The Hermeneutic Positioning of the Translator in Quran Translation

Hicham Elass, Ph.D. Candidate

Faculty of Arts and Humanities Ibn-Zohr University, Agadir-Morocco

Email: hicham.elass@edu.uiz.ac.ma

Hanan Bennoudi, Full Professor

Faculty of Arts and Humanities Ibn-Zohr University, Agadir-Morocco

Emia: hicham.elass@edu.uiz.ac.ma

Abstract

The transition from the text to the figure of the translator has been a substantial paradigm shift in Translation Studies amidst the cultural and sociological turns of the present context. Not only does current research shift the focus towards studying translation as a socially and ideologically situated activity, governed by various sociocultural and cognitive factors, but it also emphasizes the translator's role as an active agent of change—an activist. This article explores the hermeneutic positioning of the translator in the realm of Quran translation, aiming to retrieve the active role of the translator from the shackles of the dominant Western models of sacred translation and the exegetical tradition in which the practice of Quran translation is deeply entrenched. The study emanates from the premise that the practice of Quran translation lacks a consistent approach that strikes a balance between the Quran along with its interrelated systems of exegetical authority and the vital position of the translator, as an exegetical interpreter, in the hermeneutic process of translating the Quran. Inspired by Mohammed Abed Al-Jabri's Quranic hermeneutics, the study advances a middle-way translational approach to Quran translation that spares the confusion and contradictions surrounding the legitimation of the Quran's interpretation/translation, the significations of exegetical translation (tarjama tafsīriyya), and the problematic embrace of the mainstream Western definition of translation and its inherent negative bearings on the role of the Quran translator. Thus, the article posits that the retrieval of the translator's central hermeneutic positioning not only hinges on rethinking the translation as/and interpretation of the Quran but also on disconnecting the practice of Quran translation from the Western models of sacred translation to make room for special consideration of the hermeneutic implications of the Arabic term tarjama (translation) as it was

practiced in early Islamic history as a form of tafsīr (exegesis) and/or taʾwīl (interpretation) in reference to the sacred text.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Translation Studies (TS), the current era of the third millennium is, par excellence, the turn of the translator or, what Andrew Chesterman calls, the age of "Transla*tor* Studies" (2009: 13; emphasis in the original). That is to say, the translator's figure has gained much prominence as a central focus of study within TS. Beyond linguistic competence, translation scholars are now more preoccupied with exploring the role of translators as cultural mediators who navigate the intricacies of various sociocultural systems and negotiate between different cultural norms, ideologies and power structures. Much attention is paid to the active role of the translators as well as the underlying cognitive and sociocultural factors that influence their choices and decision-making, so much so that scholars are more tactful to the ideological and subjective (rather than objective) processes inherent in the activity of translation. In the scenario of Quran translation, not only have studies recently been growing in terms of throwing light on the sociological and hermeneutic positioning of the translator in the field (see, for example, Al-Amri 2010, 2019; D'Silva 2014; Haroun 2021; Qassas 2021), but numerous English translations of the Quran have also emerged embodying greater insights into the orientation of the practice towards social agency and activism (see, for example, Ahmed 2016; Bakhtiar 2009; Gerrans 2016; Mustafa 2018; The Monotheist Group 2021; Yuksel et al. 2007).

At stake is that the transformative sociocultural landscape of the 21st century and its inevitable influence on the domain of Quran translation do not seem to trigger interest in negotiating suitable but relational ways in which the translation of the Quran can be in harmony with the crucial positioning of the translator's agency and visibility without risking the sacrality of the Quran or dismissing the exegetical authority in favor of an ideological interpretation/translation. Contrariwise, the translators are either way deeply embedded in ideology and serve different loyalties in such absence of balanced methodological approaches to Quran translation. Their translations are either fully or partially loyal to an established exegetical authority or faithfully dedicated to the translator's divergent interpretation that caters to the expectation of the target readers amidst the burning issues of the present sociocultural context. Even more problematic is that both the theory and practice of Quran translation are fraught with contradictions and confusion due to the sheer absence of critical distance with regard to the adopted translation theories or the exegetical authority that each group of translators denies or subscribes to. This essential lack of engagement on the part of both Quran scholars and translators hampers the valorization of the hermeneutic positioning of the translator, which is in line with the theological doctrine of the Quran's inimitability (*iʿjāz*). Such Islamic doctrine professes that the Quran is, by definition, untranslatable (*muʿjiz*), while any rendition of it is rather merely an aid to understanding, an interpretation, or even a presentation of its possible meanings.

Within this theological scope, the translator emanates as an active performer whose role is mainly directed at giving an appropriate interpretation or commentary on the textual meanings of the Quran, akin to the long-standing tradition of exegetical commentaries (*tafāsīr*; sing., *tafsīr*). However, the fact that the main scholarship on Quran translation embraces and sees the translation of the Quran from the lens of the mainstream and common definitions of translation, often taken as reproduction or substitution, mystifies the active role of the translator, as an exegetical interpreter, given that the theological claim in favor of the interpretability (not translatability) of the Quran is contradicted against the adopted Western translational frame into the reproducibility of the Quranic meaning or even form. This confusion or contradiction is further exemplified in the term *exegetical translation* (*tarjama tafsīriyya*) that, once again, blurs the line between whether the translators should actively provide an exegetical translation/interpretation of their own, or they should passively translate exegeses contained in the exegetical commentaries of the Quran (*tafāsīr*). It seems that such confusions and contradictions are due to the lack of specifying what strictly *interpreting* the Quran entails, of course, as per the theological doctrine of the Quran's inimitability; not to mention, the confusion and contradictions are also responsible for having the translators either abide by the exegetical authority to gain recognition and prove loyalty to specific agendas or break with that authority to re-claim agency or visibility even if it comes at the expense of the unity and integrity of the Quran.

To settle these confusions and contradictions, this article draws on Mohammed Abed Al-Jabri's (d. 2010) Quranic hermeneutics, which strikes a balance between the exegetical tradition along with its embedded theological and jurisprudential forms of authority and the agency of the interpreter to enrich the readers' understanding of the miraculous meanings of the Quran. The interest in Al-Jabri stems from the fact that his hermeneutics is counter-ideology and defines in clear terms the conditions and mechanisms involved in interpreting the Quran without the risks of apologia or sectarian ideology. This means that Al-Jabri's hermeneutics allows the Quran to retain its consistency in translation without the negative influence of apologetic and ideological concerns or the traditional structures of authority which enforces what to interpret or where precisely the true meaning of the Quran lies. It follows then that the role of the translators is no longer utterly restricted by the supremacy of exegetical authority, which glorifies a singular interpretation and then implicitly freezes the Quran in the past, nor is entirely driven by the burden of modernity and its burning issues, which in turn lead some translators to violate the meanings of the Quran in light of their apologetic agendas, believing that the Quran is more aligned with the values of modernity and modern science than with what is reflected in its prior, allegedly fallacious, conventional works of *tafsīr* (exegesis)

Building upon Al-Jabri's hermeneutics, the article fleshes out a middle-way approach to Quran translation where the translators rather become active agents who not only facilitate the communication of the Quranic message to its non-Arabic speakers but also inscribe their individual voices/interpretations in their translation products according to their neutral and rigorous understanding of how differently the Quran addresses the reality/context in which they are situated. This is, of course, without missing to account for the pitfalls of their, as translators-interpreters, inevitably ideological impetus as well as the pivotal role of the exegetical tradition in enabling a better understanding and then application of the Quran to the translators' present situations. This can be through negotiating the new emergent meanings with the Quranic

context and back again to the other possibilities of meanings contained in the authoritative tradition of exegesis. At this point, the weight of exegetical tradition can no longer perpetuate the translators' invisibility, making them mere loyal servants concerned solely with rendering its established meanings in place of the meanings of the Quran. Rather, such exegetical tradition can aid the translators in having a holistic understanding of the Quran since every translator/interpreter sees the world only from one particular narrowed sociocultural and historical perspective. All in all, it could be said that Al-Jabri's Quranic hermeneutics make room for the voice/visibility of the translators, the exegetical tradition and the original Quran to be all justly given due emphasis/value in the translation process of the Quran.

Against this background, the translators are spared the troubles of opting for a dull literal translation, conforming with the Western practices of biblical translation and the mainstream definition of translation as transfer/replication, for fear the translators might inscribe any personal or interpretive addition/opinion that could mingle with the substrata of the Quran (cf. Pink 2020b: 333). Similarly, the translators are also spared the confusion surrounding their take on/task in the exegetical translation (*tarjama tafsīriya*), as the most acceptable sort of translation since it serves only the explanation of the meanings of the Quran rather than aiming at substituting the Quran, although substitution is implicitly at play in the translators' embrace of the dominant Western theories of translation; that is, the confusion, once again, concerns what meaning the translators have to explain through their translations: Is it the meaning inherent in the *tafsīr* tradition, being the majority's stance? Or the meaning fathomed and created by the translators themselves? Both the prevalent literal and the exegetical translation in the field of Quran translation contribute to the invisibility of the translators insofar as there is inconsiderable attention to recognize the Quran as a unique genre whose *tafsīr* as translation or vice versa has been practiced differently than the Western practices of biblical translation, which have enormously informed current translation theories and, ultimately, the translation practice of the Quran. Therefore, the article argues that instead of situating the translation of the Quran within the same category of Western sacred translation, the varying degree to which the translation of the Quran was practiced as part of the early forms of *tafsīr* (exegesis) can better guide a suitable reconceptualization of the role of the translator and Quran translation itself as a complex field of study that still lacks clear-cut boundaries about its definition and concepts (cf. Wilson 2020: 553).

Al-Jabri's Quranic hermeneutics—which renders the Quran first as an open text for a renewed understanding and the translator second as an active participant in the hermeneutic process of interpreting the Quran—not only helps us draw definite lines about the obligations of the translator in the process of Quran translation, but it also paves the ground to consider the possibility of Quranic interpretation in light of the Islamic tradition and exegetical authority. This is by enabling a consistent view of translation as a form of *tafsīr* (exegesis) and/or *ta'wīl* (interpretation) without running the risk of ideological motives or downplaying the conditions involved in the legitimacy of Quranic interpretation and the centrality of the Quran's interrelated systems of exegetical authority. As such, this would make it coherent to investigate the intersection between the Arabic terms *tafsīr* (exegesis), *ta'wīl* (interpretation) and *tarjama* (translation), which would not only help us discern the convergence between the role of the Quranic commentator/exegete (*mufassir*) and that of the translator but also locate the activity of Quran translation in its proper hermeneutic sphere. Therefore, before attending to the

hermeneutic implications of the translation process of the Quran as a form of *tafsīr* and/or *ta'wīl*, the article outlines first Al-Jabri's Quranic hermeneutics and its implications for Quran translation.

2. Al-Jabri's Quranic Hermeneutics and its Bearing on Quran Translation

After an extensive journey through his celebrated four-volume critique of Arab reason (Naqd al-'aql al-'Arabi) spanning a period of eighteen years (1984-2001), Al-Jabri devoted his final years to producing an additional four volumes (published between 2006 and 2009) that focused specifically on the Quran and, therefore, brought to the fore his "Quranic hermeneutics". While the initial volume, titled Madkhal ila al-Qur'ān al-Karīm: fi al-Taʿrīf bi al-Qur'ān (Towards a (re-)definition of the Noble Quran: An Introduction), serves as an introductory book in which Al-Jabri establishes the theoretical principles for his (re-)definition of the Quran, the remaining three volumes, titled Fahm al-Qur'ān al-Ḥakīm: al-Tafsīr al-Wadiḥ ḥasaba tartīb al-Nuzul (Understanding the Judicious Quran: A Clear Exegesis According to the Order of Revelation), are of a practical nature. In these three volumes, Al-Jabri offers an exegetical commentary of the Quran according to its order of revelation. However, the underlying connection between these massive projects by Al-Jabri is his meticulous methodology of reading he initially developed in his essays on Islamic heritage and philosophy published in 1980 under the title of Naḥnu wa al-Turāth (Us and Heritage).

2.1. Al-Jabri's Methodological Framework and Interpretive Mechanisms

Al-Jabri's firm commitment to his methodology is evident in every stage of his academic journey. This dedication becomes especially apparent in his later Quranic hermeneutics. The author himself openly acknowledges that his hermeneutic commentary and (re-)definition of the Quran are rooted in the methodological framework that he originally outlined in his work, Naḥnu wa al-Turāth (see Al-Jabri 2006: 28, 2016: 10). Hence, it is this methodological framework, as principally ingrained in Al-Jabri's Quranic hermeneutics, that is of crucial value in the present article insofar as it helps us clearly address the legitimacy of Quranic interpretation along with the issue of exegetical authority vis-à-vis the role of the translator's interpretation and his/her agency. Within Al-Jabri's (1985: 21–26) methodology rests his interpretive mechanism of "disconnection-reconnection" (al-faṣl wa al-waṣl), which takes different forms when dealing with the Quran. According to Al-Jabri (1985, 2006), the crucial step is the initial disconnection of the interpreters and their nagging concerns of the present from the Quran to understand it in its historical context before being followed by a subsequent reconnection of the Quran with its interpreters in the contemporary era to understand the Quran's relevance to and position in this era. The second form involves disconnecting the Quran from its prior exegetical commentaries to let the Quran speaks on its own before reconnecting it with those commentaries in new ways of understanding after isolating their ideological contents. Al-Jabri highlights that this process of "disconnection-reconnection" allows the Quran to be contemporary to itself, as it stands in its own context, while being simultaneously contemporaneous to the interpreter in his/her present context.

Concerning the first form, Al-Jabri (2006: 28) argues that the interpreter should primarily approach the Quran in itself, being independent in its historical context. The interpreter should possess sufficient knowledge about the world and reality in which the Quran was revealed, including its customs, conventions, cultural norms and practices, coupled with a particular competence about its linguistic, cultural and sociopolitical particularities. By disconnecting the Quran from the interpreter's ideological manipulation in his/her present context, Al-Jabri suggests that this is the ultimate way to make the Quran contemporary to itself. In practical terms, this approach to the Quran permits the interpreter to gain insights into the historical conditions of its period and the tribal cultures and practices of ancient Arabia with which the Quran was first engaged. By adopting this approach, the interpreter can strive to deactivate his/her biases and refrain from judging the past based on present-day standards or from assimilating the past to the present. For example, a non-believer may divorce the Quran from its context and condemn it based on the institution of slavery, being assessed through the lens of present-day human rights standards. Conversely, a pro-feminist interpreter may approach the Quran with a certain desire to uncover egalitarian meanings related to gender issues, attempting to assimilate the Quran to the present ethical values by imposing modern interpretations onto the Quranic text without adequately considering the patriarchal and family structures of ancient Arabia wherein the Quran was first received. It is within this disconnection of the Quran from the interpreter that its significance lies.

Once this disconnection is implemented, Al-Jabri suggests that the interpreter is encouraged to relinquish his/her ideological biases and adopt an objective stance towards the Quran. The interpreter is now able to neutrally reconnect the Quran with his/her present concerns, not with the sole purpose of reading too much into the Quran, but rather to remain attentive to what the Quran has to say about the present. Since the Quran is a living discourse, new meanings can emerge over time. However, the challenge lies in distinguishing biased meanings from possible ones. For this reason, Al-Jabri proposes that this reconnection of the Quran with the interpreter should be grounded in rationality and understanding. Ostensibly, what Al-Jabri implies is that the interpreter should engage in Ijtihād (a mental effort of interpretation) to comprehend the Quran's logic or intent concerning specific issues in relation to the present time. The interpreter should strive to provide a reasonable interpretation that aligns with the Quran's worldview and intentions, for interpretation itself is a daunting mental task. Al-Jabri himself declares that the Quran and its phenomena should be approached through a rational lens: "The Quran calls for a rational religion, meaning the religion that is based on the use of reason in considering issues like the existence of God or what is associated with the Islamic creeds and laws" (2006: 429) .

The aforesaid second form of "disconnection-reconnection" holds significant importance in Al-Jabri's methodology, just the same as the first form. It underscores the notion that prior exegetical commentaries of the Quran are crucial for achieving a rational understanding of the Quran. Nevertheless, it is essential to note that Al-Jabri (2016: 15) laments the prevailing treatment of the Quran, where the sacrality of the Quran itself is somewhat equated with the alleged sacredness of some exegetical commentaries of the Quran. In other words, Al-Jabri suggests that the prior Quranic commentaries are not inherently sacred but rather human endeavors. Indeed, they hold significant portions of Quranic truth just as much as a new reasonable yet neutral interpretation that uncovers another dimension of the Quranic meaning. This entails those modern interpreters, seeking an unbiased understanding of the Quran, should

not overlook the truth claims embedded within the previous scholarly commentaries of the Quran. On the contrary, they should critically examine those commentaries in isolation from the Quran to compare them with what the Quran actually conveys about its historical context and its relevance to the current reality; and what the Quran conveys about the current reality can be fathomed by the interpreter's rationality and understanding, through the practice of Ijtihād.

Furthermore, the process of disconnecting prior exegetical commentaries from the Quran affirms the Quran's exclusive sacredness and enduring authenticity. It suggests that the Quran does not have a fixed meaning that has already been sealed by the previous exegetical commentaries. Rather, the Quran remains open to a range of serious interpretations and commentaries. Therefore, this process makes space for modern interpreters to reconnect the Quran with their present needs, freeing them from being bound by previous exegetical authority. It follows that modern interpreters bear the responsibility to comprehend those commentaries in their historical context in order to discern the ideological foundations upon which they are based. By discerning these ideological orientations, the interpreters can effectively utilize the prior scholarly commentaries to gain insights into other dimensions of the Quranic meaning. When such commentaries are combined with new modern interpretations, the collective efforts yield a more comprehensive understanding of the Quran's worldview and its underlying intentions. This is precisely what Al-Jabri intends by the notion of disconnecting the Quran from its exegetical commentaries before reconnecting it with them again, that is, through the interpreter's mediation and rationality that isolate ideological contents from the Quranic commentaries. As Al-Jabri puts it,

Understanding the Quran is not only a matter of considering a text whose margins and footers have been filled with countless exegeses and commentaries, but it is also a matter of disconnecting this text from those annotated commentaries and exegeses, not with the intention to throw them away, but rather to link them to their time and place so that we can attain a certain reconnection between us, in our time, and the "text" itself—the text as it manifests itself in its permanent authenticity. … what we mean by the "authenticity of the text" here is … this text detached from the sorts of understanding which have been documented in exegetical books of different types and trends. The real issue here is basically concerned with isolating the ideological contents of those sorts of understanding. (2016: 10)

Al-Jabri's methodological framework somewhat draws a middle-way relationship between the pivotal position of the interpreter along with his/her ethical obligations and the seminal role of the exegetical authority and its relevance for facilitating the Quran's understanding—being a point of orientation. With this in mind, Al-Jabri reconciles the interpretation of the Quran with the theological dictum that the "Quran is valid for all times and all places" without sacrificing the centrality of the exegetical authority in any new interpretive endeavor of the Quran. Al-Jabri holds the firm conviction that interpreting the Quran anew has always been a necessary enterprise:

Understanding the Quran has always been a perpetual and essential endeavor. It suffices to say that our firm conviction that the Quran addresses the people of all times and all places compels us to gain a renewed understanding of the Quran as long as the evolving conditions of every

age require it. Therefore, posing the question in the form of "how to understand the Quran?" does not involve any adventure, but responding to such a question in the light of the realities of our present age is a great adventure. (2016: 9–10)

Following Al-Jabri, embarking on a fresh interpretation of the Quran is undoubtedly a great adventure, chiefly due to the pervasive presence of ideological and political agendas that often influence most scholarship on the Quran. This explains why the majority of early scholars and exegetical commentators recognized the significance of establishing some challenging conditions and factors to legitimize Quranic interpretation. While there were conflicting opinions regarding the permissibility of interpreting the Quran during the formative years of tafsīr tradition, numerous interpretations and annotated commentaries, nonetheless, emerged, many of which gained acceptance among early Muslim scholars. This historical acceptance of early interpretive efforts demonstrates that the opposition to Quranic interpretation was not rooted in a complete prohibition of the act itself. However, perhaps the opposition was directed at some specific forms of interpretations, such as the ones that heavily draw on personal opinion (tafsīr bi ra'y) or manipulative ways of reading (Gilliot 2002: 101–102; see also Zomorod 2014: 95–99).

In the meantime, it is important to emphasize that Al-Jabri's Quranic hermeneutics defines in clear terms what Quranic interpretation exactly means and involves, more particularly in the context of the primacy of the exegetical tradition and authority vis-à-vis the necessity for new interpretations. To put it simply, Al-Jabri's Quranic hermeneutics addresses the sensitive issue of authority that is often at stake whenever Quranic interpretation is under scrutiny. Again, this authority is represented by prior exegetical commentaries (tafāsīr; sing. tafsīr) that essentially bring to the fore other crucial forms of authority such as the Hadith tradition, theology, jurisprudence and Arabic rhetoric. The latter structures have always been the backbone of most works of tafsīr given that the success or acceptance of any Quranic exegetical commentary has ever been measured against the backdrop of the Hadith tradition (as a primary source to be consulted for explaining the Quran), linguistic/rhetorical aspects as well as theological and jurisprudential considerations (see Calder 1993).

Due to the fact that previous authoritative works of tafsīr have extensively embodied a large body of authority, they lead to a certain ambiguity about the relationship between the Quran and its exegetical commentaries. This ambiguity is evident in the elevation of the prior Quranic commentaries to a level of sacred authority equal to that of the Quran itself. As a result, there appears to be a common perception that the true and absolute meanings of the Quran can only be derived from the early authoritative works of tafsīr, primarily due to their association with the aforesaid established structures of authority. Because Al-Jabri's Quranic hermeneutics is anti-ideological and non-binary, Al-Jabri emphasizes the significance of exegetical authority while maintaining a critical stance on its limitation. These limitations are evident in the unreliability of certain resources within the ḥadith tradition or the scarcity of individual occasions of revelation ('asbāb nuzūl), which form the foundation of prior exegetical commentaries and, by extension, have been instrumental in establishing their exegetical authority. Even classical commentators recognized these limitations, as demonstrated by influential Sunni scholars and commentators like that of al-Tabari (d. 923 AD), who incorporated in some respects his personal opinions in the interpretation of certain Quranic

verses, albeit his tafsīr is predominantly associated with the inter-textual tradition of exegesis (tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr) (cf. Saeed 2005: 7565). This limitation can also be understood in light of the emergence of new forms of tafsīr in Quranic scholarship, particularly the exegesis based on personal/rational thinking (tafsīr bi ra'y) and the intra-textual exegesis (tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān).

In this regard, Al-Jabri's Quranic hermeneutics does not undermine the importance of exegetical authority; rather, it links it to its human dimension so that the Quran can maintain its transcendence, free from interpretations that suppress its authenticity and its ability to speak profoundly to new exegetical interpreters. By linking exegetical authority to its human dimension, as an integral part of Islamic heritage rather than an extension of the constitutional Quranic text of Islam, Al-Jabri simultaneously raises questions about the scholarly structures embedded within this exegetical authority, including theology and jurisprudence. As such, Al-Jabri's relational perspective prevents him from taking a definitive stance in favor of or, otherwise, against these structures. Indeed, he acknowledges the central role of theology and jurisprudence in comprehending Quranic issues, and yet he disconnects them from the authentic Quran so that he can bring into consideration the pitfalls of some components underlying these structures. These components are represented by the theological principle of "the clear and the ambiguous" and the jurisprudential doctrine of "abrogation" (for his discussion of these components, see Al-Jabri 2015:165–182, 95–99, respectively). By debating these authoritative components of theology and jurisprudence, Al-Jabri presents a consistent conception of the Quran that is liberated from forms of authority that hinder the Quran from being contemporary to the past while being contemporary and relevant to us in the present.

Accordingly, when the jurisprudential doctrine of "abrogation" and the theological principle of "the clear and the ambiguous" are rigidly imposed on the interpretation of the Quran, they inadvertently hinder the timeless nature of the Quran; they silence and limit the exploration of vast potential meanings and truths embedded within the Quran's rulings or its entire verses; not to mention the problems they create by undermining the agency of later exegetical interpreters as if earlier human scholarly efforts were somehow divine revelation or, even worse, as if the Quran were a stagnant tradition with fixed meanings. All in all, Al-Jabri's discussion on the question of exegetical authority highlights that the condition of allowing the Quran to stay contemporaneous and then open to new interpretations depends on the act of disconnecting all the aforementioned structures of authority from the Quran in order not to entirely dismiss them but to isolate their ideological implications. By so doing, the Quran maintains relative independence from external forms of authority, which restrains the application of new neutral interpretations and the possibility of Ijtihād.

2.2. The Implications of Al-Jabri's Quranic Hermeneutics for Quran Translation

The question of exegetical authority and its connection to the legitimacy of Quranic interpretation is particularly significant when it comes to Quran translation. Both the translator and the exegetical commentator are deeply concerned with these matters as they both navigate the interpretation of the Quran while confronting the influence of external structures of authority. In this context, Al-Jabri's Quranic hermeneutics holds crucial implications for the interpretation and/or translation of the Quran. Its centrality lies in striking a balance between

the importance of exegetical authority and the necessity of interpretation. This balanced approach not only helps the translator reconcile the tension between authoritative exegetical commentaries of the Quran and his/her active role in translation but also facilitates a contextual understanding of the Quran through these commentaries. It enables the application of new Quranic meanings to the present reality in a neutral and robust manner. By engaging with the insights provided by authoritative commentaries, the translator gains a solid foundation for understanding the Quran within its original context, thus enhancing the relevance of the translated text.

Al-Jabri's insights into the question of exegetical authority and Quranic interpretation directly confront the contradictions and the ideological orientations prevalent in the existing literature on Quran translation. It is evident that the vast majority of Muslim translators firmly believe in the Quran's endless validity, which is reflected in their persistent advocacy for interpreting, instead of translating, the inimitable Quran. However, many translators have shown little effort in clarifying the exact nature of such notion of Quran's interpreting, for a simple survey of their translations exhibits a perplexing contradiction between their professed intention to render the potential Quranic meanings—rather than the Quran per se—and the outcome of their translations. That is, the outcome indicates that most translators end up presenting the meanings found in prior exegetical commentaries instead of communicating new meanings of the Quran (cf. Qassas 2021: 153).

Indeed, a great part of the translators who have stressed the possibility of translating Quranic meanings seems to have in mind the meanings that have been recognized, widely circulated and documented in early authoritative works of *tafsīr*. Nevertheless, surprisingly, even those who have emphasized the requirement to explore new dimensions of Quranic meanings come, eventually, to draw, in part or in whole, on the same exegetical tradition. Equally, it is worth mentioning that the minority of Quran translators somewhat overlook the works of *tafsīr* altogether by dint of their belief in the exigency of meeting the burning issues of today by providing new interpretations of the Quran. Yet, their translations are again routinely marked by binary attitudes, positivist notions of truth and ideological treatments of the Quran (such translators include Ahmed 2016; Bakhtiar 2009; Chaudry 2013; Gerrans 2016; Mustafa 2018; The Monotheist Group 2021; Yuksel et al. 2007). Whatever the case, any translation of the Quran is deeply embedded into an exegetical authority on which the translators decide to draw or reject depending on where their loyalties lie (Pink 2015: 4).

Building upon Al-Jabri's insights, it is evident that the centrality of early-established exegetical authority in Quran translation is indeed pervasive. Apart from the problematic matter concerning the translator's sectarian and ideological preferences of certain types of exegetical commentaries over others, it is important to acknowledge that the centrality of exegetical authority generally means that it inherently encompasses a significant portion of the Quranic truths. This is an undeniable truth. Being adjacent in time and space to the ancient Arabian culture and language that constitute the main elements of the Quranic world/structure, as well as being the bearer of crucial parts of the prophetic tradition enables the prior exegetical commentators both the importance and the capacity to present a much clearer understanding of the linguistic, sociocultural, political and historical context in which the Quran embarked on its divine mission. To put it otherwise, such classical commentators of the Quran facilitate the

disclosure of the context to which the Quran reacted and, in turn, incorporated within its realm traces of that context; traces that can be more familiar to early commentators than to later ones due to their intimate acquaintance with the language of the Quran, the information acquired by the companions (*Ṣaḥāba*) and successors (*Tābiʿīn*) about the Prophet's practical and oral Sunnah; needless to add their acquaintance with norms and customs of the Arabs. As Pink puts it, no one "can entirely dispense with the exegetical tradition because without the historical information contained in the occasions of revelation or the prophetic biography, and without the linguistic information transmitted by the exegetes, too much of the context that is necessary to derive meaning from the Qurʾān would be lost" (Pink 2017: 490).

It follows then that the exegetical authority is indispensable as it carries with it a horizon of the past against which the modern translator-interpreter can partly assess the credibility and relevance of his/her new interpretation of the Quran, that is, through having enough background information about the historical context derived from such a horizon of early-established exegetical commentaries. Yet, this does not mean that this exegetical authority is absolute, nor is it rendered useless simply because it produces conventional meanings of the Quran that some *liberal* translators-interpreters dismiss on the pretext of being incompatible with modern values. What is at issue is that these conventional meanings arise naturally due to the absence of the contemporary horizon/outlook and a changing sociocultural reality through which the classical exegetical commentators could have gauged the inclusive character of the Quran and its ability to speak to every present. Therefore, the role of exegetical authority lies in highlighting the Quranic meanings from one available historical horizon, which can be expanded and complemented through subsequent interpretive endeavors. Again, such ongoing efforts serve to illuminate new dimensions of the Quranic meanings, guided by evolving horizons perpetually expanding the understanding of the Quran ad infinitum.

For this reason, it is pivotal to acknowledge that serious modern scholarly translations and/or interpretations of the Quran hold a similar contribution to the disclosure of other potential Quranic truths. Their value rests on their ability to test and apply the Quranic meanings within new contexts and emerging issues. In this regard, Al-Jabri's Quranic hermeneutics directs us to see that a consistent yet balanced approach to the translation of the Quran essentially transcends ideological biases and binary perspectives towards both the Quran and its prior exegetical commentaries, while it alternatively combines and fuses translational and interpretive efforts done by both classical commentators and the modern ones. The approach allows navigating the relational point(s) between the seemingly opposing classical and modern interpretations in order to get a comprehensive understanding of the Quran in its contemporaneity to itself (in its historical context) without failing to account for its enduring relevancy to us in our present time through interpretation and mental reasoning (*Ijtihā*).

3. The Hermeneutic Convergence between Tafsīr, Ta'wīl and Tarjama

Al-Jabri's Quranic Hermeneutics and its positive implication for Quran translation pave the way to a balanced reconceptualization of the Quranic text in translation, making room for translation to function as a form of tafsīr and/or ta'wīl without failing to account for the high standards involved in the legitimacy of Quranic interpretation as well as the centrality of the

Quran's interrelated systems of exegetical authority. So to speak, exploring the boundaries between tafsīr (exegesis), ta'wīl (interpretation) and tarjama (translation) defines in clear terms the hermeneutic positioning of the translator in the translation activity of the Quran. Noteworthy is the fact that the translator's role is explicit in discussing the significations of the aforementioned conceptual categories, for any definition is reflective of the considerations attached to the task of the exegete/interpreter (mufassir) and the translator (mutarjim).

3.1. Tafsīr and/or Ta'wīl

In the field of Quranic studies, the terms tafsīr (exegesis) and ta'wīl (interpretation) are intricately connected yet have been subject to extensive debates and definitions among Muslim scholars throughout history. Generally, they are considered as two complementary aspects of Quranic commentary or interpretation, although tafsīr is the more commonly used term in existing scholarship as it technically encompasses both the act of interpreting the Quran and the collection of various exegetical commentaries of the Quran (tafāsīr). From a historical perspective, Zomorod (2014: 81) argues that some early Quranic commentators displayed little interest in delineating the boundaries between tafsīr and ta'wīl, using them interchangeably as synonymous terms, particularly given their elevated status in early scholarly works. At times, ta'wīl gained greater credibility and was highly valued, while at others, it was deemed less reliable or held equal importance to tafsīr (see Gilliot 2002: 100–101).

The early commentators, including Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 687 AD) and Mujāhid (d. 722 AD), exemplify this trend by blurring the distinction, if any, between tafsīr and ta'wīl. Even al-Tabari (d. 923 AD) himself, a relatively late classical commentator, did not clearly differentiate between these aforesaid terms, despite using the word ta'wīl in his renowned Quranic commentary (tafsīr al-Tabari) and incorporating it throughout his commentary on each individual Quranic verse to describe his exegetical practice. Likewise, al-Suyuti (d. 1505) later on makes no distinction, perceiving ta'wīl as another facet of tafsīr. According to him, both terms served the same purpose: to interpret, explicate, unveil and reveal the hidden meaning(s) or ambiguities present in Quranic words and expressions (as cited in Ashfagh 2018: 350). At any rate, although the terms tafsīr and ta'wīl have sparked controversy and conflicting opinions regarding their meanings or similarity, they remain deeply interconnected, converging on multiple levels to serve both as descriptive categories of the practice of Quranic interpretation or exegetical commentary (cf. Zomorod 2014: 104).

3.2. Translation as Tafsīr and /or Ta'wīl

Although the primary signification of the Arabic term tarjama (translation) refers to the act of interpreting or explaining a given speech or language in another language, as the task of the turjumān is to explicate the communicative act initiated in a foreign tongue, it encompasses a broader range of expressions within the Arabic language. Put differently, tarjama signifies various activities, including translating from one language to another, narrating one's biography, sending a message to someone across distance, the act of explaining or interpreting a word by rewording it within the same language, and directly communicating a word through the medium of a different language after the hermeneutic processes of understanding and interpretation have taken place (Doğan 2014: sec. 1.8; Zadeh 2011: 57). The semantic tokens

associated with the word tarjama along with its diverse connotations shed light on new dimensions of the concept of translation and the role of the translator in any given act of communication. It is no surprise that translation is generally regarded as a significant form of exegesis and/or interpretation, for the differences shrink between the role of the mufassir (Quranic commentator) and that of the mutarjim/turjumān (translator). Both are engaged in elucidating the understood meaning of the Quran, with the distinction that one works intralingually, within the same language, while the other operates across languages, interlingually (Ashfagh 2018: 351–352; Azzouzi 1995: 26)

One of the striking conceptual links between tarjama and tafsīr/ta'wīl is observable when considering how these three categories were addressed in early Islamic history. The prevailing conception of translation as a means of replacing the Arabic text in another language sparked a discussion on the legitimization of the Quran's translation and, consequently, the positioning of the term tarjama. Such discussion provided Islamic scholars with an opportunity to explore the interpretive dimension of tarjama, assigning it a hermeneutic function in the process of translating the Quran—rather than being a mere substitution, it was understood as an act of interpretation according to the Quran's unique nature that surpasses reproduction. As Zadeh puts it: "By force of semantic usage, the concept of exegesis (tafsīr) is coupled with the concept of translation (tarjama), due in part to the notion that the Qur'ān is sui generis and ultimately untranslatable, such that any translation can itself only be an interpretation and cannot stand in as a full simulacrum" (2007: 492–493; emphasis in the original)

By situating the signification of tarjama in the realm of tafsīr/ta'wīl, the debate shifted towards considering Quran translations as complementary commentaries or exegetical interpretations that enhance and broaden the meanings and understanding of the Arabic Quran. This perspective allowed the translation of the Quran to gain acceptance among many scholars because the primary objective became the comprehension of the message. And translation, as interpretation, served as a means to facilitate this comprehension for non-Arabic speakers, providing a channel through which the exegetical interpretation of the Quran was exercised and carried out in another language. This is the justification why the translation of the Quran into the vernacular languages (such as Persian) seemed lawful and legitimate since it took the notion of tarjama to the realm of interpretation and exegetical commentary instead of associating it with substitution and reproduction (cf. Zadeh 2007: 298, 484–485, 2015: 398). Interestingly, the early practice of vernacular exegesis was ostensibly fueled by the emergence of the so-called exegetical translation (tarjama tafsīriya), which transformed the understanding of the word tarjama from being a sound replica of the original text by virtue of a literal rendering to being tantamount to the exegetical commentary of the Quran. Thus, it is worth noting that the way tarjama was hermeneutically received and practiced in the past as part of tafsīr facilitated the acceptability of the term of exegetical translation, where the translator and the exegetical commentator were treated on equal footing, thereby both agents expand new interpretive dimensions of the Quran. However, arguably, today's usage of the term mystifies the meaning of tarjama tafsīriya, in which the role of the translator appears to be subordinate and passive compared to that of the exegetical commentator. Currently, this type of translation becomes somewhat conditioned by the translator's selection and choice from a range of well-established interpretations and possibilities of meanings, as proposed by prior yet authoritative exegetical commentators of the Quran (see Azzouzi 1995: 26, 31), rather than by what the translator actively comprehends out of the Quranic meaning(s).

Perhaps, the modern tendency to obfuscate and weaken the genuine role of tarjama tafsīriya, as it was practiced before, can be attributed to the weight of accumulated and sustained exegetical authority over time. Another contributing factor could be the semantic usage of tarjama in the prevalent Western theories of translation, which are rooted in notions that still emphasize substitution and reproduction as descriptive categories for the translation process (see Venuti 2019). Furthermore, the mystification of the concept of translation as tafsīr becomes evident in the ambivalent attitudes of many modern translators of the Quran. At times, such translators employ tafsīr as an interpretive move to translate the Quran, while, at others, they rely on tafsīr tradition, as an enterprise, to select a specific meaning or interpretation.

This discussion highlights the inherent and intricate interconnection between Quranic exegesis (tafsīr) and the concept of translation (tarjama) because the practice of translation as practiced outside the European models differs significantly in form and methodology, so much so that one can see no difference between tarjama and/as tafsīr. This observation triggers modern debate regarding the necessity to clearly define, in concrete terms, the specific parameters of each concept so that it becomes easier for scholars to identify and assess each one of them separately. To put it in Wilson's words, "the distinction between translation and commentary—tarjama and tafsīr—in Qur'anic literature is often hazy, and many renderings of the sacred book are embedded in a composite genre that blends paraphrase, exegesis, and translation proper" (Wilson 2020: 557). Notwithstanding this debate, it is worth noting that most practices of doing tafsīr in non-Arabic languages belong to the realm of tarjama as tafsīr. Whereas there is little contention on the connection between tarjama and tafsīr, both represent an activity that aims at explaining or interpreting the Quran, the dispute arises when considering translation as an intrinsically equivalent (sub)genre to that of the long-standing tradition of tafsīr. This is especially because the products of Quran translation have seldom been examined or recognized as integral components of the extensive enterprise of exegetical commentaries— albeit they actually belong there—that are predominantly written in Arabic and recognized as authoritative only in being in Arabic (Pink 2020a: 72; see also Lukman 2022: 17–22)

It is evident that despite any distinctions attributed to the concepts of tarjama and tafsīr/ta'wīl, they maintain a fundamental closeness and similarity in their broader sense since they are both endeavors concerned with providing an interpretation or unveiling additional explanations to make the Quran intelligible for its readers, employing different phrases from either the same language or another language. However, it seems that the divergence between tarjama and tafsīr becomes mainly apparent when the former is perceived in the sense of an activity that seeks to replace or reproduce the original text. This is what creates an elusive difference between the two terms, for translation is, in essence, a hermeneutic enterprise. As Pink aptly argues:

The concept of tarjama as an explanation and interpretation of the source text is rather close to the notion of tafsīr. Besides, there is no such thing as a "literal" translation. Every translation is a hermeneutical activity. Even the author of an interlinear word-by-word translation who does not seek to produce a separate text with a coherent meaning will have to make choices when deciding on the equivalent of Qur'anic terms. (2022: 366)

As hinted at above, approaching the translation of the Arabic Quran through the semantic conception of translation commonly employed in Western models tends to obfuscate the alignment of tarjama with/as tafsīr, which itself can resolve the question of what Quran translation truly entails. Should it be regarded as a hermeneutic rendering or a translation of a

specific exegetical commentary? That is to say, in light of the Arabic tradition surrounding the undertaking and reception of the activity of tarjama in relation to the sacred text, it becomes obvious that it inherently aligns with the practice of tafsīr. Hence, this implies that the translator, much like the exegetical commentator, is equally active in interpreting the Quran without being restricted to adhering solely to a singular meaning found within an authoritative exegetical material.

Although the vast majority of Quran translations (excluding the minority of liberal translations) are deeply rooted in the exegetical tradition, embracing its meanings as the core material of translation, there have recently emerged some translations that somewhat revert back the act of tarjama to its proper conception as a form of tafsīr—an interpretive mechanism where the translator's voice and perspective becomes visible when applying the meanings of the Quran to a new context. These translations offer crucial insights into the viability of translation as tafsīr within the realm of Quran translation. Yet, the notable nuance of these translations lies in their ambivalence, as they selectively activate the mechanism of translation as tafsīr to address a small portion of the Quran, more particularly the controversial aspects that bring about apologia discourses, while they rest content with and rely on readily available exegetical meanings for the other portions of the Quran.

To understand the functioning of translation as tafsīr in the practical realm of Quran translation, let us consider the example of how the term Islam has been rendered in 21st-century English translations, especially in the context of post-9/11 and the war against terrorism. As a matter of fact, the post-9/11 context has accelerated the proliferation of numerous English translations that introduce modern concepts of pluralism, tolerance and freedom into the realm of the Quran. Extensive debates have revolved around whether the lexical item Islam, as it occurs on different occasions in the Quran, is all-inclusive, a broadly applicable term or a specific word exclusively denoting the religion preached by the Prophet Muhammad and practiced by his Muslim (with capital "M") followers. Within the tradition of tafsīr itself, the term Islam gives rise to fundamental questions concerning its semantic depth and intricacy, thereby leading to two distinct approaches in its interpretation—as done by Quranic commentators and scholars involved in deciphering the polysemantic vocabulary of the Quran. The term Islam is either viewed as universal or a particular term with narrower connotations. As mentioned by Eggen (2016: 51–52), among the aspects of meanings ascribed to the word in question in the exegetical literature include: 'sincerity' (ikhlāṣ), 'confirmation' (iqrār), the name of the religion (ism al-dīn), a declaration of God's oneness (al-tawḥīd), surrender (istislām) and a commitment to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad.

In the context of Quran translation practice, the signification of the word Islam manifests differently in most orthodox and orientalist English translations compared to contemporary English translations of the Quran, including those from the 21st century. While the former orientations adhere to the prevailing and authoritative exegetical commentary of the term, transliterating it as a proper name Islam and thereby particularizing its meaning to distinguish it from other monotheistic religions, the latter ones tend to "internalize/naturalize the term to make it more appealing to its new readership: the semantically related words 'submission', 'devotion', 'peace' and 'surrender' have all invariably been used in these translations" (Al-Amri 2019: 17). In support of a pluralistic Islam, such Muslim translators of the Quran like Abdel Haleem (2004) and Hammad (2008) refrain from translating Islam based on the conventional exegetical sense of the term, designating the religion of the Prophet Muhammad.

Instead, they not only render the term as "devotion or submission to God alone", but they also strongly claim that translating islam (with lowercase "i") in any other case (such as with capital "I") is less likely to be accurate as it would strip off the word from its essential semantic aspects. This includes the exclusion of not only the present religions but also the other preceding monotheistic religions or prophets that the Quran refers to as "muslims" (with lowercase "m") (more on this aspect, see Al-Amri 2019: 18–23).

Another remarkable instance where translation emerges as a form of tafsīr in contemporary English translations of the Quran pertains to the sensitive and contentious issue of "infant marriageability", which is claimed to be addressed in Quranic verse [65:4]. This verse generally addresses the waiting period (ʿiddah) that divorced women should observe before entering into a new marriage. According to most authoritative exegetical commentators, the verse indicates that three categories of women are concerned with this Quranic sanction of a three-month waiting period (ʿiddah) as per verse [65:4]. These categories include (1) those who no longer menstruate because of old age, (2) those who do not have their period because of young age and (3) those who are pregnant (see Al-Razi 1981: 35; Ibn Al-Arabi 2003: 284–286). From the second category, which is understood out of the verse's واللّائي لَم يَحِضــنَ (those who do not menstruate), commentators have inferred that the permissibility of marriage to immature girls can be deduced from the point that sanctioning equally the rule of three months as ʿiddah for females without periods presupposes the occurrence of a prior marriage. That is, the point of not menstruating is attributed to immature females who, in certain circumstances, happen to be married. This inference on the part of the commentators might stem from a preliminary knowledge that such a social custom was prevalent in the past.

Al-Hilali & Khan are among the translators who retain this exegetical sense in their translations, rendering واللّائي لَم يَحِضن as "and for those who have no courses [(i.e. they are still immature) their 'Iddah (prescribed period) is three months likewise, except in case of death]" (1998: 766; emphasis in the original). The translators highlight between square brackets that the women without periods refer here to prepubescent girls. This orthodox translation can help us gauge how the modern principles of ethics, the position of women and prevailing legal codes have driven other Quran translators to refrain from taking the literal exegetical meaning at face value and, instead, employ tafsīr on their own to navigate the translation and/as interpretation of this perplexing fragment, واللّائي لَم يَحِضن. Consequently, there emanate interesting renditions that reflect the translators' agency and agenda. For example, Muslim translators like Ünal (2008), Ahmed (2016) and The Monotheist Group (2021) exclude the option that the fragment in question is about girls below the age of puberty, embodying the view that all women addressed in the verse are by definition adults. This is particularly evident in their translation decisions, which communicate that the Quran refers here to grown-up women who have problems in their periods; that is, women "who for some reason do not have monthly periods" (Ünal 2008: 1074), or "whose menstruation has ceased" (The Monotheist Group 2021: 393) or "women who do not have menstruation (for any physiological reason)" (Ahmed 2016: 717). Similarly, Chaudry joins the other translators in rejecting any direct association of the verse with prepubescent girls; however, what sets his interpretation apart is his distinct perspective and understanding in considering واللّائي لَم يَحِضن as being part of the third category of women mentioned by the verse أُولاثُ الأَحمالِ (those who are pregnant). He interprets the verse's mention of ʿiddah as applicable only to two categories of women: those who reached menopause and those who are pregnant. This understanding is manifest in his translation of واللّائي لَم يَحِضــن,

which he renders as follows: "As for those who do not menstruate and discover that they are pregnant" (2013: 369).

Apart from the obvious ideological agendas of all the aforementioned translators, what can be drawn from the above examples is that recent endeavors to translate sensitive Quranic issues and topics incorporate a hermeneutic approach that deviates to some extent from the existing exegetical authority in order to inscribe their voice and highlight their stance. This is through employing the mechanism of translation as tafsīr, in which the focus is laid on interpreting according to context and modern perceptions of ethics, freedom, plurality and inclusiveness rather than solely preserving an established exegetical commentary or meaning. While it is predominantly the sensitive aspects of the Quran that prompt the utilization of translation as tafsīr, it can be inferred that Quran translators implicitly recognize the semantic force of translation as a form of exegesis (tafsīr). Still, there is a high need to establish clear-cut boundaries regarding the translator's role to prevent theoretical confusion and ensuing complications. Accordingly, due to an incomplete recognition of the hermeneutic force of translation as tafsīr, three nuanced yet ideological approaches emerge from the translation practice of the Quran: a) The orthodox approach, which predominantly prioritizes the preservation of authoritative exegetical commentaries over interpretation; b) The liberal approach, which outright rejects tradition and any exegetical authority in favor of a contemporary interpretation that is in line with the values and ethics of the present sociocultural reality; c) The ambivalent approach, which selectively activates the principle of translation as tafsīr primarily to contentious Quranic issues while consulting established exegetical commentaries for other matters. In this light, it becomes crucial to dispel any ambiguity surrounding the hermeneutic nature of Quran translation so that translators can deal with the whole Quranic issues in an equal manner without becoming solely preoccupied with apologetic concerns, or sacrificing their visibility and individual understanding by blindly adhering to a specific established exegetical commentary, or being unduly influenced by ideology, adopting interpretations that deviate from the Quran's essence.

Considering the concept of translation as tafsīr, Quran translators would come to recognize the vital role they perform in the translation process; a recognition that would enable the translators to simultaneously mediate between their interpretive voices, as active agents and contributors to yet another understanding of the miraculous Quran, and the exegetical authority, which has often been criticized for promoting misinterpretations. This implies that the translators would bear the responsibility of carefully assessing the importance of their hermeneutic positioning, guided by an ethical obligation to set aside any ideological motives. Meanwhile, they would not fail to account for the centrality of exegetical authority—being a point of reference for the translators rather than viewing it as an impediment. As Qassas aptly puts it, "translators have an active, interpretative role in the translation of the Qurʾan. Compatibility with tradition does not mean being constricted exclusively by Tafsīr. Tradition is a frame of reference, a point of departure for new horizons of interpretation where interpretation is viewed as an augmentation to tradition, not sedition" (2021:139).

4. Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, by taking into account the close interconnection between the Arabic terms tafsīr (exegesis), ta'wīl (interpretation) and tarjama (translation) and their subtle shared significations, it becomes obvious that the translation of the Quran falls within the realm of

tafsīr/ta'wīl tradition, wherein translation returns to its hermeneutic anchor. Having said this, the field of Quran translation, indeed, requires this reconceptualization to achieve a better understanding of the translator's role and to overcome the recurring contradictions and confusions surrounding Quran translation. Furthermore, with the added value and greater implications of Al-Jabri's Quranic hermeneutics for Quran translation, the hermeneutic positioning of the translator can be consistent with the nature of the Quran—a sacred text that is valid for all times and all places and is completely coherent to be open in its entirety for rigorous exegetical and/or interpretive translations to enable new contributions to the infinite circle of understanding miraculous Quranic meanings. This entails, drawing on Al-Jabri, that the exegetical tradition is disconnected from the Quran so that the translator can achieve the task of tafsīr/ta'wīl without the influence of authority before he/she consistently gets to reconnect that tradition again with the Quran. This tradition, ultimately, serves as a guiding point for the translator and as a means to access specific perspectives/horizons of the past to encompass a holistic understanding of the Quran. Consequently, the Quran translator can no longer be a passive communicator of an existing exegesis/commentary nor be driven by ideological motives disguised as interpretation. Rather, the translator's role is intricately linked to ethical, authorial, methodological and knowledge-based responsibilities before undertaking the hermeneutic task of interpretation. The translator acts as a mediator, negotiating between his/her active hermeneutic positioning and the significance of the exegetical authority in the translation process of the Quran.

REFERENCES

Abdel Haleem, Muhammad. 2004. *The Qur'an: A New Translation*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press.

Ahmed, Shabbir. 2016. *The Qur'an as It Explains Itself*. 6th ed. Lighthouse.

Al-Amri, Waleed Bleyhesh. 2010. "Qur'ān Translation and Commentary: An Uncharted Relationship?" *Islam & Science* 8 (2): 81–110.

. 2019. "The Rise of Interventionist Quran Translations: Contextual Overdetermination and the Translator's Political Agency." In *Arabic Translation across Discourses*, edited by Said Faiq, 9–26. London and New York: Routledge.

Al-Hilali, Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din, and Muhammad Muhsin Khan. 1998. *The Noble Qur'an: The English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*. Madinah, K.S.A.: King Fahd Complex.

Al-Jabri, Mohammed Abed. 1985. *Naḥnu Wa Al-Turāth: Qirā'āt Muʿāsira Fi Turāthinā Al-Falsafi*. 4th ed. Casablanca: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-ʿArabi.

. 2006. *Madkhal Ila Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm: Fi Al-Taʿrīf Bi Al-Qur'ān*. 4th ed. Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Waḥda al-ʿArabīya.

. 2015. *Fahm Al-Qur'ān Al-Ḥakīm: Al-Tafsīr Al-Wadiḥ Ḥasaba Tartīb Al-Nuzul (Part III)*. 4th ed. Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Waḥda al-ʿArabīya.

. 2016. *Fahm Al-Qur'ān Al-Ḥakīm: Al-Tafsīr Al-Wadiḥ Ḥasaba Tartīb Al-Nuzul (Part I)*. 6th ed. Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Waḥda al-ʿArabīya.

Al-Razi, Fakhr Al-Din. 1981. *Mafātīḥ Al-Ghayb: Al-Tafsīr Al-Kabīr (Vol. 30)*. 1st ed. Dar Al-Fikr.

Ashfagh, Mhamdan Baba. 2018. "Ta'wīl Al-Qur'ān Wa Tarjamatuh: Ayatu ʿalaqa?" *Al-Ta'wīl*, no. 4: 349–65.

Azzouzi, Hassan. 1995. "Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm Wa Ishkāliyat Tarjama: Qadāyā Wa Mushkīlāt Wa Ḥulūl." *Daʿwat Al-Ḥaq*, no. 315: 24–33.

Bakhtiar, Laleh. 2009. *The Sublime Quran: English Translation (Revised Edition)*. 6th ed. Chicago IL: Kazi Publications.

Calder, Norman. 1993. "Tafsīr from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr: Problems in the Description of a Genre, Illustrated with Reference to the Story of Abraham." In *Approaches to the Qur'ān*, edited by G. R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef, 101–40. London and New York: Routledge.

Chaudry, Ijaz. 2013. *The Quran: The Latest and Most Modern Translation of the Quran*. Lulu.com.

Chesterman, Andrew. 2009. "The Name and Nature of Translator Studies." *Hermes--Journal of Language and Communication Studies*, no. 42: 13–22.

Doğan, Recep. 2014. *Usūl Al-Tafsīr: The Sciences and Methodology of the Qur'ān*. New Jersey: Tughra Books.

Eggen, Nora S. 2016. "Universalised versus Particularised Conceptualisations of Islam in Translations of the Qur'an." *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 18 (1): 49–91. https://doi.org/DOI: 10.3366/jqs.2016.0222.

Gerrans, Sam. 2016. *The Qur'an: A Complete Revelation (Reference Edition)*. Quranite.

Gilliot, Claude. 2002. "Exegesis of the Qur'ān: Classical and Medieval." In *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān (Vol. II: E-I)*, edited by Jane Dammen McAuliffe, 99–124. Leiden-Boston: Brill.

Hammad, Ahmad Zaki. 2008. *The Gracious Quran: A Modern-Phrased Interpretation in English*. 2nd ed. Lisle, IL USA: Lucent Interpretations, LLC.

Haroun, Yazid. 2021. "Interpellation of English Qur'an Translators in the 21st Century." *Asia Pacific Translation and Intercultural Studies* 8 (1): 23–39. https://doi.org/10.1080/23306343.2021.1898852.

Ibn Al-Arabi, Abu Bakr. 2003. *Aḥkām Al-Qur'ān (Vol. 4)*. 3rd ed. Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah.

Lukman, Fadhli. 2022. *The Official Indonesian Qur'ān Translation: The History and Politics of Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers.

Mustafa, Paigham. 2018. *The Quran: God's Message to Mankind*. London: Xeitre-Signat International House.

Pink, Johanna. 2015. "Editor's Preface." *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 17 (3): 1–9. https://doi.org/DOI:10.3366/jqs.2015.0.

———. 2017. "Modern and Contemporary Interpretation of the Qur'ān." In *The Wiley*

Blackwell Companion to the Qurʾān, edited by Andrew Rippin and Jawid Mojaddedi, 2nd ed., 479–91. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

———. 2020a. "Tafsīr as Discourse: Institutions, Norms, and Authority." In *Deconstructing Islamic Studies*, edited by Majid Daneshgar and Aaron W. Hughes, 53–76. Boston, Massachusetts: Ilex Foundation.

———. 2020b. "The Kyai's Voice and the Arabic Qur'an: Translation, Orality, and Print in Modern Java." *Wacana* 21 (3): 329–59. https://doi.org/10.17510/wacana.v21i3.948.

Qassas, Raed A. 2021. "Translation and the Individual Talent: Ambiguity in the Qurʾanic Text and the Role of the Translator." *Arab World English Journal for Translation & Literary Studies* 5 (2): 139–55. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awejtls/vol5no2.11.

Saeed, Abdullah. 2005. "Qur'ān: Tradition of Scholarship and Interpretation." In *Encyclopedia of Religion (Vol. 11)*, edited by Lindsay Jones, 2nd ed., 7561–70. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA.

D'Silva, Patrick J. 2014. "Social Agency and Translating the Qur'an: The Case of Laleh Bakhtiar's The Sublime Qur'an and 4:34." In *Culguage in/of Translation from Arabic*, edited by Said Faiq, Ovidi Carbonell, and Ali Almanna, 109–26. Lincom GmbH.

The Monotheist Group. 2021. *The Great Qur'an: An English Translation (Fourth Revision)*. United States of America: BrainBow Press.

Ünal, Ali. 2008. *The Qur'an: With Annotated Interpretation in Modern English*. New Jersey: Tughra Books.

Venuti, Lawrence. 2019. *Contra Instrumentalism: A Translation Polemic*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Wilson, M. Brett. 2020. "Translations of the Qur'an: Islamicate Languages." In *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, edited by Mustafa Shah and Muhammad Abdel Haleem, 552–64. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yuksel, Edip, Layth Saleh Al-Shaiban, and Martha Schulte-Nafeh. 2007. *Quran: A Reformist Translation*. United States of America: Brainbow Press.

Zadeh, Travis. 2007. "Translation, Geography, and the Divine Word: Mediating Frontiers in Pre-Modem Islam." Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University. https://doi.org/Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global (accessed on 15 September 2022).

———. 2011. *Mapping Frontiers across Medieval Islam: Geography, Translation, and the ʿAbbāsid Empire*. London and New York: l. B. Tauris & Co Ltd.

———. 2015. "The Fātiha of Salmān Al-Fārisī and the Modern Controversy over Translating the Qur'an." In *The Meaning of the Word: Lexicology and Qur'anic Exegesis*, edited by S. R. Burge, 375–420. London: Oxford University Press.

Zomorod, Farida. 2014. "Al-Ta'wīl Fi Moqadimāt Kutub Al-Tafsīr: Qadāyā Wa Ishkālāt." *Al-Ta'wīl*, no. 1: 77–104.