



The Socio-Cultural, Historical, and Political Allusions in the Translation of the Saudi National Day Poetry: “Peace, O Gracious King” as a Case Study

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore the cultural, social, political, and linguistic aspects of Saudi poems sung on patriotic occasions such as the Saudi National Day. The focus of the study will be on “Peace, O gracious King”, a poem composed by Dr. Abdulaziz Khuja and sung by the famous Saudi singer, Mohamed Abdu in 2010. The use of eulogy has a long tradition in Arabic poetry. It could be traced back to the classic ages. Classic Arab poets used to live on the eulogy’s bounty granted to them by rulers. For them, eulogy was both a means of surviving and to have the privileges of being close to the ruler. Furthermore, it was a way to fame and good reputation.

The language of the song gains its power not only from its musicality and lyricism but also from its literariness and poeticness, the most obvious aspects of Abdul-Aziz Khuga’s songs. The song is written in al-fushā or what is known as the modern standard form of Arabic. Dr. Khuga, presently the Minister of Information and Culture in Saudi Arabia, is a Saudi poet. He is one of the contemporary poets who use standard Arabic to express the concerns of the Saudi people using simple language, though exceptionally of poetic and high style. It is a language that can be said to be appealing and accessible to a large audience in society. This language is set up to answer the new needs of the modern Saudi society. Khuga’s language has also managed to bring the audience closer to poetic songs, particularly the national ones.

The poem/song is permeated by the age-old metaphor of the King as “pater patriae”; “father” to his subjects’ or “the father of the country”. The representation of the

King as the nation’s father taking care of his subjects and having allegiance to the nation’s stability is a salient feature of national songs. In addition, the poet populates his song with other native traditional symbols – the palm tree is an example- that are rooted in the Saudi world and are reflective of its indigenous cultural experience. As will be shown in the discussion, the Saudi national culture, natural world, and common heritage are the sources for his material. He relies on the past experience of the Saudi people to express their present situation and future aspirations. A study of the local national poem/song examined here is meant to give readers a hint at: First, the Saudi notion of what a nation is. Second, the social, cultural, religious, historical, political and emotive implications of the song, and Third, the difficulties encountered when translating such a eulogizing poem/song into English and the procedures the translator should adopt to overcome such difficulties.

Key words: Eulogy; National day; Cultur; Arabic translation challenges

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INTRODUCTION

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, national songs represent folkloric regular expression of the national culture of the Saudis. Besides the early attempts of Mathew Arnold to define culture as the pursuit of perfection, sweetness and light (Arnold, 1869, p.67, 173), Raymond Williams provides a definition that can suit the artistic context of national songs. Williams refers to the various senses in which the word ‘culture’ is usually used. One sense

that seems to fit the national songs is the one in which the word 'culture' "describes the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity (Williams, 2011, p.80). This definition of culture fits the cultural phenomenon of national songs because they are historical texts generally set to music by songwriters, poets and other artists native to the place and therefore probably important for the country. Geert Hofstede provides a thorough definition of culture as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others" (Hofstede, p.6) National songs, an aspect of this distinction, play a critical role in the cultural, political and social life of the Saudi. They are utilised to strengthen and reinforce the social ties between them and to express the common sentiments and feelings which they share.

Although the Saudi Kingdom has almost all of the characteristics of a modern state, one of its salient features is the tribal structure on which the society is based. However, there are strong bonds between its tribes; language, religion, and race feature as the most prominent. In addition, they are linked by common cultural signs; tribal values and practices, particular norms of behaviour, and traditions. These aspects of the Saudi culture can be well discerned in their national songs sung on patriotic occasions and at important ceremonies such as the national day to reflect the 'collective' spheres of the country and to celebrate the stability of the nation.

National songs can be regarded as an interesting and informative form of art that could help us understand the cultural tradition and the political and social life of certain people. Like other folkloric forms of literary and musical output, songs can reflect the world view of these people, their values, aspirations, dreams, the historical experience of their past, and the challenges of their present life. They can also tell us about their religious beliefs. The core of patriotic songs can represent a national message representing the overall societal structure. The nationalist passions of the crowd are ignited by such verbal behavior on occasions such as the National Day commemoration exhibit the collective nationhood awareness as they materialize the people's pride in their nation. A song can reflect a number of concepts and references or even tells a whole story, and is usually composed for performance on certain occasions. Moreover, songs are generally replete with a variety of allusions, which include poetic texts, an implicit narrative story that is not recounted in detail as it is assumed that the natives are already familiar with its threads and the aesthetic value embedded in it.

We are going to examine the national song of Mohamed Abdo to examine the collective cultural values which the poem advocates, and hence to see how far it is a representative song of the Saudi national culture. The song/poem specifies the valleys, the mountain ranges, the landscapes, and the two kingdoms of Nejd and Hijaz

that constituted the historical geography of Saudi Arabia. It also celebrates the national culture through the symbol of the palm-tree; a sustained source of food, shadow and beauty for a desert environment. The palm tree itself is part of the Saudi national emblem. The Saudi Arabia national emblem consists of two crossed swords with a palm tree in the space above and between the blades. The swords represent the two regions of Nejd and Hijaz which were united under King Abdel Aziz Ibn Saud on 23rd September, 1926 (Hence, the Saudi National Day is celebrated on 23rd September every year to commemorate this historical event. This year of 2014 witnessed the 84th National Day celebration in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia). The palm tree represents the Kingdom's assets which are defined as its people, heritage, history, and natural resources. Thus, the palm tree symbolizes the nation as guarded by the two swords. King Abdullah is praised in the song for building up on what his father achieved, and for reinforcing the cultural integration of Nejd and Hijaz and fostering social stability in the Kingdom.

Some songs like national, patriotic or religious ones are viewed as a unique legacy to the local community and the living cultural history of it. In addition to affirming cultural identity as a nation, song texts are a source of information about historical figures and celebrities, important places, and the present natural and ecological features of the country, or those that may have disappeared. Songs bring together people over national and religious events in a spirit of artistic competition. This cultural legacy is held in the oral tradition through which it is activated, which keeps it alive. In Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as the case might be the same in other communities, songs themselves have their own historic background in terms of their original compositions, the music and type of dance accompanying them. It is through such songs as a social convention, people constitute national sensibilities, voice out national pride, and negotiate national meanings, thus making nationhood as associated with loyalty, belonging, solidarity and allegiance to the leader of a prominent feature of their everyday lives. Such songs are enacted with a particular music and even special costumes when on national occasions to highlight their distinctiveness.

Communities give expression to their culture in an attempt to construct a way of living, create a meaning for their lives, and establish a cultural representation of their history and traditions. As an art form or an aspect of expressing, songs are, to quote Williams, "one of the primary human activities, and that it can succeed in articulating not just the imposed or constitutive social or intellectual system, but at once this and an experience of it..." (Williams, p.25). Songs are considered cultural items and primary constituents of a way of life shared by individuals who have common characteristics and are tied by their world views and tradition. They further carry the

attitudes and shed light into the behavior of a community of people who implicitly and explicitly share common cultural values. Considering this distinctiveness, which further can justify songs' differences cross-linguistically and cross-culturally, songs can also be looked at as another integral component of the multifaceted and "collective programming of the mind" as Hofstede defines it (p.6).

1. STATEMENT AND PURPOSE

One of the salient features of the Saudi community is its tribal structure. This inevitably entails that its members share a multitude of attributes and common cultural habits and traditions. Nationhood awareness as reflected in the everyday behavior of ordinary people is expressed in the artistic folkloric literature. Solidarity among its members including the sense of loyalty to both the homeland and the King manifests itself outstandingly in national and patriotic songs. Hence, the present study lends itself to investigating the intimate relationship between the Saudi political system and the people. Examining the Saudi well-known national song "salam ayuha al malik al jalil" lit. Peace to you, your majesty the King, as an example, this paper analyses the cultural, historical and social allusions utilized in expressing loyalty to His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and to a unified nation. As it is shown in the analysis below, the study attempts to show how the songwriter successfully incorporates certain symbols and lexical items that potently reflect semantically loaded meanings and connotations contained within a nationwide collective consciousness. Moreover, the paper also addresses some translation problematic areas which are relevant to social and cultural peculiarities. These peculiarities posit themselves as a challenge for the translation of national songs.

2. NATION, SONGS, AND NATIONAL LANGUAGE

Nationalism has been examined as a political ideology holding that each state should have its nation and each nation its state. Both the state and the nation are brought into alignment as "a cultural construct of collective belonging realized and legitimated through institutional and discursive practices" as Fox and Miller-Idriss put it. It is further looked at as a project to make the state as a political unit congruent with the nation as a cultural unit. In his essay "What is a Nation?", Ernest Renan defines "nation" as "... a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those one will be prepared to make in the future." (*Nation and Narration* 19) This solidarity is determined by two elements: A common heritage from the past and present

consent of co-habitation and determination to preserve that heritage. Interestingly enough, these two elements exist in today's common cultural atmosphere of Saudi people, and it is strongly reflected in their national songs as we will see in the study shown here.

Since nature played a pivotal role in forging the alliance between the two regions of Najd and Hejaz-natural integration based on common geography and history, religion, ethnicity, and language- the national concept is surviving. There is a high degree of cohesion among the people of Saudi Arabia. They take pride in their common heritage and in being together under one flag. Hence, it is not difficult for them to retain the feelings of harmony and belonging necessary for a nation to be stable and productive.

Among the various materials and symbolic struggles, to make a nation or to make people nationalism is the promotion of standardized national languages. A national language is regarded by the speakers of an ethnic community as the means which best expresses their distinctive culture and traditions, and thus is a symbol of their identity. In sociolinguistics, as Holmes (1992, p.105) states, the distinction between a national language and an official one, for example, is made along the affective-referential dimension or in this specific context along the ideological-instrumental one. Adopting the concept of "everyday nationhood" used by Fox and Miller-Idriss (*ibid*), a national language is the people's everyday verbal behavior constituting the communicative means of a political, cultural and social unit.

The people's activities in which their solidarity is displayed are based on a national language which strengthens the feeling of nationhood. This national language is a unifying element; an expression of the essence of belonging to a nation. It becomes a symbol of cooperation, integration, artistic creativity. It is partially embodied in songs which give voice to people's aspirations, ambitions, hopes, grievances, delightful and dreadful times, etc. With this in mind, the nation is not simply an outcome or product of macro-structural forces as it is rather concurrently the practical achievements of ordinary people engaging in routine activities. What goes in harmony with this is what Hobsbawm (1992, p.10) admits that while nationalism is "...constructed essentially from above, [it]... cannot be understood unless also analyzed from below, that is in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people".

National songs in Saudi Arabia as one salient way of displaying nationhood awareness, through expressing senses of belonging, pride, patriotism, and loyalty to homeland and the leader is a quotidian behavior in which nationhood is produced and reproduced in everyday life. This supports the concept introduced by Hobsbawm (*ibid*) that a nation is a discursive construct constituted and legitimated not only in response to elite directives and orders but also in accordance with the contingencies

of everyday life. Therefore, from this perspective, we look at songs as one way of “talking the nation”, i.e. the discursive construction of the nation through routine talk in interaction, to use Hobsbawm’s (ibid) words. Therefore, songs are among the ways in which nationhood shapes the choices people make and how it is implicated in the spontaneous decisions of ordinary people, in addition to their distinctive invocations and ritual enactment of symbols, whether national, patriotic or religious. In this sense, songs as one feature of everyday life is an activity spontaneously coordinated and pursued by the public or ordinary people, and thus are seen as politicized forms of collective belonging when glorifying, exalting, and honoring, through chanting a national symbol like the king or elements from nature as in the selected song here within a Saudi context. Thus, festivals and parties in which songs, among other artistic performances, are played are contrived occasions for the crystallization of national awareness. Besides, songs are themselves a symbolic accoutrement of the nation, like flags, banners and speeches, which, according to Mosse (1975) provide explicitly national parameters to facilitate the organization and experience of national solidarities. As for the integrative function of symbols and rituals wherein songs are sung, chants chanted, banners unfurled and flags waved, Turner (1967, pp.22, 48-50) states that these are to make the bonds that join one another momentarily visible and audible to express the social unity, serving to create, or are themselves a constitutive element of that national awareness.

3. THE TRANSLATABILITY OF SONGS

Although the Saudi community shares much with its neighboring Arab states, its folkloric literature including poetry and songs enacted represents a distinctive cultural entity. This could be attributed to the artistic nature of this folkloric genre, especially national and patriotic songs. They are much allusive, contextual, thematic, message bearing and highly metaphoric and figurative. These do reflect a multifaceted cultural composite that makes them unique and distinctive, which inevitably poses specific challenges in the act of translation, and thus creating a host of gaps that are likely to be hard to bridge. The frequent use of figures of speech and words with varying shades of meaning, which highly need to be interpreted, in addition to the frequent use of intertextuality derived from ancestral history or religious contexts can be invulnerable in the process of translation.

Moreover, the norms and codes of behavior that reflect the values and virtues are transmitted through songs. Translating songs, national or patriotic, is not an everyday activity, the complexity of which makes it an extremely interesting area of research due to the intricacies involved in it. As is shown in the analysis below, songs heavily

rely on emotive power to create an equivalent emotive effect on the listener. In translation, however, this emotive power produced on the entertained audience of the source text might not be realized in the receptive culture, where people are very likely to have different if not opposing views. In the case of songs, the translator is not solely working on a printed text. She is also working on a sung text where extra meanings spring from the auditory form of the national song which moves the audience feelings, and hence the translator is entrusted with a more challenging task. As a result, the translator can but compromises, offers a sacrifice of what seems to be of little significance, and makes cultural transplantation in order to create an effect tantamount to the original one on the target language audience.

Besides, translating songs requires not only imparting the source language message to a target audience as optimally as possible, but also subduing it to the musical features accompanying the song, whereby a translation symbiosis is produced that embraces the poetic and musical aspects (cf. Graham, 1989; Whissell, 1996; Dunbar, 2002). Of course, in songs meaning is the vital criterion; yet, the scope of acceptable accuracy in this context is likely to be wider than in other acts of translating, as stated by Low (2005a, pp.193-195). So one can say that when the purpose of translating a certain song is for singing, the translator focuses on form, but if the content is what the translator is after, the form then is relegated to the background.

As a result of intercultural gaps, which are likely to be confronted in song-translation, and according to Translation Studies principles, the ultimate purpose in any corpus study is to find out whether the translation gives priority to the source or the target pole and text. In other words, the translator makes a choice against Toury’s ‘initial norm’ and ‘continuum of adequate and acceptable translation (Munday, pp.112-113): Either to keep the translation close to the original, hence the translation is adequate, or close to the original text-type in the target culture, hence the translation is acceptable (Sánchez, p.132). Since no translation can be completely be adequate or acceptable because of interferences from the source language and culture, and the inevitable shifts between the two texts, as Tirkkonen-Condit (1989, p.6) and Toury (1995, pp.56-7) argue. The translator can choose a more satisfactory approach and opt for intermediate resolutions. The types of shifts or changes that could possibly occur during translation such as cultural shift, narrowing or broadening of meaning, compensation, to mention a few, stand for the elements that do not remain approximately identical in the original and the translated text, and hence results in rendering a variation of the source text.

Since the pre-Islamic era, poetry has been implemented as a way of eulogizing rulers, kings or high dignitaries. In the written, or more often the oral composition of poems,

poets used to illuminate the remarkable features of the eulogized addressee such as courage, wisdom, sagacity and clemency, especially in unsettled situations. In order to successfully reflect the prestigious position or status of the ruler, poets tended to choose the most appreciated values and merits of the person eulogized, as considered by their own community. What makes certain eulogizing poems more popular than others is performing them as songs, and socially giving them enough attention. The intimate relationship between the Saudi political system and the Saudis springs from the historical dimension of the royal family of the Kingdom. Expression of loyalty to the king, and belonging to the land has taken many forms, one of which is elucidating the merits of the king via songs. As will be shown in the discussion below, allusion to the Saudi cultural and social elements is what characterizes the Saudi national songs.

The poem "salaman ayuha l maliku l jaleelu", which enlightens the values and the highly appreciated qualities of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Ibn Abdulaziz, is a case in point. This panegyric embraces some attributions of the King, that is clearly welcome by the Saudi community. Being peculiar to such a community gives the sung poem idiosyncracies that make it uneasy to grasp in translation. To put it differently, the eulogizing poem under discussion does not lend itself easily to translation, because it is loaded with expressive language.

In order to handle the sung poem translationally, it is conducted according to themes. Therefore, verse inability and incapability to describe the King, the importance of geopolitical dimensions illustrated in the poem, the role of the King in the patronage of the Two Holy Mosques, his highly-esteemed qualities, and the strong relations between the King and his people are major themes of the poem.

سلاما ايها الملك الجليل وعهدا لا يحيد ولا يميل

Peace, O gracious King and a covenant that neither deviates nor tends

In the introductory section of the poem, the poet is addressing the King saying: "Peace, O gracious King and a covenant that neither deviates nor tends". Translating the first line literally is deemed to fail, due to the socio-cultural implications that are pertinent to the source text. In the source culture, there is normally a direct relationship between the people and the ruler, and people usually express themselves and their needs or demand in a highly elevated style. Featured as appreciating poetry and poets, Kings tend to respond to what their people ask.

أحاور فيك شعري وهو بحر فيصمت في مقامك لا يقول

Of your Highness I converse with my poetry and though voluminous as a sea it cannot give you your due

In the second line, the poet continues praising the King by saying "Of your Highness I converse with my poetry

and though voluminous as a sea it cannot give you your due". The linguistic and literary power of the poet's words emanates from the fact that this genre has been inherited as people's voice in demonstrating their needs before the ruler. What ensures those eulogists is that rulers appreciate poetry, and awards are normally given as a response to their eulogizing compositions. As it seems, the translation does not reflect the skirmish between the poet and his poetry in enlightening the extremely appreciated qualities of King Abdullah. Though the poetry is sea in itself, it does have the courage to produce or say a verse in the presence of the King. Of course, the exalted and dignified character of the King imposes itself in the scene, a fact that cannot be observed in the western culture, where rulers do not pay enough attention to such a social genre.

لأنك يا ملكي فوق مدحي ومهما زدت في وصفي قليل

Because you your highness is far beyond my eulogy and whatever I say is little in my view

The mutual relationship that King Abdullah has built on the basis of veneration and gratitude between himself and his people has made it no strange to be addressed in this highly elevated style. The harmonious textile of the Saudi community and the King has resulted from efforts made by the ruling family to facilitate life for the Saudi community, and help in modernizing the Kingdom at all levels. The poet is trying in third line to find justifications for his poetry incapacity to praise the King. The poet says that his verse is unable to reflect the attributions of the King by saying "Because you your highness is far beyond my eulogy and whatever I say is little in my view". The fact that praising kings is exclusive to some cultures like the Arabic culture has made it challenging to be reflected likewise in the western culture. The social values of intimacy, closeness, community satisfaction, and the cultural aspect of this type of poetry make it difficult to relay in the target language. The translator has, thus, to indicate that such type of a literary genre is not new and has been inherited over history in the Arabic culture.

وأنتم من تعز به المعالي ويسمو الحرف والقلم النبيل

Your majesty is the source of ranks' elevation, and the raise of letter (language) and the noble pen

The poet continues admiring the King by illustrating his verse incapability to reflect the Royal attributes; the high positions or statuses are raised by the majesty of the King. The use of the plural masculine addressee pronoun "antum", "you plural", instead of the masculine singular addressee pronoun "anta", "you singular" are an example of eulogizing the addressee. The poet addresses the King by saying "your majesty is the source of ranks' elevation, and the raise of letter (language) and the noble pen". The figurative language of the poet cannot be reproduced in the translation, and the emotive power that it enjoys in the source language is hardly attainable. This difficulty can be attributed to the social and cultural impact of

poem. In the western culture, rulers do not receive such interest and care of the community, a fact that makes such a genre seem extraterrestrial and foreign. Not only this, the fact that eulogy has been traditionally, socially, and culturally, inherited has given it a sense of sacredness and sensitiveness. This literary norm has been employed over history, and has gained enough attention and care of rulers, which empowers it and makes it highly acceptable, at all levels, the highest of which is the political level.

سأترك للقوافي ما تشاء وأبعث مهجتي حبا يسيل

I will let the rhymes to express what they desire, and let my love flow

The poet concludes the introductory part of the poem by declaring his surrender, and announcing his inability to continue eulogizing. To put differently, he confessed that the high qualities of the King cannot be expressed in his words; his lexicography bank does not have expressions that can state the high qualities of the King, as the merits are beyond description. On this basis, he releases the rhymes to express in their own, and the way they see appropriate in reflecting the unprecedented values of kings. Simultaneously, the poet sends his heart flooding with love, respect, appreciation, gratitude, and gratefulness for a repay to the King who has made enough efforts for the contentment and happiness of his people. The King associations, and the way of expressing these values in the poetry of eulogy cannot be observed, if the poem is translated in the Western culture. Again, this may be due to the social, cultural, emotive, ecological, and expressive differences.

يسابقني المحبة كل قلبٍ وتشرها الروابي والسهول

'All hearts are competing with mine in the love (of the King), a love spread by mounts and plains

In order to reflect the whole land in appreciating the King, the poet includes natural elements in his ode, and shows the competition between people in love of the King, an image that cannot be reflected likewise in other cultures. In Arabic, "qalb", "heart" is the source of love and appreciation; the poet says that all hearts are racing with me to your love, my dear King. The pragmatic meaning is that all people, regardless of their tribal and regional belongings, are contending in love of the King whose ancestors have made immense efforts to unify the outstretched Kingdom on the basis of equality, justice, duties, and more importantly love and appreciation.

The fact that the King has gained enough love and appreciation from his people and land is apparent in exchanging and extending congratulations on the Saudi National Day. The poet expresses this fact candidly, when he expresses this fact by saying "All hearts are competing with me in the love (of the King), which is spread by mounts and plains". The choice of these geographical features is deliberate as it reflects the unity of land in the Kingdom, regardless of its features, being a mountain, a

plain, a sea, or a steep region. In other words, the entire Kingdom's geography celebrates being together, and express thankfulness to the royal family in creating this harmony of unity.

وتعزفها السراة بكل فخر وترقص من معانيها النخيلُ

And *Al-Surat proudly fiddle love of the King and palm trees dance to the meanings of that music

The animation is clear in the competition of mounts and plains in love of the King, an image that cannot be similarly handled in other culture's political discourses. What added beauty to the composed poem is that the love is proudly fiddled by Al-Surat range of mountains; resort to this range of mountains aims at illuminating the idea that all elements of nature in the Kingdom are extremely glad on this occasion, to the extent that all fiddle "love of the King". Cohesion is apparent among the various components of the terrain; palm trees, which are considered as a main feature in the Kingdom, do not remain standstill when the Al-Surat Mountains "fiddle love of the King", but rather dance joyfully. This rudimentary scene of the poem cannot be felt equally if the poem is translated literally in the target language, for the idea that palm trees, if existing, are not socially and culturally appreciated and treasured.

*As-Surat: a long and high mountain range in the South West of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

ويحملها الصبا في كل نجدٍ معطرة معززة تجولُ

Saba (the morning cool wind) holds love all over Najd, scented, enhanced and moving through

ويهتف يا صبا نجد حجازاً ينغمها توحدنا الجميلُ

And Hijaz loudly chants "oh the Saba (the cool wind of) Najd", a chant melodised by our beautiful unification

The poet continues incorporating environmental elements in the celebration of the national day. As the capital, Riyadh, lies in Najd, which is the central region of Saudi Arabia, and includes besides Riyadh, Al-Qaseem and Ha'il, the poet stresses that the morning cool wind holds this love in all parts of Najd; not only this, this love is perfumed from the essence of this pivotal region and is respectfully moved all over the region. Thus, the line "Saba (the morning cool wind) holds love all over Najd, scented, enhanced and moving through," shows the political central role of the region in the Kingdom.

This line highlights the religious and political dimensions of the poem. On the national day, Saudis recall the major role of the royal family for the preservation of the Islam as a message, and the Islamic message of tolerance, moderation, and respect of the other. Hijaz is mostly recognized for accommodating the two Islamic holy cities, Mecca and Medina. As the region of these Islam's holy places, the Hejaz has significance in the Arab and Islamic, religious, historical, cultural, and political map. The significance of this part of the poem

is that it reflects the real and strong relationship between the religious and the political regions of the Kingdom, where the ruling family has significantly contributed in establishing this relationship. The political region, Najd, and the religious region, Hijaz are integrated, holding the political and religious dimensions of the Kingdom. The political rules of the Kingdom are stemmed from the Qur'an and Sunnah, and it is thus no strange that the poet illuminates this relationship. These culture-bound dimensions and implications of the national day poem cannot be grasped similarly if the text is literally rendered as "And Hijaz loudly chants 'oh the Saba (the cool wind of) Najd', a chant melodised by our beautiful unification".

As far as translation is concerned, the translator should have enough knowledge of the geography of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Understanding this geography quips the translator with the necessary details needed to reflect the various associations of the two significant regions under discussion. The religious significance of Hijaz, and the political approval of the religious rules apply in the capital city in Najd signify the strong relationship between the political and religious references, a fact that does not exist in most countries. These values cannot be easily attained in the target culture if the translator is not acknowledged enough in the Saudi culture, which has taken Shari'ah as the source of rules and authorities.

لأنك فارس الأزمات شهيم ويخضع إن أردت المستحيل

As you are the chivalrous knight of crises, the impossible is subdued to your will

The Middle East in general and the Arab region in particular have witnessed continuing problems over the last few decades, among which was the Arab and the Muslim's central question, the Palestinian issue. The Kingdom has been supporting the Arabs and Muslims, due to the pivotal role it enjoys at the Arab, Muslim, and international levels. Not only this, the Kingdom is catering for the internal affairs, and does all the possible efforts in order to provide a decent life for its population. For all the insurmountable challenges facing the neighboring states, the Kingdom managed to get out intact thanks to the wise and far-sighted vision of the King.

It is thus no strange that the poet is expressing what he has observed and felt, being a Saudi citizen. Of course, this the feeling of the Saudis who have enjoyed their rights and have been living decently and securely during the period of the Saudi family after the unification of this outstretched Kingdom. The ruling family has created justice and equality among people on the basis of Shari'ah, without which it seems impossible to achieve social harmony between the tribal structure; it is thus with the real will that the impossible has become reality and turned true and practical.

Translating the verse under discussion literally, the translator would collide with many linguistic, social, cultural, political, religious, and emotive problems.

Therefore, "As you are the chivalrous knight of crises, the impossible is subdued to your will" cannot fully reflect the peculiar values of the Saudi community on the National Day. The Arabic "shahm" does not have a clear equivalence in the target culture, and has stemmed its values from the Arabic culture; meanings such as helping the needy, supporting the oppressed, sheltering the homeless, and protecting the neighbors can be derived from this Arabic expression, but cannot be felt likewise in the western culture. Those meanings are highly appreciated in the source text, but are equally considered by target language people, who lack such values at the social and cultural levels.

رضيتَ كتاب ربك خير نورٍ لدرّيك أن يكون هو الدليلُ

You have accepted your God's book (The Holy Qur'an) as the best light of guidance to your path

سلمتَ لتخدم الحرمين أجراً من الرحمن يرفله القبولُ

Delivered to look after the Two Holy Mosques and your reward is increased by God's acceptance of your deed

أعبد الله لا تخش العوادي وحكمك ذاك ما سنّ الرسولُ

Oh Abdullah fear not the enemies, and your ruling is but an implementation of the prophet's Sunnah

The fact that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia embraces the abode of Islam, where the message of Islam was revealed, has given it a unique significance worldwide. The ruling family has given enough care and interest to this divine religion, and at all levels. As his ancestors, King Abdullah did not cease the tradition of caring about Islam and Muslims in different areas, stemming the approach of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The Two Holy Mosques, for example, have been tremendously looked after during the Saudi reign, and this can be clearly observed during the pilgrimage period, where services and facilities are offered to the pilgrim guests. Not only this, applying the rules of Islam in people's affairs is another example, where such rules are equally applied without distinguishing between people in the Kingdom, whether being Muslims and non-Muslims.

On the national day, people express their happy feelings and point out the political and the religious of the ruling family. The fact that King Abdullah, and of course his ancestors, has adopted the Qur'an as guidance is clear in addressing the King in the verse "You have accepted your God's book (The Holy Qur'an) as the best light of guidance to your path". This can explicate the idea that the Qur'an and Sunnah are practically implemented in the Kingdom, where religious approach is clear in all people's affairs, if compared with other Islamic states, where secularism can be clearly observed. The only recompense the King is awaiting from the care of the Two Holy Mosques is the award from Allah; this is clear in the verse "Delivered to look after the Two Holy Mosques and your reward is increased by God's acceptance of your deed". The idea that

the King is putting his trust in God has made him satisfied and fearless of enemies or opponents. This is clear in the line “Oh Abdullah fear not the enemies, and your ruling is but an implementation of the prophet’s Sunnah”.

What makes translating these lines problematic is being heavily overloaded with national, religious, cultural, social, and political allusions. Target language readers would not comprehend the idea of the national celebration, where people over the Kingdom recall and commemorate the values and merits of the ruling family in establishing this Kingdom of justice and equality. They would not also understand that, unlike other Muslim countries, implementation of Islam is manifest in all branches of life in the Kingdom, and this is due to the directions of the King, and his care of the Islamic rules. Therefore, supporting details are necessary to point out all those meanings that are idiosyncratic and peculiar to the source text.

وقولك ناصعٌ أصلٌ وفصلٌ وصدقك قاطعٌ سيفٌ صقيلٌ

And your saying is purely clear and your honesty is a heavy cutting sword

وإنك في السلام أبٌ رحيمٌ وإنك في الوعى أسدٌ صؤولٌ

In peace you are a merciful father, and in battlefield an assailing lion

وتدمع إن رأيت الطفل يبكي كأنك ظل والده الظليل

Your tears drop down when you see an infant crying as if you were the father

وهمك أن يعيش الناس أمناً وتسهر عنهم ليلاً يطول

Your concern is people’s safe lives, while you remain watchful long nights

وإنك إن فرحت وإن حزنت لكل منهمو الخل الخليل

And when saddened or pleased, to each you are the best companion

The poet continues eulogizing King Abdullah by referring to his character and the social closeness to his people. Reference is made to the words and deeds of the King, an allusion that has plainly reflected the King’s features, as felt by the Saudi community. Arabs are socially related by nature, and close to each other; this appreciated feature of Arabs is reflected in the person of the King, who is close to people in all their life circumstances. The King is watchful over his people to ensure that the people are living happily with all needs provided; he has the mercy upon the people, and does all efforts for his people to live securely and peacefully.

The reflection of the King’s features is clear in the poem and at different levels. The fact that the King is clear in words and deeds is clearly portrayed when the poet says “And your saying is purely clear and your honesty is a heavy cutting sword”. Sword is a symbol of sharpness and decision taking in the Arabic culture, and is figuratively implemented to depict King Abdullah in expression and deed.

The wise leader is the one who acts and reacts according to situations and circumstances; as the situation in the region is unsettled, the King has done enough efforts to keep his people secure and safe. However, if any danger is imposed upon his people, he will react bravely and boldly. This is expressed in the line “In peace you are a merciful father, and in battlefield an assailing lion.” Social closeness is another merit of the King as illustrated in “Your tears drop down when you see an infant crying as if you were the father.” The last two lines reveal the intimate relationship between the community and the ruler, a relationship that may not be experienced likewise in other communities.

Fathers in traditional communities, like the Saudi one, are given sufficient importance, adequate respect, ample reverence, and high prestige, and are held in esteem. Fathers are sometimes sworn by, though religiously forbidden, a fact that indicates sacredness and reverence. Here, the King is likened to a kind merciful father. What has pushed the singer to perch on such choice of lexical elements is the social value given to fathers, and the communality of the significance of the ‘lion’ as a brave hunter of the enemies in war.

Welcoming the King by addressing him as a merciful father has cultural and social implications. Unlike the western culture, where family relations of parents and sons are pathetic after the age of sixteen, the historic and intimate relationship between sons and fathers in the Saudi conservative community is strongly constructed and genetically inherited. The elderly people are given sufficient attention of sons and grandsons, and the consideration and care that they receive from their offspring have enabled them to occupy a social position, making them spokespersons on social occasions. Describing the King as a merciful father highlights the warm welcome that the King should expect from his people. Though the singer subjectively expresses the feeling towards the King, he highlights a social feeling and loyalty to the ruler. The case being so, the national song is performed on different social occasions, in a way that combines between the leader and his people. The verbal link between the two parts represents a real intimacy of the people’s truthfulness to the Saudi Royal Family, an intimacy that does not exist in Republic States, where a leader can only be given charge for four years or a few more years. This short period might not be enough to build bridging relations between the top authorities and the subordinates.

Peace and security are essential requirements for the happiness and contentment of any society. They are prioritized by King Abdullah and given enough care and precedence. It is thus no strange that the poet alludes to such a necessity in his ode; this citation is manifest when addressing the King as “Your concern is people’s safe lives, while you remain watchful long nights”. The socio-

political value of the poem reflects the social and political lifestyle of the Saudi community. Though the Kingdom is outstretched, the King has succeeded to keep it secure, peaceful, and safe; this is due to his wise policy which is based on bringing his people close to him, and in all conditions. Not only this, the King is always with his people and in all occasions; his happiness or sadness is a reaction of his people's feelings. If they are happy, he shares them the same feeling, and if they are otherwise, he is deemed to be sad with them. This is stated when the poet says "And when saddened or pleased, to each you are the best companion".

The socio-political and cultural values expressed in the above lines cannot be reproduced similarly in the target language. Due to the lack of knowledge in the Saudi culture, and celebration of the national day, target culture readers would not be able to have enough comprehension and awareness of the source text. The translator has to attach his translation with explanatory details to reflect as much meaning as possible in the target culture. Cultural and social allusions between the royal family and the people cannot be predicted from the literal translation of the text. Not only that, indeed, the various connotations of the Saudi national day cannot be displayed in the mere translation of the poem. Meanings such as unification of the Kingdom, peace, security, prosperity, social relations, and intimacy between the leader and his citizens cannot be grasped totally in translation without supporting the translation with enough social and cultural details.

يزفُ الشعب أفئدة التفاني وحباً في الحنايا لا يزولُ

The people send you the hearts of devotion, and a love eternalized in the bones

فأنت ملكنا مدّ أليمننا سنتبع بالمحبة ما تقولُ

You are our sovereign, kindly stretch your right hand, and with love we follow what you say

The Saudi faithful and sincere community highly appreciate the efforts exerted by its political leadership, an admiration that has stemmed from the achievements that have been witnessed all over the Kingdom, and at all levels. It is customary among honest communities to reflect their happiness and thankfulness to their leadership, as a repay of the honors gifted of their leadership. A scrutinizing eye in what has been achieved in the Kingdom over the last eighty four years would reveal the huge size of success and accomplishments; that would not have happened without the real and the sincere intention of the Saudi leadership, represented in the Saudi family.

Celebrating the national day in the Kingdom is practiced in every part of the Saudi land. People rejoice the day and show harmonious structure of the one Saudi family; they have similar feelings, and celebrate the day by composing poems and raising high the voice of loyalty and faithfulness to their leadership. This is illustrated

in the poem when the poet addresses the King saying "the people send you the hearts of devotion, and a love eternalized in the bones". The real love of the King comes as gratitude for the favours that the royal family has been doing since the establishment of the Kingdom, and the fortification of the political system, which is primarily based on the rules of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The poet states the nations follow up by saying "You are our sovereign, kindly stretch your right hand, and with love we follow what you say".

Translating the concluding part of the poem is not less difficult than the previous sections. The translator should have enough social, cultural, religious, political, and regional information to approximately reflect the values and allusions of the original text. Target language readers would not seize the total meaning of the text without being equipped with enough details about the source language social and political implications. To uncover the difficulties and resolve their translation problems, the translator should study the translation first, and examine its matchlessness or watchfulness with the receiving culture and society.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the study attempts to figure out the poetic, social, and cultural implications in the Saudi national songs, and the political influence on orienting the national singers to adapt such a style to indirectly express the public loyalty to the King and belonging to the homeland. National songs are regarded as the living part of cultural and social heritage as they include various cultural elements that might not lend themselves easily understood by the new generation. In addition, the study has made clear that the environmental and ecological factors have played a crucial role in shaping the Saudi national song, a strategy that has fed it with a communal acceptance nationwide. The analysis has shown that the clear linguistic and cultural differences between Arabic and English add to the intricacy of translating this type of songs into English. As far as translation is concerned, the study has shown that sociolinguistics and politics of the source national song is culture-specific and as such cannot be completely preserved in the target language. As such, it is hopeful that the study has succeeded in revealing to what extent Arabic could be different from English in the representation of social, cultural, and emotional relations—a lingua-cultural difference that manifests itself clearly in Abdou's national song, the case study of this paper.

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