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Submissive VS Resistant Translation: Suppressing Linguistic And Cultural Differences Or Respecting Difference

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Abstract

This article examines the translation of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) from an ethical and intercultural perspective, with particular attention to the challenges of rendering Igbo linguistic and cultural specificity into Arabic. Drawing on Lawrence Venuti's theory of foreignization and the ethics of translation difference, and on Antoine Berman's concept of the experience of the foreign, the article argues that domesticating translation strategies risk erasing the cultural and ideological dimensions that are central to Achebe's literary project. The article proposes a threefold analytical framework — lexical, syntactic, and stylistic — for identifying culturally marked elements in the source text, and develops explicit foreignizing strategies for their Arabic translation, including lexical borrowing, literal rendering of proverbs, and structural preservation of Igbo-inflected English. The article also engages critically with the limits of foreignization as a strategy, acknowledging the risk of exoticization and the practical constraints of Arabic morphosyntax. It concludes that translating Achebe demands an ethical commitment to cultural difference — one that acknowledges the presence of the Other rather than assimilating it.

Keywords: foreignization, domestication, Venuti, Berman, Achebe, postcolonial translation, Arabic translation, *Things Fall Apart*

1. Introduction

The translation of postcolonial literary texts raises questions that go far beyond the linguistic. When a text has been written in the language of the colonizer and deliberately reshaped to express a colonized culture's worldview, the translator faces decisions that are simultaneously aesthetic, ethical, and political. What should be domesticated for the reader's comfort, and what should be allowed to remain foreign, strange, and challenging? These questions are at the heart of contemporary translation theory and practice.

This article addresses these questions through an analysis of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), widely regarded as a foundational text of African postcolonial literature. Achebe wrote in English while systematically incorporating Igbo vocabulary, proverbs,

syntactic patterns, and cultural references — a strategy of linguistic and cultural hybridity that constitutes the very substance of his literary project. Translating this novel into Arabic thus entails a double responsibility: faithfulness to the English surface text, and faithfulness to the Igbo cultural world that Achebe encodes within it.

The central research question of this article is: *How can Arabic translators preserve the linguistic and cultural specificity of Achebe's Igbo-inflected English without reducing its foreignness or assimilating it to target-culture norms?* From this primary question, three subsidiary questions emerge: (1) What linguistic and cultural elements in the text most resist domestication? (2) What translation strategies best preserve those elements in Arabic? (3) What are the irreducible losses, and how should they be acknowledged?

To address these questions, the article draws on two major theoretical frameworks: Lawrence Venuti's (1995, 1998, 2017) ethics of foreignization, which advocates for translation strategies that resist the dominant norms of the target culture and preserve the foreignness of the source text; and Antoine Berman's (1984, 1985/2021) concept of the experience of the foreign, which conceives translation as an ethical encounter with linguistic and cultural Otherness. These frameworks are brought into dialogue with postcolonial translation theory (Spivak, 1993; Niranjana, 1992; Tymoczko, 1999), situating the analysis within a broader reflection on translation, power, and cultural representation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Foreignization and Domestication: Theoretical Foundations

The opposition between foreignization and domestication, though anticipated in earlier debates on translation, was systematically theorized by Venuti (1995) in *The Translator's Invisibility*. Building on Schleiermacher's (1813/2004) distinction between moving the reader toward the author and moving the author toward the reader, Venuti argues that domestication — the production of a fluent, transparent translation that conceals the work of the translator — serves the dominant cultural norms of the target language and erases the foreignness of the source text. Foreignization, by contrast, is a resistant strategy that foregrounds linguistic and cultural difference, making the translator visible and challenging the reader's expectations.

Venuti's argument is simultaneously aesthetic and political. Domestication, he contends, is not a neutral choice but an *ideological act* that reinforces cultural hierarchies by assimilating foreign texts to dominant norms. It enacts what he calls "the ethnocentric violence of translation" (Venuti, 1996, p. 198) — a violence that is particularly acute when

the source culture is already marginalized in relation to the target culture. Foreignization, by contrast, introduces "a salutary disruptive force" (Venuti, 2017, p. xii) into the target language, expanding its expressive resources and fostering a more democratic cultural exchange.

Berman (1984, 1992) approaches similar questions from a hermeneutic and phenomenological perspective. For Berman, translation is fundamentally an encounter with the Other — an experience of foreignness that should be preserved rather than domesticated. In his influential 1985 essay (republished in Venuti, 2021), Berman identifies twelve "deforming tendencies" that characterize ethnocentric translation — including rationalization, clarification, expansion, ennoblement, and the destruction of vernacular networks — and argues that authentic translation must resist these tendencies through a principled fidelity to the form, rhythm, and cultural logic of the source text. Crucially, Berman does not advocate literalism in any simplistic sense; his ethics of translation is grounded in attention to the letter of the text, understood as the material carrier of its cultural and aesthetic meaning.

While Venuti and Berman share an ethical commitment to preserving foreignness, their emphases differ in important ways. Venuti's framework is primarily socio-political and discursive: he is concerned with the power relations between source and target cultures, and with the ideological effects of translation choices. Berman's framework is more hermeneutic and poetic: he is concerned with the experience of reading and translating a foreign text, and with the translator's ethical responsibility to the form of the original. For Venuti, the key question is what translation does to cultural hierarchies; for Berman, it is what translation does to the text itself. This article draws on both perspectives, using Venuti's framework to situate the translation of Achebe within postcolonial dynamics, and Berman's framework to analyze specific textual choices.

2.2 Postcolonial Translation Theory

Both Venuti and Berman have been significant influences on postcolonial translation theory, but neither engages directly with the specific challenges of translating from postcolonial contexts. A more explicitly postcolonial framework is provided by Spivak (1993), Niranjana (1992), and Tymoczko (1999).

Spivak (1993), in her foundational essay "The Politics of Translation," argues that the translator of a postcolonial text must engage with the rhetorical and culturally specific texture of the source language, resisting the temptation to smooth over difference for the sake of readability. She emphasizes the translator's responsibility to the subaltern — to those whose

voices have been suppressed by colonial power — and insists that translation can either reinforce or challenge that suppression, depending on the strategies it employs.

Niranjana (1992) examines the historical role of translation in colonial India, demonstrating how translation practices contributed to the construction of colonial knowledge and the subordination of indigenous cultures. Her work foregrounds the political stakes of translation choices and underscores the importance of a postcolonial ethics of translation that refuses to reproduce colonial hierarchies.

Tymoczko (1999) offers a comparative and corpus-based perspective on translation and postcolonial literature, arguing that literary translators working with postcolonial texts must attend to the metatextual dimensions of their choices — including what is glossed, what is left untranslated, and how paratextual elements (introductions, footnotes, glossaries) frame the foreign cultural material for the target reader.

These perspectives are directly relevant to the translation of *Things Fall Apart*, a text that embodies the postcolonial condition in its very language — written in English yet saturated with Igbo cultural content, it challenges the translator to navigate between languages that carry vastly different cultural and ideological histories.

3. Methodology

This article adopts a qualitative, text-analytical methodology oriented toward translation criticism and proposal. The corpus consists of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958, Heinemann edition), selected as the sole source text on the grounds of its canonical status and the density of its culturally marked linguistic features. The objective not being a comparative study the article develops and evaluates original translation proposals rather than comparing competing versions. Where partial Arabic renderings or paratextual decisions have been documented in the secondary literature, these are noted and discussed.

The analytical framework draws on three levels of literary language analysis, following Quider, Al-Ayoub, and Baraka (2002) and Jaber (2005):

1. The lexical level: the selection and function of culturally marked vocabulary, including untranslated Igbo terms, culturally specific proper nouns, and culturally loaded common nouns.

2. The syntactic level: non-standard English constructions, including patterns of repetition, unusual conjunctive structures, and punctuation and capitalization choices that reflect Igbo linguistic patterns.
3. The stylistic level: rhetorical and figurative devices, including proverbs, oral narrative formulas, and metaphorical constructions drawn from Igbo tradition.

Examples were selected through a systematic reading of the complete novel, with attention to passages identified in prior scholarship (Riche, 2009; Bishai, 2019) as particularly dense in culturally marked features. The selection prioritizes examples that represent distinct translation challenges and that allow for a range of foreignizing strategies to be demonstrated and evaluated.

Each proposed Arabic translation is accompanied by an explicit statement of the strategy employed (borrowing, literal translation, structural preservation, paratextual annotation) and a discussion of the expected benefits and potential losses. The evaluation criteria are: (a) preservation of the Igbo cultural specificity of the source text; (b) coherence and readability within the Arabic target text; and (c) consistency with the foreignizing ethics of Venuti and Berman. Where losses are inevitable — for instance, due to the morphosyntactic differences between English and Arabic — these are acknowledged explicitly rather than minimized.

This methodology is avowedly interpretive rather than empirical, and the proposed translations are put forward as principled proposals rather than definitive solutions. The article does not claim to offer a comprehensive translation of the novel, but rather a theoretically grounded analytical framework that could inform a full translation project.

4. Achebe's Linguistic and Cultural Project in *Things Fall Apart*

4.1 The Postcolonial Context

Chinua Achebe's literary project is inseparable from its postcolonial context. As Achebe (2000) explains, Western narratives — most notoriously Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) — constructed Africa as a space of primitivism, irrationality, and absence: a continent without history, language, or interiority. *Things Fall Apart* was written as a direct counter to these representations, presenting Igbo society from within — as a complex, differentiated, and morally serious world — and thereby challenging the colonial gaze that had rendered it invisible or inferior.

Achebe's choice to write in English rather than Igbo is itself a strategic decision. English is the language of the colonizer, and by writing in it, Achebe acknowledges the historical reality of colonial linguistic domination. But he refuses to write a conventional English novel. Instead, he systematically reshapes English from within, incorporating Igbo vocabulary, proverbs, syntactic rhythms, and conceptual categories. The result is a hybrid text that is neither straightforwardly English nor straightforwardly Igbo, but something new — a literary language that uses the colonizer's tongue to speak the colonized culture's truth.

This linguistic strategy has direct implications for translation. As Spivak (1993) argues, the translator of a postcolonial text must engage with its rhetorical texture, not merely its semantic content. The foreignness of Achebe's English — its Igbo-inflected rhythms, its untranslated terms, its culturally opaque proverbs — is not an obstacle to be overcome but a meaning-bearing feature to be preserved.

4.2 Lexical Features: Igbo Terms

Achebe incorporates numerous untranslated Igbo lexical items into the narrative, embedding them within their cultural context rather than glossing them for the anglophone reader. These terms carry meanings that are deeply embedded in the social, religious, and cosmological framework of Igbo society and cannot be reduced to simple lexical equivalents.

The term *agbala*, for instance, first appears in the sentence "His father was *agbala*" (Achebe, 1958, p. 13). Its meaning becomes apparent through the characterization of Okonkwo's father Unoka — weak, improvident, socially marginalized — and carries a specific culturally gendered judgment about masculinity and social worth that no single English or Arabic word could convey without paraphrase. Similarly, the *egwugwu* (Achebe, 1958, p. 93) are not merely elders or judges but embodied ancestral spirits whose authority is simultaneously spiritual, judicial, and communal — a convergence of functions that has no ready equivalent in Arabic legal or religious vocabulary.

Religious and cosmological terms present analogous challenges. The divine system of *Things Fall Apart* — Chukwu (the supreme deity), *Agbala* (the Oracle), *Ani* (the earth goddess), and the personal spiritual concept of *chi* — constitutes a coherent and internally differentiated cosmology that structures the moral life of the community (Achebe, 1958, pp. 100–105). To translate *chi* as "fate" or "soul," as some versions have done, is to assimilate it to an alien conceptual framework and thereby suppress the specific Igbo ontology it encodes.

Other culturally marked lexical items include titles such as *Ozo* (signaling prestige and hierarchical distinction within the community), kinship terms such as *oradinwanyị* (old woman), and the names of musical instruments — *ekwe*, *udu*, *ogone* — that are central to ritual and communal life. Each of these terms is embedded in a network of cultural meanings that resists reduction to a target-language equivalent.

4.3 Syntactic Features: Igbo-Inflected English

Beyond the lexical level, Achebe reshapes English at the syntactic and discursive levels to reflect Igbo patterns of thought and oral expression (Riche, 2009). Several features are particularly significant for the translator.

The frequent use of paratactic structures — sequences of clauses linked by "and" rather than by subordinating conjunctions — creates a narrative rhythm that echoes the oral storytelling tradition of Igbo culture. This rhythm is integral to the texture of the novel and would be lost if the translator normalized the syntax into the more hypotactic patterns characteristic of written Arabic prose.

Certain non-standard grammatical choices — such as "a animal" instead of "an animal" (Achebe, 1958, p. 71) — may reflect Igbo phonological patterns, in which the distinction between vowel-initial and consonant-initial nouns does not carry the same grammatical weight as in English. While such features cannot be reproduced in Arabic (which has no equivalent article system), they serve as a reminder that the text's grammatical surface is itself a site of cultural meaning.

The use of capitalization for certain culturally significant concepts — *Chi*, *Agbala*, the Oracle — signals their cosmological importance and distinguishes them from common nouns. Arabic's non-use of case-based capitalization means that this distinction must be handled through other means, such as the use of the definite article, syntactic positioning, or paratextual annotation.

4.4 Stylistic Features: Proverbs and Oral Rhetoric

Proverbs are one of the most culturally distinctive features of *Things Fall Apart*, and among the most challenging for the translator. In Igbo oral tradition, proverbs function not merely as decorative figures of speech but as epistemological tools — condensed expressions of collective wisdom that carry normative and communal authority. Achebe (1958, p. 7) describes proverbs as "the palm-oil with which words are eaten" — a meta-proverb that itself illustrates the central role of proverbial speech in Igbo communicative culture.

Many of the proverbs in the novel reflect core Igbo values of community and interdependence:

- "An animal rubs its aching flank against a tree; a man asks his kinsman to scratch him" (Achebe, 1958, p. 117).
- "If one finger brought oil, it would soil the others" (Achebe, 1958, p. 87).
- "When a man walks naked, it is his kinsmen who feel shame, not himself" (Achebe, 1958, p. 132).

Others address individual destiny and the relationship between human will and spiritual determination:

- "When a man says yes, his chi says yes also" (Achebe, 1958, p. 19).
- "Here was a man whose chi said nay despite his own affirmation" (Achebe, 1958, p. 94).

Still others use nature-based imagery to express social truths:

- "The sun will shine on those who stand before it shines on those who kneel under them" (Achebe, 1958, p. 6).
- "When the moon is shining, the cripple becomes hungry for a walk" (Achebe, 1958, p. 7).
- "You can tell a ripe corn by its look" (Achebe, 1958, p. 16).

The apparent simplicity of these expressions — their short sentences, concrete imagery, and direct syntax — conceals their cultural depth. Their strangeness in English is precisely what marks their foreign origin, and this productive opacity should, in Berman's (1985/2021) terms, be preserved rather than eliminated in translation.

5. Foreignizing Translation Strategies for Arabic

5.1 Strategy 1: Borrowing Igbo Terms

Following Venuti's principle that translation should foreground the foreignness of the source text rather than assimilating it to target-culture norms, Igbo terms should be maintained through phonological borrowing (transliteration into Arabic script) rather than replaced with approximate Arabic equivalents. This strategy preserves the cultural specificity of the terms, signals their Igbo origin, and invites the Arabic reader into an encounter with a linguistic world different from their own. It is consistent with established Arabic translation practices for culturally untranslatable religious and cultural terms from other languages.

Table 1 presents proposed transliterations for the principal Igbo terms in the novel.

Table 1. Proposed Arabic Transliterations of Igbo Terms

Igbo Term	Cultural Function	Arabic Rendering
Egwugwu	Masked ancestral spirits; communal judiciary	إيغوغو
Ozo	Prestige title; marker of social hierarchy	أوزو
Chukwu	Supreme deity in Igbo cosmology	تشوكو
Agbala	Oracle; also term for a man without titles (social stigma)	أغبالا
Ani	Earth goddess; guardian of communal morality	آني
Chielo	Priestess of Agbala	تشيلو
Chi	Personal spiritual double; destiny-force	تشى
Oradinwanyi	Old woman (kinship/social term)	أورادينواني
Ekwe	Wooden percussion instrument	إيكوي
Udu	Clay pot used as drum	أودو
ogone	Metal gong	أوغوني

This strategy is not without risk. Repeated exposure to unfamiliar transliterated terms may impede fluency for some Arabic readers, particularly those unfamiliar with Igbo culture. This risk can be mitigated through a brief glossary appended to the translation — a paratextual device that Tymoczko (1999) identifies as an important tool for managing the reader's encounter with cultural foreignness without domesticating the text itself. Crucially, the glossary should explain rather than assimilate: it should describe the Igbo cultural function of each term without reducing it to an Arabic or Islamic equivalent.

5.2 Strategy 2: Literal Translation of Proverbs

Proverbs should be translated as literally as possible, preserving their syntactic structure, their concrete imagery, and their metaphorical logic, even at the cost of some initial opacity for the Arabic reader. This approach is consistent with Berman's (1985/2021) insistence on fidelity to the form of the original, and with Venuti's (2017) argument that foreignizing translation should resist the normalization of difference.

The opacity of a literally translated Igbo proverb in Arabic is not a failure of translation but a feature of it: it signals the cultural distance between the Igbo source world and the Arabic target world, and invites the reader to engage with that distance rather than having it eliminated. As Achebe himself demonstrates by leaving his proverbs untranslated for anglophone readers, cultural meaning can be communicated through context and cumulative reading even when the surface expression is unfamiliar.

Table 2 presents proposed literal Arabic translations of the principal proverbs.

Table 2. Proposed Literal Arabic Translations of Igbo Proverbs

Source Text (Achebe, 1958)	Proposed Arabic Translation	Strategy Notes
An animal rubs its aching flank against a tree; a man asks his kinsman to scratch him (p. 117)	الحيوان يفرك خاصرته المؤلمة على شجرة؛ أما الإنسان فيطلب من قريبه أن يحك له	Semicolon retained to preserve syntactic contrast; no Arabic equivalent substituted
If one finger brought oil, it would soil the others (p. 87)	لو حمل إصبع واحد الزيت لوث بقية الأصابع	Conditional structure retained literally
When a man walks naked, it is his kinsmen who feel shame, not himself (p. 132)	عندما يمشي الرجل عارياً، فإن أهله هم من يشعرون بالخجل، لا هو نفسه	Cleft structure preserved to maintain rhetorical emphasis
The cock that crows in the morning belongs to one household, but its voice belongs to the whole neighborhood (p. 122)	الديك الذي يصبح صباحاً ينتمي إلى أسرة واحدة، لكن صوته يخص الحي بأسره	Contrastive conjunction retained; كَـ replaced by أسره for rhythmic naturalness
When a man says yes, his chi says yes also (p. 19)	عندما يقول الرجل نعم، يقول تشي نعم أيضاً	chi transliterated; no domestication to Arabic spiritual vocabulary

Source Text (Achebe, 1958)	Proposed Arabic Translation	Strategy Notes
Never kill a man who says nothing (ch. 15)	لا تقتل رجلاً لا يقول شيئاً	Imperative retained; literal structure maintained

A potential objection to this strategy is that Arabic has a rich proverbial tradition of its own, and that substituting Arabic equivalents would produce a more culturally resonant text for Arabic readers. This objection has some force; however, it misconceives the purpose of translation in this context. To replace an Igbo proverb with an Arabic one is to erase the Igbo origin of the text and to assimilate Achebe's novel to the Arab literary tradition — precisely the kind of ethnocentric domestication that Venuti and Berman argue against. The strangeness of the proverbs is part of their meaning.

5.3 Strategy 3: Structural Preservation of Igbo-Inflected English Expressions

Beyond proverbs, Achebe's text contains numerous expressions that reflect Igbo conceptual and syntactic structures. These should be translated in a way that maintains their structural form, even where the result may appear unusual by Arabic prose standards.

Table 3. Proposed Arabic Translations of Igbo-Inflected Expressions

Source Text	Proposed Arabic Translation	Cultural Note
The sun will shine on those who stand before it shines on those who kneel under them (p. 6)	تشرق الشمس على الواقفين قبل أن تشرق على الراكعين تحتهم	Hierarchical spatial metaphor (standing/kneeling) preserved; no leveling to abstract equivalence
When the moon is shining, the cripple becomes hungry for a walk (p. 7)	حين يضيء القمر، يشتهي المقعد المشي	Disability reference retained without euphemism, as in source; cultural context of night mobility in precolonial village life
A man who pays respect to the great paves the way for his own greatness (p. 14)	الرجل الذي يجلّ العظماء يمهد الطريق لعظمته هو	Concessive-causal structure retained; reflexive pronoun added in Arabic for clarity without paraphrase

Source Text	Proposed Arabic Translation	Cultural Note
Here was a man whose chi said nay despite his own affirmation (p. 94)	كان هذا رجلاً قال تشييه لا، رغم تأكيدته هو	chi transliterated and possessivized (تشييه) to preserve the personal-spiritual relationship
You can tell a ripe corn by its look (p. 16)	يمكنك تمييز الذرة الناضجة من مظهرها	Agricultural imagery retained; no substitution with Arabic crop equivalent

5.4 Paratextual Strategies

Beyond the text itself, the translator has access to paratextual devices — introductions, footnotes, endnotes, and glossaries — that can help the Arabic reader navigate the cultural foreignness of Achebe's world without domesticating the text. Tymoczko (1999) and Hermans (2007) both argue that such paratextual elements are integral to the translation's cultural politics: they can frame the foreign text as genuinely Other, or they can assimilate it to the target culture's expectations.

A foreignizing approach to paratextual framing would include: a translator's preface situating Achebe's novel within its postcolonial context and explaining the linguistic strategy of Igbo-inflected English; a brief glossary of Igbo terms with cultural explanations (not merely definitional equivalents); and footnotes, used sparingly, for particularly opaque cultural references where in-text context is insufficient. What should be avoided is the kind of over-explanatory footnoting that domesticates foreign cultural concepts by assimilating them to Arabic or Islamic equivalents.

6. Critical Discussion: The Limits of Foreignization

A foreignizing approach to translating *Things Fall Apart* is theoretically compelling and ethically grounded, but it is not without practical and conceptual limits. These must be acknowledged honestly rather than minimized.

The first limit is the risk of exoticization. Venuti's critics — including Pym (2001) and Hermans (2007) — have argued that foreignization can itself become a form of cultural appropriation: by foregrounding the foreignness of the source text, the translator may inadvertently reinforce its status as exotic, strange, and fundamentally Other — the mirror image of the colonial gaze that Achebe was writing against. A translation that makes Igbo

culture appear maximally strange to Arabic readers may reproduce the very exoticizing dynamic that Achebe sought to challenge. This risk can be mitigated, though not eliminated, by the kind of paratextual framing described in Section 5.4, which situates the foreignness of the text within an ethical and political context rather than presenting it as mere curiosity.

The second limit is morphosyntactic. Arabic and English differ substantially in their grammatical structures: Arabic is a highly inflected, root-based language with a complex system of verb-initial sentence orders, grammatical gender, and dual and plural marking that has no English equivalent. Several of Achebe's Igbo-inflected English features cannot be reproduced in Arabic without some degree of adaptation. The non-standard use of the indefinite article ("a animal") has no Arabic correlate, since Arabic does not use an article of this kind. The paratactic rhythm of Achebe's sentences — his characteristic "and... and... and" — can be approximated in Arabic through the conjunction *wa*, which functions similarly, but the equivalence is imperfect. Capitalization as a marker of cosmological significance cannot be reproduced in Arabic script. These losses are not trivial, but they are inevitable: the translator's task is to acknowledge them and to compensate for them, where possible, through other means.

The third limit concerns readability and reception. A maximally foreignizing Arabic translation may be received as opaque, inaccessible, or poorly executed by readers and reviewers who expect fluent, idiomatic Arabic prose. This is a real risk, particularly in publishing contexts where commercial considerations may constrain the translator's choices. Venuti (1995) is aware of this problem and argues that foreignizing translation requires not only an ethical translator but also an educated reader and a receptive publishing culture — conditions that cannot be guaranteed. A partial response to this risk is the strategic use of paratextual framing, which can help readers understand and appreciate the foreignizing choices the translator has made.

These limits do not invalidate the foreignizing approach argued for in this article, but they do require that it be pursued with critical awareness rather than dogmatic prescription. Translation is always a practice of negotiation, and the translator's ethical commitment to preserving foreignness must be held in tension with the practical realities of the target language, culture, and publishing context.

7. Conclusion

This article has argued that the translation of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* into Arabic demands a foreignizing approach — one grounded in the theoretical frameworks of

Venuti and Berman, informed by postcolonial translation theory, and sensitive to the specific linguistic and cultural features through which Achebe constructs his vision of Igbo society.

The analysis has identified three principal categories of culturally marked features — Igbo lexical items, Igbo-inflected syntactic structures, and proverbs rooted in oral tradition — and has proposed corresponding translation strategies: phonological borrowing for Igbo terms, literal structural translation for proverbs, and structural preservation for Igbo-inflected expressions, supplemented by paratextual framing. Each of these strategies has been evaluated against criteria of cultural fidelity, Arabic readability, and consistency with a foreignizing ethics.

The article has also engaged critically with the limits of foreignization: the risk of exoticization, the morphosyntactic constraints of Arabic, and the reception risks of a maximally foreignizing text. These limits are real, and they require the translator to exercise judgment rather than apply theory mechanically. Translation is always a practice of negotiation — between the source text and the target language, between cultural fidelity and readability, between the ethics of the foreign and the pragmatics of communication.

Ultimately, translating Achebe requires an ethical commitment to difference — a commitment that Achebe's own writing embodies and demands. As he reminds us, "until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter" (Achebe, 2000). A translation that smooths over the foreignness of his text, assimilating it to the norms of the target culture, risks becoming just such a hunter's history — one that silences, again, the voice it was meant to carry. A foreignizing translation, by contrast, allows that voice to be heard on its own terms: different, challenging, and irreducibly itself.

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