic wisdom, to become "more than the sum of its parts."[24] For Montgomery, it is nothing less than a totalizing, morally obligated (*taklīf*) solution to the cataclysms that rocked al-Jāḥiẓ's era.[25]

One might describe the discursive mixing of al-Jāḥiẓ—including in *al-Bukhalāʾ*—as "polyphony," a term made famous by Bakhtin. Pinpointing what makes Fyodor Dostoevsky's novels unique, Bakhtin describes how, rather than subordinate to the author, the hero's position "is given as a separate, foreign consciousness."[26] This creates the "polyphonic novel," featuring a "plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world, [which] combine but are not merged in the unity of the event."[27] In turn, the coexistence of many voices leads to a state wherein characters with ideologies opposed to the author's—

18. Jørgen Dines Johansen uses semiotics and pragmatics to think about how literature relates to reality. See his *Literary Discourse: A Semiotic-Pragmatic Approach to Literature* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2002), 113–73. Drawing on the work of Charles Sanders Peirce, he conceives of literature as a "model" of human life, "function[ing] much in the same way as when we say that somebody is a model of something, for instance, of courage, beauty, or evil" (p. 169).

19. In pragmatics, reader trust in the communicative purpose and function of speech acts is called "presumption of relevance." See D. Sperber and D. Wilson, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995), 2–9.

20. *Al-Bukhalāʾ*, ed. al-Ḥājirī, 86–88.

21. Ibid., 94–95.

22. Cooperson, "Proto-Sunnī Ascetics," 197. Al-Jāḥiẓ had a reputation among medieval readers for eclecticism, even to a fault. Ibn Qutayba (*Taʾwīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth*, ed. M. Z. al-Najjār [Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyyāt al-Azhariyya, 1966], 59) remarks that he "purposefully makes use in his writings of farce and trifle, in order to appeal to the young and the wine-drunkard."

23. J. E. Montgomery, "Al-Jāḥiẓ's *Kitāb al-bayān wa l-tabyīn*," in *Writing and Representation in Medieval Islam: Muslim Horizons*, ed. J. Bray (London: Routledge, 2006), 91–152, at 95.

24. Hence the title of J. Miller's dissertation: "More Than the Sum of Its Parts: Animal Categories and Accretive Logic in Book One of al-Jāḥiẓ's *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*," PhD diss., New York Univ., 2012.

25. Montgomery, *In Praise of Books*, 31.

26. M. Bakhtin, *Problem of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. C. Emerson (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1984), 6. Chapter five, "Discourse in Dostoevsky," appears in a different translation as "Discourse Typology in Prose," in *Readings in Russian Poetics*, ed. L. Matejka and K. Pomorska (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971).

27. Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 6.

one acceptable in polite society—receive equal treatment: criminals, extremists, perverts, lunatics. Here one sees the import of a second term, "carnivalesque," used by Bakhtin about François Rabelais, which describes "temporary suspension of all hierarchic distinctions and barriers."[28] In the case of both Rabelais and Dostoevsky, there is an assumed discursive norm from which the characters deviate, whether the sixteenth-century high Church culture of Rabelais or the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie of Dostoevsky.

At the same time, nonstandard discourse refers to the norm and even relies on it.[29] Michael Halliday argues as much in his study on "antilanguage,"[30] namely, the jargons used by an "antisociety," meaning "a society that is set up within another society as a conscious alternative to it."[31] Observing the fluidity between standard speech and slang, and how that fluidity applies to literature, Halliday writes: "literature is both language and antilanguage at the same time. It is typical of a poetic genre that [among many features of a text] one or other mode of meaning is foregrounded."[32] In a similar vein, Roger Fowler points out that speech acts anticipate "the actual or potential response of an interlocutor, [displaying an] orientation toward a second act of speech."[33] A multiplicity of orientations comprises in linguistic terms what Bakhtin may have meant by polyphony, especially when each orientation signals an outlook or "linguistic *Weltanschauung*" posed against the others.[34]

Thus, antilanguages like the Banū Sāsān jargon are part of an overall process of negotiation between linguistic worldviews. Marginal discourse is not an absolute deviation, but rather one of many degrees of contrast, which within the notional textworld reflect competing identities and ideologies. In turn, seeing polyphony in *al-Bukhalāʾ* as an ongoing process bears on translation. Oftentimes, slang and dialect translators posit a linguistic norm, since those translators rightly see their task as part of rendering language variation in general.[35] A negative example is Aimé Césaire's use of standard French to translate African American, of which Thomas Hale says that "the French terms do not convey quite the same power or particular qualities of speech."[36] These and other cases hinge on the real impression given by linguistic variation of a marginal identity.

28. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. H. Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1984 [orig. 1968]), 15.

29. Sarah R. bin Tyeer (*The Qur'an and the Aesthetics of Premodern Arabic Prose* [London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016], 269–75) discusses the limitations of Bakhtin's ideas to Arabic literature, based on her claim that those ideas make too firm a distinction between religion and freedom. But Bakhtin (*Rabelais*, 12) himself does not place laughter and creativity in opposition to religion; rather he notes that "folk humor is ambivalent" in its parody of serious institutions. Perhaps it is instead the reception and recycling of Bakhtin's ideas that tends to separate between piety on the one hand and humor on the other.

30. M. A. K. Halliday, "Antilanguages," in idem, *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning* (London: Edward Arnold, 1978), 164–82. Examples of "antisocieties" given by Halliday include Calcutta's underworld and the inmates of Polish prisons.

31. Ibid., 164.

32. Ibid., 182.

33. R. Fowler, "Anti-Language in Fiction," *Style* 13.3 (1979): 259–78, at 260.

34. Ibid., 261.

35. R. M. Asensio, *La traduccíon de la variación lingüística* (Soria, Spain: Diputación Provincial de Soria, 1999). According to Luigi Bonaffini ("Translating Dialect Literature," *World Literature Today* 71.2 [1997]: 279–88, at 283), "translation from dialect must in some way reflect its uniqueness and diversity." In another example, Jean Auzanet tries to capture the anticlerical stance of *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes* through a "subversive" rendering of that novella from standard Spanish into Parisian slang. See M. Charron, "Projecting Lázaro's Life Story into Parisian Slang," *Confluencia* 21.2 (2006): 111–19.

36. T. A. Hale, "Césaire and the Challenge of Translation: The Example of 'Strong Men' by Sterling Brown," *Comparative Literature Studies* 50.3 (2013): 445–57, at 450.

But per the notion of polyphony as a process, would-be translators should try to capture marginal identity as one of many conflicting linguistic worldviews. One difficulty with such a charge involves conveying variation within the target language itself, a strategy that risks blurring the text's polyphony through "domestication."[37] Other tactics might preserve the source culture but sacrifice ease of reading, such as transliteration of foreign words.[38] Still another difficulty is to say which of a text's features matter to its interpretation, since what stands out in one discourse type will be assumed in another.[39] Whichever path one chooses, an effective translation should strive for the "rapprochement of norm and deviation"[40] necessary to conveying polyphony as in *al-Bukhalāʾ*. Such an objective means giving readers a sense of the contrasts that obtain within the textworld itself, alongside contrasts with the norm language of real life.[41]

II. ON THE MARGINS: A TALE OF TWO THIEVES

Before using the framework of reconciling norm and deviation to compare the relative strengths of English translations of *al-Bukhalāʾ*, I will first introduce the source text and consider the importance of polyphony therein. Throughout the work, contrasting discourse types and the worldviews they encode give clues to meaning, such as the detectable upward shift in register at the start of one anecdote: "They claimed there was once a man who had obtained the utmost degree of avarice and became an imam thereof. Whenever a dirham came into his hands, he would address it lovingly, confide in it, offer himself a ransom for it, and wonder why it had kept him waiting so long."[42] Moving from a relatively neutral Arabic marked only by its narrative framing (e.g., *zaʿamū anna*, "they claimed"), the verbs describing how this miser talks to his own money carry religious undertones, especially of unmediated discourse with the divine. The first of them, *khāṭaba*, might be read in connection to *khiṭāb*, God's discourse that often inspires human speech,[43] or perhaps the *khuṭba* (sermon) given at Friday

37. A term coined by Lawrence Venuti to describe one end of a translation spectrum, being that which "masquerades as true semantic equivalence when in fact it [ends up] . . . reducing if not simply excluding the very difference that translation is called on to convey." At the other end lies "foreignization," defined as a translation that "resists dominant target-language cultural values so as to signify the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text." See L. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London: Routledge, 1995), 21–23.

38. For more on these and other terms, see I. Craig and J. Sánchez, *A Translation Manual for the Caribbean (English-Spanish)* (Kingston, Jamaica: Univ. of the West Indies Press, 2007), 8–11.

39. R. Fowler, *Linguistic Criticism*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996), 96–97. To determine the relative significance of textual features, one requires a sense of the discursive and cultural norms by which real-life elements appear in a text, since "literature offers several conflicting models of our lifeworld, each structured according to different sets of internal conventions." See Johansen, *Literary Discourse*, 169.

40. Fowler, "Anti-Language in Fiction," 270.

41. Milton Azevedo argues this point based on a study of English translations of Basque-inflected Spanish in *Don Quixote*, remarking that successful translation of slang in literature "will strive to capture the implications of the contrasts that obtain between the characters' voices." M. M. Azevedo, "Get Thee Away, Knight, Be Gone, Cavalier: English Translations of the Biscayan Squire Episode in *Don Quixote de la Mancha*," *Hispania* 92.2 (2009): 193–200, at 199.

42. *Al-Bukhalāʾ*, ed. al-Ḥājirī, 119: *zaʿamū anna rajulan qad balagha fī l-bukhl ghāyatahu wa-ṣāra imāman wa-innahu kāna idhā ṣāra fī yadihi al-dirham khāṭabahu wa-nājāhu wa-faddāhu wa-stabṭaʾahu*. My translation.

43. For the centrality of *khiṭāb*, divine speech, to interactions between the discourse of God and human speech when the latter is inspired by the former, see A. K. Reinhart, "*Khiṭāb*: 'Discourse' in the Jurisprudential Theory of Ibn ʿAqīl al-Ḥanbalī," in *Classical Arabic Humanities in Their Own Terms*, ed. B. Gruendler (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 165–75, at 168–69. The idea of *khiṭāb* as divine discourse also appears in Sufi writings, e.g., Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, ed. ʿU. Yaḥyā, 14 vols. (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li-l-Kitāb, 1972–1992), 12: 459–60.

prayers.[44] The second verb, *nājā*, denotes any secret conversation but especially intimate communion with the deity.[45] The third, *faddā*, can refer to God's ransoming his servants or to human solidarity with others.[46] With the noun *imām*, "prayer leader," going from neutral to religious speech draws a sardonic parallel between extreme devotion to God and extreme devotion to money.[47] Furthermore, such polyphonic discourse and the worldview it supplies play multiple roles, including religious satire, social commentary, and reader entertainment.

The myriad functions of polyphony bear on two other episodes from *al-Bukhalāʾ* that illustrate meaning through contrastive, linguistically encoded worldviews. Both scenes feature slang associated with the Banū Sāsān, a shadowy underworld society whose sociohistorical boundaries are hard to pin down but which evokes concrete popular associations, if its memory in literature is any signal.[48] In the first episode, "Ḥadīth Khālid ibn Yazīd" (The story of Khālid ibn Yazīd),[49] the title character is reported to be so miserly that he once took back a silver dirham he had given to a beggar by mistake and replaced it with a (much less valuable) copper *fals*.[50] Confronted by an onlooker, Khālid ibn Yazīd trumpets his ability to differentiate among classes of beggars—in this case, one asking for a *fals* rather than a dirham—which he counts off using obscure jargon. In the second episode, from a section called "Qiṣṣat al-Ḥārithī" (The tale of al-Ḥārithī), readers meet another thief named Abū l-Fātik. This rogue's offensive slang, aimed at al-Ḥārithī's dinner guests, gives the latter good reason to avoid hosting more refined company.

The characters in these stories use thieving jargon to perform a social identity caught between ethnicities, economies, and societies. The first episode's title character is doubly named: Khālid ibn Yazīd, an Arab moniker, and Khālawayh al-Mukaddī, an alias marked by the Persian diminutive suffix *-wayh*. Together with the fact that al-Jāḥiẓ describes him as both an associate of the Banū Sāsān and a *mawlā* (non-Arab client), such onomastic duality reveals that this character is ethnically Persian. For many Arabs of al-Jāḥiẓ's era, Persianness in particular would have signified foreignness, against the backdrop of the ethnic strife

44. T. Qutbuddin, "*Khuṭba*: The Evolution of Early Arabic Oration," in *Classical Arabic Humanities*, ed. Gruendler, 176–273, at 181–83.

45. In both Sufi and Ismāʿīlī literature (especially in the poetry of al-Muʾayyad fi l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, where it becomes a fully developed literary genre). See T. Qutbuddin, *Al-Muʾayyad al-Shīrāzī and Fatimid Daʿwa Poetry: A Case of Commitment in Classical Arabic Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 220–35.

46. Already in the ninth century, there is evidence for use of the word *fidāʾ* to convey astonishment or disbelief, e.g., a poem by al-Buḥturī (*Dīwān al-Buḥturī*, ed. Ḥ. K. al-Ṣayrafī, 4 vols. [Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1963–1964], 3: 1567–68) whose first line reads: *juʿiltu fidāka al-dahru laysa bi-munfakkin / min al-ḥādith al-mashkuww wa-l-nāzil al-mushkī* (God bless your soul! Fate never stops from [bringing] a woeful mishap and a vexing [or, pleasing] event). As with phrases such as *in shāʾ Allāh* and *al-salāmu ʿalaykum*, its usage in common parlance does not strip it of religious or formal register.

47. This particular case confirms Cooperson's reading of *bukhl* (miserliness) as a satirical analogue to proto-Sunni *zuhd* (renunciationism).

48. Although the eleventh-century theologian and commentator al-Wāḥidī (d. 1075) glosses the phrase "Abū Sāsān" in a poem by al-Mutanabbī (d. 965) as the name given to several Sasanian rulers, and that for this reason Persian kings are called "Banū Sāsān" (*Dīwān Abī l-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī wa-fī matnihi sharḥ al-Wāḥidī*, ed. F. Dieterici [Berlin: E. S. Mittler, 1861], 743), by the thirteenth century Banū Sāsān had come to apply specifically to underworld society. The itinerant alchemist al-Jawbarī, for example, devotes entire chapters to the Banū Sāsān in his work on thieves and tricksters, *Kitāb al-Mukhtār fī kashf al-asrār* (ed. M. Höglmeier [Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2006], 71–80). Recently, Kristina Richardson ("Tracing a Gypsy Mixed Language through Medieval and Early Modern Arabic and Persian Literature," *Der Islam* 94.1 [2017]: 115–57) has used linguistic evidence to link the Banū Sāsān to the European Roma and the Middle Eastern Domari and Zargari groups, among others. Her findings confirm that "the Banū Sāsān were a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional nomadic group" (p. 148).

49. *Al-Bukhalāʾ*, ed. al-Ḥājirī, 39.

50. Both Serjeant and Colville transliterate *fils*.

(*shuʿūbiyya*) that characterized the first century of Abbasid rule (ca. 750–855).[51] In the text, Khālid ibn Yazīd's non-Arab ethnicity is also linked to economic marginality, revealed in the nickname *al-mukaddī*, "the sly beggar thief," a widespread yet disreputable profession.[52] In addition, he is associated with the Muhallabs, a once-prominent tribe of Iraq and the Ḥijāz that lost its erstwhile prestige due to reliance on leaders of non-Arab origin.[53] Their reduced social status gives a further impression of marginal identity.

As for the second episode, it too imparts a sense of liminality. The main character, al-Ḥārithī, commiserates with a group of unnamed speakers who ask about his hospitality toward guests. Readers then meet the rogue beggar Abū l-Fātik, whose figurative patronym might be thought of as an anti-honorific, along the lines of "Mighty Slayer." The active participle *fātik* is almost certainly a reference to the *futtāk*, "[pre-Islamic] desperadoes whose specialty was killing, amongst whom Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb al-Baghdādī counts the poets Taʾabbaṭa Sharran and ʿAmr b. Kulthūm."[54] In this sense, *fātik* might mean something similar to *ṣuʿlūk*, the wandering poet cast out of the tribe and occupying a transitional identity as "a permanent way of life."[55] This sense of liminality is further reinforced when readers learn that Abū l-Fātik is also *qāḍī al-fityān*, "judge of the youth," perhaps a more unsavory sort of *arbiter elegantiarum*.[56] While connoting courage and *murūʾa* in the pre- and early Islamic periods, a word related to *fityān* ("young men"), *futuwwa*, took on a meaning in the early Abbasid era of social cohesion among such men, in the absence of lineage or religious ties.[57]

51. This suspicion of Persianness had partly to do with the absence of a Persian state beyond Abbasid imperial power, and partly with a feeling of loss among Arabs of their religio-cultural solidarity. For more on the latter point, see M. Cooperson, "'Arabs' and 'Iranians': The Uses of Ethnicity in the Early Abbasid Period," in *Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts: Essays in Honor of Professor Patricia Crone*, ed. B. Sadeghi et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 364–87.

52. Al-Jāḥiẓ himself defines a *mukaddī* as *ṣāḥib al-kidāʾ*, "one who practices artful thievery" (*al-Bukhalāʾ*, ed. al-Ḥājirī, 46). Other premodern authors use terms like *kidāʾ* or *kudya* with similar meaning, often praising crime as a lifestyle. The tenth-century Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Bayhaqī (*Kitāb al-Maḥāsin wa-l-masāwī*, ed. F. Schwally (Giessen: J. Ricker, 1902), 623) calls *kudya* a "noble craft" (*ṣināʿa sharīfa*) that affords those who practice it a carefree life of luxury. Al-Jawbarī (*al-Mukhtār*, 82–84) associates professional thieving with "skills" or "fields of expertise" (*al-ʿulūm wa-l-funūn*), along with mathematics, philosophy, natural science, and so on. For a general overview of the term *kudya*, see "Mukaddī" (Ch. Pellat), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition (Leiden: Brill, 1960–2004), henceforth *EI2*. For a sense of the overall economic fabric of the medieval Islamic underworld, at least as far as it is preserved in the popular literary and cultural imagination, see P. Kahle and D. Hopwood, *Three Shadow Plays by Muḥammad ibn Dāniyāl* (Cambridge: E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 1992). Also, al-Jawbarī divides his work *al-Mukhtār fi kashf al-asrār* by chapters devoted to questionable professions such as false prophets (*alladhīna yaddaʿūna al-nubuwwa*), false preachers (*al-wuʿʿāẓ*), alchemists (*ahl al-kāf*), quack doctors (*aṭibbāʾ al-ṭuruq*), etc.

53. For more on the history of this tribe, see *Misers*, 36; "Muhallabids" (P. Crone), *EI2*, 7: 359; M. J. Kister, "Mecca and Tamīm (Aspects of Their Relations)," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 8.2 (1965): 113–63, at 131.

54. C. E. Bosworth, *The Medieval Islamic Underworld: The Banū Sāsān in Arabic Society and Literature*, 2 vols. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), 1: 17.

55. S. P. Stetkevych, "Archetype and Attribution in Early Arabic Poetry: Al-Shanfarā and the Lāmiyyat al-ʿArab," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 18.3 (1986): 361–90, at 365. Albert Arazi ("Ṣuʿlūk," *EI2*) lists *fātik* among the pre-Islamic synonyms of *ṣuʿlūk*. According to Peter Webb (ed. and trans., *Al-Maqrīzī's* al-Ḥabar ʿan al-bašar*: Volume V, Sections 1–2, The Arab Thieves* [Leiden: Brill, 2019], 21–27), scholars have overemphasized heroic outlawry at the expense of other characteristics, particularly poverty and violence, when discussing premodern Arab rogues.

56. I have one of the *JAOS* readers to thank for this suggestion.

57. "Futuwwa" (Cl. Cahen and Fr. Taeschner), *EI2*. For more on the later association of *futuwwa* orders with criminality, see M. Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers in Early Muslim Society: The Origins of ʿAyyārān and Futuwwa* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1995); D. G. Tor, *Violent Order: Religious Warfare, Chivalry, and the ʿAyyār Phenomenon in the Medieval Islamic World* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2007).

Such cohesion could be peaceful and focused on improving society, or it could be a violent means to pillage wealth.[58]

Contributing to the marginal identity of Khālid ibn Yazīd and Abū l-Fātik is their very speech, peppered as it is with jargon. In touting his knowledge of beggar thieves, Khālid ibn Yazīd claims that he can recognize them all: a *makhṭarānī* (a beggar pretending to have been injured in war), *kāghānī* (someone faking insanity), *bānuwān* (a thief with phony wounds), etc. In the second episode, Abū l-Fātik lambasts his benefactor's unsuspecting guests as *nashshāl* (a dinner guest who steals meat from the cooking pot), *lakkām* (someone who gluttonously crams food down his throat), or *musawwigh* (a guest who chokes down big portions by drinking water). The reader is given to understand that these terms are opaque or at least troubling to the other characters, from both their reactions and the intratextual glossaries inserted later in each section.[59] The jargon therefore builds an identity in contrast to the mainstream assumed by the notional world of the text. Such a contrastive function is common for slang in any discursive mode.[60]

Identity performance in these episodes also adds humor, a role played often by dialect and slang in literature.[61] The Banū Sāsān scenes are entertaining in their own right, and in addition there may be some underhanded social satire, though it is hard to say who exactly the butt of the joke is.[62] Beyond this, the text's entertainment also involves what one might call philological pleasure reading. Al-Jāḥiẓ is a master of Arabic, and throughout his works he often takes the chance to display some baubles from his cabinet of linguistic curiosities.[63] A third valence of humor in the Banū Sāsān episodes is a contrast with the other characters, who try to maintain some semblance of propriety in the face of shameful behavior by professional thieves. These awkward interactions heighten the sense of interpersonal drama, to a comedic effect.

In this way, thieving slang in *al-Bukhalāʾ* relies on contrast to achieve its effects. A tension obtains within the speech of Khālid ibn Yazīd and Abū l-Fātik, who do not speak in slang the whole time but code switch between it and standard Arabic. When one considers the talk of other characters, their reactions to the jargon, glossaries to explain that jargon, and assumed social disparities, the Banū Sāsān speech stands out even more. But the prominence of nonstandard language invites readers to find a norm, a task that is complicated by the polyphony in *al-Bukhalāʾ* and in al-Jāḥiẓ's writings generally; there is not just one voice conflicting with the criminal slang, but many. Moreover, literary discourse itself is said to "defamiliarize" normal uses of language, making that which seems natural, strange;[64] indi-

58. The dual meaning is reflected by each translator's handling of the term. Serjeant chooses the neutral "young men" for *fityān*, while Colville renders it as the more marked "braves," synonymous with "gangsters" or "thugs."

59. *Al-Bukhalāʾ*, ed. al-Ḥājirī, 44–46, 66–68.

60. For more on this point, see, for example, P. Gaitet, "From the Criminal's to the People's: The Evolution of Argot and Popular Language in the Nineteenth Century," *Nineteenth Century French Studies* 19.2 (1991): 231–46, at 231–32. For a discussion of slang and "coolness," see L. Hall, "Coolspeak," *The Hudson Review* 55.3 (2002): 411–22.

61. D. Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 410.

62. Indeed, this ambiguity may play into the humor, since both beggar thieves arrogantly tout themselves as experts on poverty.

63. *Al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn* is a particularly apt example, presenting as it does the sociolects of contemporary Arabic.

64. Viktor Shklovsky coined the term defamiliarization, literally "making strange" (*ostraninye*), which became a key concept for Russian formalism and the Prague Linguistic Circle. See idem, "Art as Technique," in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, trans. L. T. Lemon and M. J. Reis (Lincoln, NE: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1965), 3–24, at 12.

vidual authors go a step further by adopting their own idiolect, or unique linguistic style, toward such defamiliarizing ends.

Given so many layers of variation and contrast, it is necessary to consider thieving jargon in *al-Bukhalā'* as one of many opposing linguistic worldviews that reflect degrees of contrast rather than as a bifurcation of speech into norm and deviant. This conceptual framework can help evaluate the two English renderings of criminal slang in *al-Bukhalā'* I have chosen, in terms of how well they convey that slang as part of a broader oppositional aesthetic. As well as the translations themselves, explicit comments by Serjeant and Colville about their methods reveal two effective but dissimilar results borne of equally dissimilar approaches.

III. R. B. SERJEANT'S THICK TRANSLATION

Serjeant's *The Book of Misers* is best understood in light of his university teaching, in which *al-Bukhalā'* played a major role, and of his longtime ethnographic studies in Yemen.[65] Out of a sense of it being "a most valuable work for training students because of its faithful presentation of Arab life, then and now"[66]—that is to say, Montgomery's *Bukhalā'*-ism— Serjeant makes an effort to reveal its linguistic, intellectual, and sociocultural background. His scholarly apparatus includes a subject index, more than one thousand footnotes, two introductions, a select bibliography of 125 titles, and sixty-two appendices of proper names and technical terms.

One could thus describe his *Misers,* mutatis mutandis, as a "thick translation," which is Kwame Anthony Appiah's term for a translation that "seeks with its annotations and its accompanying glosses to locate the text in a rich cultural and linguistic context."[67] While Appiah hoped that such translations would be a way to resist Western superiority, an agenda that does not characterize Serjeant's work, his formulation does share with Serjeant's *Misers* a concern for exposing source text culture.

In the two Banū Sāsān episodes, Serjeant illuminates the source text itself by transliterating and explicitating—making explicit in the target language what is implicit in the source language—a strategy that effectively conveys sociocultural otherness and signals the downward shift in linguistic register. Here is the first Banū Sāsān encounter, featuring the Persian *mawlā* Khālid ibn Yazīd:[68]

قالوا: وإنّك لتعرفُ المكَّدِّين؟ قال: وكيفَ لا أعرفُهم؟ وأنا كنتُ كاجَارَ في حَداثة سنّي. ثمّ لم يبقَ في الأرض مخطرانيّ، ولا مستعرض إلا فُقْتُه، ولا شحّاذ ولا كاغاني ولا بانوان ولا قرسي ولا عوّاء ولا مشعّب ولا فلور ولا مزيدي ولا إسطيل، إلّا وقد كان تحتَ يدي. ولقد أكلتُ الزكوريّ ثلاثين سنة؛ ولم يبقَ في الأرض كعبيّ ولا مكدٍّ إلّا وقد أخذتُ العرافة عليه حتّى خضع إلى إسحاقُ قتال الحرّ، وبنجويه شعر الجمل، وعمرو القوقيل، وجعفر كردي كلك، وقرن أيره، وحمّويه عين الفيل، وشهرام حمار أيوب، وسعدويه نائك أمه. وإنّما أراد

بهذا أن يؤسهم مِن ماله، حين عرَف حِرصَهم وجشَعَهم، وسوء جِوارهم. وكان قاصّاً متكلِّما
بليغاً داهِيا، وكان أبو سليمانَ الأعور وأبو سعيد المدائنيّ القاصّان من غِلمانه.

Serjeant's rendering of this passage exposes structures from the source text, an approach that "stage[s] an alien reading experience"[69] for his English-speaking audience:

> "Can you really recognize mendicants?" they asked. "How shouldn't I be able to recognize them," he answered, "seeing I was a *kājār*-gypsy in my young days? At that time there wasn't a rascal claiming to have suffered in the holy war (*makhṭarānī*) nor one with a sob story (*mustaᶜrid* [*sic*][70]) left in the land whom I didn't outdo, nor importunate beggar (*shaḥḥādh*), feigner of madness (*kāghānī*), faker of ulcerated limbs (*bānuwān*), hanger-on at gates (*qarasī*), a howler (*ᶜawwāʾ*), contriver of deformities in infants (*mushaᶜᶜib*), faker of afflictions to his private parts (*filawr* [*sic*][71]), confidence trickster (*mazīdī*), shammer of blindness (*isṭīl*) but came under my hand. For thirty years I have eaten bread given in charity (*zakūrī*)! Not a *Kaᶜbī* or mendicant is left the headmanship over whom I haven't seized—even Isḥāq Slayer of the Freemen/vulva, Bamjawayh Camel-hair, ᶜAmr al-Qawqīl, Jaᶜfar Punting Pole, Qarn (Horn) of his Penis, Ḥammawayh Elephant-eye, Shahrām Ayyūb's Ass, Saᶜdawayh Fornicator with his Mother!" By all this he aimed, when he realized their greed, insatiable graspingness and ill-neighbourliness, at bringing them to abandon hope of extracting money from him. He was a story-teller, scholastic theologian, eloquent and crafty. Abū Sulaymān the One-eyed and Abū Saᶜīd al-Madāʾinī the story-tellers were among his lads.[72]

Readers will note the relexicalization (replacing one word with a less common alternative) and overlexicalization (many terms for beggar thieves) noted by Halliday as elements of "antilanguage."[73] The unfamiliar look and sound of Arabic words in transliteration appear alongside stilted English explicitations ("feigner of madness," "faker of ulcerated limbs"), as well as the jarring list of Banū Sāsān *noms de guerre* at the end. While these tactics suggest the ethnographer's wish to document slang as a sociocultural artifact, they also convey the slang's essential oddity.

Serjeant draws on philological insights to further enhance his reader's understanding of the jargon's cultural backdrop. His rendering of *Jaᶜfar kardī kalak* as "Jaᶜfar Punting Pole" was based on a solution from a doctoral advisee: "For Jaᶜfar," he writes, "nicknamed *kardī-kalak* (p. 39) she reads *mardī-kalak*, a sort of punting-pole, I suppose we might say Jaᶜfar the Punt-pole."[74] Elsewhere in *Misers*, Serjeant likens Abū Saᶜīd al-Madāʾinī's practice of selling the dust swept up by his house servant to "the *qashshāᶜ* who sweeps the silversmith's *dukkān* and buys the sweepings for an agreed price."[75] Where the narrative mentions *ishkanj* as one of the substances that Abū Saᶜīd would gather for building material and cooking fuel,[76] Serjeant translates it as "rubble,"[77] based on "the modern *ishqannaq/ishgannag*, rubble for foundations still used today."[78]

69. Venuti, *Translator's Invisibility*, 20.

70. Correct transliteration is *mustaᶜriḍ*.

71. Correct transliteration is *fillawr*.

72. *Misers*, 36–37.

73. Halliday, "Antilanguages," 165.

74. Serjeant, "Translating *Al-Bukhalāʾ*," 26.

75. Ibid., 27.

76. *Al-Bukhalāʾ*, ed. al-Ḥājirī, 129.

77. *Ishkanj*, meaning "folds" or "tucks," may come from Persian, perhaps suggesting the haphazard intertwining of rubble heaps.

78. Serjeant, "Translating *Al-Bukhalāʾ*," 27–28. On this passage (and several later elaborations of it), see also G. J. van Gelder, "Arabic Banqueters: Literature, Lexicography, and Reality," in *Banquets d'Orient*, ed. R. Gyselen

Throughout, not just in the Banū Sāsān episodes, Serjeant exposes such details as these with glosses, appendices, and footnotes from such diverse sources as popular sayings, quranic verses, and lines of poetry. But this background information is a double-edged sword, aptly conveying textual polyphony on the one hand, while perpetuating a view of *al-Bukhalāʾ* as a "slice of life" on the other, especially when Serjeant draws from his personal experiences in modern-day Yemen. Also, his attention to detail can overshoot the source text in terms of formality. In a passage preceding Khālid ibn Yazīd's entrance, Serjeant translates, "the fellow isn't a poor man of the (silver) dirham class. He's a poor man of the copper class" (parentheses in the original). The translated phrases *masākīn al-darāhim* and *masākīn al-fulūs* ("dirham-seekers," and "fals-seekers") do not justify placing these drifters in a specific social class, even if Serjeant intended a more general meaning. Then again, the somewhat pedantic-sounding "class of beggar" does fit the character's humorous self-presentation as an "expert" on poverty, thus conveying the contrasted voices and worldviews in this episode.

Similar methods and effects as these appear in Serjeant's version of the second episode:[79]

وبعدُ فلم تبيحُ مَصونَ الطعام لمن لا يحمدُك، ومن إنْ حَمِدك لم يحسن أنْ يحمدَك، ومن لا يفصِلُ بينَ الشهيِّ القَديِّ، وبينَ الغليظ الزهِم؟ قال: يمنعُني من ذلك ما قال أبو الفاتك. قالوا: ومن أبو الفاتك؟ قال: قاضي الفتيان. وإني لم آكل مع أحد قطّ إلا رأيتُ منه بعضَ ما ذمّه، وبعض ما شنّعه وقبّحه. فشيءٌ يقبحُ بالشطّار، فما ظنّك به إذا كانَ في أصحاب المروءات وأهل البيوتات؟ قالوا: فما قال أبو الفاتك؟ قال: قال أبو فاتك: الفتى لا يكونُ نشّالا، ولا نشّافا، ولا مِرسالا، ولا لكّاما، ولا مصّاصا، ولا نفّاضا، ولا دلّاكا، ولا مقوِّرا، ولا مُغَربِلا، ولا محلِقما، ولا مسوِّغا ولا مُلغِّما ولا مخضّرا. فكيف لو رأى أبو الفاتك اللطّاع والقطّاع والنهّاش والمدّاد والدفّاع والمحوِّل؟

"Why, furthermore, do you admit to your exclusive table persons who show you no thanks and those who, if they thank you (at all), do not do so properly, persons who do not distinguish between the appetizing and delicious and what is coarse and badly cooked?" He said: "What Abuʾl-Fātik said prevents me from doing this." "And who may this Abuʾl-Fātik be?" they asked. "He is the qadi of the Fraternity of Young Men (*al-Fityān*)" was his answer. "Never have I eaten with anyone but I saw him criticize something—some he denounced and condemned as vile. And in gangsters (*shuṭṭār*) (of course) there is something vile. What do you imagine he would be like in the company of persons of manly virtue and persons belonging to noble houses?" "And what *did* Abuʾl-Fātik say?" they asked.

"Abuʾl-Fātik said," he replied, "'A Young Man (*fatā*) may not be a snatcher (*nashshāl*), a sponger (*nashshāf*), swallower (*mirsāl*), crammer (*lakkām*), sucker (*maṣṣāṣ*), scatterer (*naffāḍ*), masseur (*dallāk*), hollower-out of centres (*muqawwir*), siever (*mugharbil*), speaker with his mouth full (*muḥalqim*), choker (*musawwigh*), sopper-up (*mulaghghim*), or a greener (*mukhaḍḍir*)." Now (imagine) how it would be if al-Fātik were to see a finger-licker (*laṭṭāʿ*), dipper of part-eaten morsels (*qaṭṭāʿ*), gnawer (*nahhāsh*), stretcher (*maddād*), thruster (*daffāʿ*), or shifter (*muḥawwil*)?[80]

As before, transliteration works along with explicitation to contrast between Arabic speakers. Serjeant includes Arabic words not of the criminal argot, such as *fityān* and *shuṭṭār*. Another technique, seen more plainly here than in the first episode, is the relative closeness to the source text that Serjeant's English maintains. In the scene at hand, an interlocutor tells the narrator al-Ḥārithī: *taʿẓum ʿalayk al-nafaqa wa-tukthir minhu*[81] (in Serjeant's translation, "Your expenditure upon it [food] is considerable and you provide plenty"[82]). This rendering follows the source text's grammar, syntax, and semantics quite closely, which (perhaps unintentionally) better captures the sentence's formal register compared to the jargon that follows. Such linguistic contrast reflects a broader social one, namely, that between the well-behaved dinner guests and their indecorous counterparts, which lends the scene its humor.

In another case of how literalness successfully conveys textual polyphony, Serjeant's translation of "What do you imagine he would be like in the company of persons of manly virtue and persons belong to noble houses?" expresses fear of Abū l-Fātik's critical behavior toward guests, which is why al-Ḥārithī does not invite people of rank to dinner. But in Arabic, the sentence could also refer to al-Ḥārithī's typical dinner guests as the cause of his hesitancy, rather than Abū l-Fātik's rudeness.

Based on the context, Serjeant's English captures the likely gist of al-Ḥārithī's question. To the query about his reluctance to invite well-behaved guests to dinner al-Ḥārithī answers, "What Abu'l-Fātik said prevents me from doing this,"[83] leading him to expound Abū l-Fātik's penchant for criticizing table companions. This suggests that it is Abū l-Fātik's table manners that pose the problem, not those of al-Ḥārithī's usual guests. Such a reading is further reinforced by the fact that al-Ḥārithī quotes Abū l-Fātik's jargon, followed by a second rhetorical question: "Now (imagine) how it would be if al-Fātik were to see a finger-licker (*laṭṭāʿ*), dipper of part-eaten morsels (*qaṭṭāʿ*), gnawer (*nahhāsh*), stretcher (*maddād*), thruster (*daffāʿ*), or shifter (*muḥawwil*)?" Here the etiquette of the dinner guests is not in question, but rather Abū l-Fātik's eagerness to denounce it. In this way, Serjeant's literal translation ends up conveying what is less literal about *al-Bukhalāʾ*, by attending to the contrasts had between multiple characters and their worldviews.

IV. JIM COLVILLE'S DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE

In contrast to Serjeant's translation, Colville's "is not aimed at those who can read the original or students who are studying it."[84] Instead, Colville endeavors to bring *al-Bukhalāʾ* to a nonspecialist readership that enjoys literature as a pastime rather than as an academic subject. This goal betrays a broader way of translating, and perhaps also reading, premodern Arabic literature. Colville rejects the possibility of complete faithfulness to texts written in such a convoluted style as that of *al-Bukhalāʾ*, in which "accurate definition, let alone faithful correspondence, is often elusive."[85] He harbors a corollary dissatisfaction with much premodern Arabic literature in English, which for him "exaggerates an impression of difficulty and inaccessibility."[86]

Based on these statements, one might describe Colville's overall goal in translation as "dynamic equivalence," which describes a translation in which "the relationship between

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81. *Al-Bukhalāʾ*, ed. al-Ḥājirī, 59.
82. *Misers*, 55.
83. *Al-Bukhalāʾ*, ed. al-Ḥājirī, 49; *Misers*, 55.
84. Colville, personal communication to author, March 9, 2012.
85. *Avarice*, xiv.
86. Ibid.

receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message."[87] Background knowledge is not an urgent priority since dynamic equivalence "does not insist that [the reader] understand the cultural patterns of the source-language context in order to comprehend the message."[88] Colville asserts that stinginess operates in *al-Bukhalāʾ* as a universal human vice, just as it represents a contemporary social phenomenon, and therefore a translation of al-Jāḥiẓ precludes a need for details of the source text culture. This view explains his avoidance of overly literal renderings, a policy that "has sometimes meant the sacrifice of a little accidental but not, I hope, essential accuracy (as Jahiz might have expressed it)."[89]

His translation as a whole indeed shows a "preference for going for 'best fit' rather than paraphrase or transliteration plus footnote."[90] For English readers, this imparts an informal, conversational feel, wihch becomes clear in the two criminal slang episodes. Here is Colville's take on the encounter with Khālid ibn Yazīd:

> "Do you mean you're familiar with people like that?"
>
> "I should think so. I lived as a Rom in the days of my youth. There wasn't a dommerar or mumper in the land could put one over on me. Every rogue and gigger, lurker, palliard and griddler, abram-man, arse-maunder, blind-harper and kinchen-cracker took his orders from me. I ate pannum bread for thirty years. There wasn't a ruffler or a *kaʿbi* I could not outsmart. They all danced to my tune—Camel-hair Benjawayh, Dung-Beetle ʿAmr, Elephant Hammawayh, Shahram Job's-donkey, Jaʿfar the Cross-eyed Kurd, Isaac the Kunt-Killer, Saʿdawayh the Motherfucker and the Horned Phallus."
>
> Realising how tight, unreliable and mean the Banu Tamim were, Khalid simply told them this to thwart ambitions on his wealth. He was an eloquent, skilful and entertaining storyteller, the teacher of both Abu Sulayman ʿAwar and Abu Saʿid Madaʾini.[91]

Without footnotes like those in Serjeant's *Misers*, this passage does not readily expose the source culture of *al-Bukhalāʾ*'s textworld, even as its uncluttered pages ease the reading experience along with Colville's "fluent" English (contractions, low register, simple diction). To get across the contrastive sense of criminal jargon, therefore, Colville uses a target language analogue: Scots canting slang. To the confused reader of terms like "dommerar," "mumper," "gigger," "lurker," "palliard," and "griddler," Colville commends the *Concise Scots Dictionary*,[92] although that lexicon in fact omits most of Colville's jargon, which is too archaic for its purview.

Instead, the terms can be found in the *New Canting Dictionary* (1725), which expounds the hierarchy of thieves in early modern Scottish society.[93] For example, *makhṭarānī* is defined by al-Jāḥiẓ as a beggar who "dresses like a holy man and leads you to believe that his tongue was cut out by Babak because he had been a muezzin in those parts."[94] Colville substitutes Scots "dommerar," which, according to the *New Canting Dictionary*, is an order of

87. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 159.

88. Ibid.

89. *Avarice*, xiv.

90. Ibid.

91. Colville, *Avarice*, 46.

92. Colville, *Avarice*, xvii. See Mairi Robinson, ed., *Concise Scots Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1999).

93. For information about early modern interest in preserving the slang of this underworld society, see, for example, J. Sorensen, "Vulgar Tongues: Canting Dictionaries and the Language of the People in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37.3 (2004): 435–54.

94. *Avarice*, 51.

"rogues pretending to have had their tongues cut out [for purposes of begging]."[95] Another term, *isṭīl*, is defined by al-Jāḥiẓ as a beggar who fakes blindness and, in Colville's rendering, "can display his eyes with the whites upturned or streaming, or perhaps make you think he has opthalmia or trachoma."[96] This term Colville renders as blind-harper, which the *New Canting Dictionary* describes as "the *Fifty-sixth* order of Canters [beggars], who, counterfeiting blindness, strowl about with Harps, Fiddles, Bagpipes, etc. led by a Dog or a Boy [original italics]."[97]

Such vivid images do much to portray the contrast of slang and the alternative social identity it implies. Like the nonstandard thieving jargon of *al-Bukhalāʾ*, the Scottish dialect is emblematic of Scotland's marginalization by Great Britain through political and cultural suppression.[98] Long seen as inferior to the English, the Scottish people have nevertheless survived, in great part through a rich lexicographical tradition documenting the indigenous language.[99] It is this tradition that Colville's translation employs to good effect. However, using Scots to convey contrast requires cultural background knowledge—ostensibly not a priority for Colville—that one can assume to be rare, especially among the broad audience *Avarice* aims for. That knowledge cannot be gained from *Avarice* itself, without footnotes or other tools. Also, just as Serjeant overshoots the source text in its formality, Colville often deploys slang when there is no downward register shift in the source text, as in the following: "They might at least try once or twice before concluding, in the absence of any hard evidence, that I'm an inhaudin' old peysert."[100] The final colloquialism "peysert," which means a miser,[101] is a stand-in for the standard Arabic *bukhl* (miserliness, or in Colville's understanding, avarice).[102] A second case is the term "costermonger,"[103] which is used to translate *baʿḍ al-bāʿa* (one of the merchants).[104]

English slang used for nondialectical Arabic points toward an overall preference in Colville's translation for informal speech. From the Khālid ibn Yazīd scene, Colville translates *wa-kāna yanzil* (he used to stay with) as "he put up in"; *masākīn al-fulūs* (those begging for *fals*) as "He's only fishing for *fils* [*sic*]"; *fa-lam yaʿrifūh* (they did not recognize him) as

95. *New Canting Dictionary*, 45, online at https://babel.hathitrust.org. Lee Beier ("Anti-Language or Jargon? Canting in the English Underworld in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *Languages and Jargons: Contributions to a Social History of Language* [Oxford: Polity Press, 1995], 79) traces dommerar, also spelled dummerer, to "dumb," which, of course, fits the description of beggars who pretend they are unable to speak.

96. *Avarice*, 52.

97. *New Canting Dictionary*, 23.

98. For scholarship on the construction, preservation, and suppression of Scottish heritage, see *The Nuttis Schell: Essays on the Scots Language Presented to A. J. Aitken*, ed. C. Macafee and I. Macleod (Aberdeen: Aberdeen Univ. Press, 1987); Ch. Jones, ed., *The Edinburgh History of the Scots Language* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1997); J. Corbett et al., eds., *The Edinburgh Companion to Scots* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2003); Ch. Jones, *A Language Suppressed: The Pronunciation of the Scots Language in the 18th Century* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1995). For a study of British suppression of Scottish culture, see B. Kay, *Scots: The Mither Tongue* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2006). For more on the Scottish language as a political battleground, see J. W. Unger, *The Discursive Construction of the Scots Language: Education, Politics, and Everyday Life* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2013).

99. Sorensen, "Vulgar Tongues," 435–37. Since 2004, Oxford University Press has published no less than four volumes on the history of English slang dictionaries, which speaks to the immense scope of this tradition. See J. Coleman, *A History of Cant and Slang Dictionaries*, 4 vols. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004–2010).

100. *Avarice*, 90.

101. J. Jamieson, *An Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language*, rev. ed. J. Longmuir and D. Donaldson, 4 vols. plus suppl. (Paisley: A. Gardner, 1879–1882), 3: 481.

102. *Al-Bukhalāʾ*, ed. al-Ḥājirī, 83.

103. *Avarice*, 121.

104. *Al-Bukhalāʾ*, ed. al-Ḥājirī, 114.

"he was able to maintain a low profile"; and *khuḍiʿa lī* (they were under my power) as "they all danced to my tune." In addition to being a mismatch for the source text, informal English downplays the contrast and polyphony that makes the Banū Sāsān episodes so entertaining. Readers miss the contrast between the Banū Sāsān slang and the formality of the other interlocutors.

These observations about erring on the side of informal language are corroborated by Colville's translation of the second Banū Sāsān episode:

> "Why admit to the sanctuary of your table someone who either will not or cannot speak well of you and who can't tell the difference between one dish that's choice and delicious and another that's half-cooked and rotten?"
>
> "It's the words of Abuʾl Fatik that prevent me," Harithi replied.
>
> "Abuʾl Fatik? Who's he?"
>
> "The boss of 'the Braves.' I have yet to sit down to a meal with anyone whose table manners failed to display something that Abuʾl Fatik would have disapproved of or been disgusted by. If an old villain like him could be revolted by something, what are men of rank and status going to make of it?"
>
> "So what did this Abuʾl Fatik have to say?"
>
> "He said, 'the brave is not a pot-picker, bread-sponger, fast-pitcher, gob-smacker, bone-sucker, hand-splasher, towel-spoiler, bread-gouger, salt-shaker, gulper, mumbler, sapper or green-lips.' What would he have said if he had seen a finger-licker, rip-and-dipper, bone-crusher, bone-pusher, stone-switcher or arm-stretcher in action?[105]

Colville again uses target language resources and avoids footnoting to give a "fluent" translation. A notable difference between this Banū Sāsān scene and that of Khālid ibn Yazīd is the absence of Scottish canting slang. That absence may have to do with the fact that Abū l-Fātik's jargon is Arabic in its etymology, morphology, and grammar, against the Persian and Sawādī (Ḥīrī) Arabic-inflected slang of the first Banū Sāsān episode.[106] Whether conveying this linguistic difference between the two episodes was Colville's reason for avoiding Scots jargon here, it is a nuanced way to convey linguistic contrast and textual polyphony relying just on the target language.

But as before, without footnotes or explicitation, using the source language to convey such textual contrasts will go unnoticed by all but a select few who can access premodern Arabic, Persian, and Scots. Also, Colville's general willingness to move away from the Arabic source text, arguably from a desire to translate it into readable English, leads to interpretations not justified by the original. His rendering of the question posed to al-Ḥārithī about Abū l-Fātik's table manners—"If an old villain like him [= Abū l-Fātik] could be revolted by something, what are men of rank and status going to make of it?"[107]—suggests that the question is about the behavior of al-Ḥārithī's typical dinner guests, not that of Abū l-Fātik, hence why al-Ḥārithī refuses to dine with nobles. As noted above, this is the less likely of two possible readings, based on the overall context of the passage.

Such limitations in Colville's translation speak to a problem faced by any translator, namely, the background knowledge assumed of readers. Echoing the aim of dynamically equivalent translations "toward equivalence of response rather than equivalence of form,"

105. *Avarice*, 66–67.

106. A. Aẕarnūš and B. Farzāneh, "Notes on Some Persian Words in the Works of al-Ǧāḥiẓ," *Arabica* 58 (2011): 436–45, at 442–43. Moreover, Aẕarnūš and Farzāneh confirm that some 250 Persian words have been identified throughout al-Jāḥiẓ's writings. Richardson ("Tracing a Gypsy Mixed Language," 124–25, 151–56) has identified word origins from Greek, Syriac, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Akkadian, with many more as yet unknown.

107. *Avarice*, 66.

Colville's *Avarice* seeks to replicate textual effects on the reader from within her own culture.[108] However, such an orientation posits an ideal Anglophone reader who does not exist in reality. In the case of *al-Bukhalāʾ*, it also presumes an idealized reading experience for Arabic speakers, which presumption is also difficult to maintain since, as noted, there is much debate over how to read *al-Bukhalāʾ* and al-Jāḥiẓ's works on the whole. Both cases resonate with Walter Benjamin's notion of the text's "afterlife" (*Fortleben*) in its new language, as it is no longer what it was in the original.[109] A third point, and at a most basic level, is that dynamic equivalence conceals the source text's foreignness, thereby denying the encounter with difference that enriches literature in translation.

Yet lessening difference is one of Colville's stated goals, on the grounds that premodern Arabic literature in English can be needlessly difficult. This attitude, which in some ways obscures the work's intricacy, does get at the idea of linguistic variation as an ongoing process. Just as textual polyphony within *al-Bukhalāʾ* comprises a range of conflicting worldviews encoded in language, rather than as a single norm and deviations therefrom, so too do the source language and target language represent points on a spectrum instead of unbridgeable opposites. By carrying the source text closer to the target culture, the strategy of Colville suggests that the gap between them, like the gap between conflicting linguistic *Weltanschauungen*, is not as wide as readers might think.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite divergent approaches, Serjeant and Colville confront many of the same challenges—for example, both struggle to fit English register to the original Arabic since the latter frequently shifts in register and discursive mode for rhetorical effect—and offer creative solutions. In the end, neither translation fully conveys this facet of al-Jāḥiẓ's textual polyphony. Indeed, it is rare to find translations that experiment with more than one style of English as a means of transmitting a source text's blending of discourses and genres.[110]

Both English translations of *al-Bukhalāʾ* also find their way into the contrastive sense of nonstandard criminal jargon, whether by transliteration and footnote as with Serjeant or by Scots canting slang as with Colville. While each imparts the subversive nature of "antilanguage," the preferred method will depend on the kind of reading experience that is sought. Serjeant's footnotes, glosses, and appendices invite a slower, more deliberate involvement with the text, suitable for study purposes. Colville uses fluent, conversational English and a minimum of scholarly equipment to stage a more pleasurable reading: one would more readily absorb his *Avarice* cover-to-cover in an armchair by the fireplace than Serjeant's *Misers*. As these descriptions suggest, each translator's approach betrays more basic assumptions about language, text, readership, and culture.

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108. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 166. Nida suggests footnotes and other tools beyond target language resources to convey the source text culture, which, as said, are largely absent in *Avarice*.

109. W. Benjamin, "Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers," *Gesammelte Schriften,* ed. R. Tiedemann and H. Schweppenhäuser, 7 vols. in 14 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972–1989), 4.1: 7–21, at 11. In an ironic twist, scholars mistranslate—or perhaps misquote—Benjamin when they attribute to him the term *Nachleben*. In reality, he never used that term, but instead the terms *Überleben* ("survival") and *Fortleben* ("afterlife"). See C. Disler, "Benjamin's 'Afterlife': A Productive (?) Mistranslation In Memoriam Daniel Simeoni," *TTR: Traduction*, *terminologie, rédaction* 24.1 (2012): 183–221.

110. An exception is M. Cooperson, *Impostures by al-Ḥarīrī: A Groundbreaking Translation* (New York: New York Univ. Press, forthcoming [2020]). It uses English of various genres and styles—Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky," Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, American cowboy slang—to approximate a similar generic plurality in the source text.

However, those assumptions can lead to second- and third-order consequences that may not be foreseeable at first. A clear example is how each translation represents the source text culture. From Serjeant's and Colville's secondary statements about *al-Bukhalāʾ*, Colville expresses a much more measured view. He sees the text as a window onto premodern Muslim life, but also as a work of literature, a social commentary, a religious polemic, and a historical index, reminding readers that "our author is never simplistic."[111] In contrast, Serjeant is at the vanguard of *Bukhalāʾ*-ism, namely, the view that al-Jāḥiẓ's writing transparently depicts the average Muslim "man-in-the-street."

This same focus on everyday life also leads Serjeant to create a "thick translation," in Appiah's sense of doing justice to the source culture by making it visible, even if the immediate goal is to equate text with social reality. Colville's approach to *al-Bukhalāʾ* as a universal text limits his translation from capturing the immediacy of context, even as he describes that context in his secondary analysis. In this case of miserliness, downplaying the source culture means that readers miss the importance of generosity as a specifically Bedouin—and later, caliphal—virtue.[112] In my view, Colville's approach thus falls short of conveying textual polyphony in comparison to Serjeant's, since the former more fully conceals *al-Bukhalāʾ*'s contrasted worldviews.

These observations complicate Lawrence Venuti's "resistant strategy" of translation—that is, a translation that deliberately flouts easy domestication in order to fight against parochialism, since textual fluency can encourage readers of a "major" target language to see the rest of the world like themselves.[113] The question of power dynamics between languages comes up more often when translating contemporary Arabic texts into English, but it seems to bear on *al-Bukhalāʾ* and other classical Arabic texts as well.[114] One might hesitate to call Serjeant's translation "resistant" in light of how it takes complex literary works as an uncomplicated portrayal of Arab culture, but not in light of the nuance and detail with which that culture is so richly portrayed. Meanwhile, Colville's eighteenth-century thieves' cant is not exactly domesticating for twenty-first century readers, a fact that might suggest "resistance," or at least a studiously challenging translation. Assuming that resistance is a desirable quality of translation, the difficulty of defining it and saying wherein it might reside suggests that it would be better seen as a byproduct, rather than as a cause, of good translation.

One's translation ideology can have a variety of affects, not all of them intended, which also perplexes the oft-made comparison between the process of translation and that of reading. Appiah pairs these activities when he writes that "questions of adequacy of translation thus inherit the indeterminacy of questions about the adequacy of the understanding displayed in the process we now call 'reading.'"[115] Yet there are also distinctions between the two, chief among them that reading allows for multiple interpretive potentialities, whereas in translation those potentialities must be actualized through choice.[116] Also, the source text

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111. Colville, *Avarice*, xiii.

112. I am indebted to one of the JAOS readers for this insight.

113. Venuti, *Translator's Invisibility*, 299.

114. For a second example, see I. Boullata, "The Case for Resistant Translation from Arabic to English," *Translation Review* 65 (2003): 29–33, for his comparison of translations of Ṭarafa's *muʿallaqa* and call for resistant translation in Arabic to English translation. My thanks to one of the *JAOS* reviewers for suggesting this source.

115. Appiah, "Thick Translation," 816–17.

116. For an intriguing counterexample, David Larsen ("Three Versions of a *Qasida* by Abu Sakhr al-Hudhali," *Cambridge Literary Review* 10 [2017]: 116–33) tries his hand at three different English renderings of the same Arabic *qaṣīda*, an exercise that "is not just [meant] to make variability accessible to the reader in translation, but to highlight it as a positive element of the poem's impact and charm." Even here, however, potentialities are still actuated in a way that they would not be if kept inside the reader's mind.

militates against the "control" of the translator's voice, in contrast to the freedom allotted by secondary exposition. With literary works that adopt a noncommittal stance toward reality, translation opens itself up to the same manifold significance as the original. All these elements, like the conflicting voices of *al-Bukhalāʾ*, bring out a welter of meanings that make the would-be translator's task akin to that of reading, and yet something more.