

Translational Ethics and the Grammatization of At-Homeness. A Grammatical Analysis of the Bouazza's "De verloren zoon" and the French Translation

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Abstract

The ethico-translational debates circulate incessantly around two notions: the Self and the Other. This comes as no surprise, given that the translator is often described as a mediator whose main responsibility consists in carrying a text, initially embedded in a foreign culture, not only into another language, but also into another cultural setting. Still, Selfhood and Otherness have remained abstract and fuzzy terms. For this reason we have elaborated a scheme, based on the writings of Bernard Stiegler and Martin Heidegger, that will allow us perform, what we call, a grammatical analysis of at-homeness. This analysis will provide us with sufficient grounds to determine the Selfhood of the Other – i.e. text-to-be-translated. This determination will come in handy when comparing the source text and the target text. In this specific case, we will compare the grammatically constituted notions of selfhood in the short story "De verloren zoon" (The Prodigal Son), written by the highly influential and critically acclaimed Moroccan-Dutch author Hafid Bouazza, and the French translation of Daniel Cunin, entitled "Le fils prodigue".

Keywords: *ethics, grammatization, identity, Heidegger, Levinas, Stiegler*

Nearly 200 years after the publication the seminal text *Ueber die verschiedenen Methoden des Uebersetzens*¹, the spirit of Friedrich Schleiermacher still seems to haunt translators and translation scholars throughout the world. He was the one who stressed the need, once more, to pay close attention to literary texts in relation to their respective translations. Although a paraphrasing of propositional content could suffice in a situation where language is used in a purely instrumental way, a purging of textual, linguistic and cultural characteristics should never be allowed in literary (and scientific) translation.² Of great interest here may be, of course, the question: how can we welcome the other text, language, yes even the other culture in our midst?³ The answer offered by Schleiermacher is seemingly simple: by leaving the author in peace and moving the reader towards him – i.e. by confronting the reader with the strangeness of the author/other.⁴ In the past centuries, the translation strategy preferred by the German

¹ Friedrich Schleiermacher, "Ueber die verschiedenen Methoden des Uebersetzens," in *Das Problem des Übersetzens*, ed. Joachim Störig (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1962), 108-135.

² Schleiermacher, "Ueber die verschiedenen Methoden des Uebersetzens," 40.

³ Schleiermacher, "Ueber die verschiedenen Methoden des Uebersetzens," 44-45.

⁴ Schleiermacher, "Ueber die verschiedenen Methoden des Uebersetzens," 47, 55-56.

philosopher has been profusely sustained by other theoreticians (mainly philosophers) and accepted in Translation Studies ever since postmodernism came into fashion. The ethics of translation got stuck in what we can call the paradigm of Otherness.

During a one-day conference, we have decided to no longer yield to the temptations of simplistic romantic and postmodern thought, by coining a term that would enable us to move beyond the strict dichotomy of Sameness and Otherness: “*Hospitability*”.⁵ First of all, this term invites us to question not *how* one can welcome the other in our midst, but *if* one can welcome him – if one is able to be hospitable at all. At this point, it seems that we only want to stir up the debate on translatability once more. However, a repetition of this age-old debate appears not to be very fruitful, given that it will only lead to a confirmation of the postmodern belief that the gap between the Self and the Other is irreducible and, therefore, ought to be respected at all times. Instead, we aim to illustrate the deconstruction not only of the idealist figment of Otherness, but also of the notion of the Self and the oppositionality (of the opposition Self-Other). Especially these last two steps appear to be paramount. For the postmodern paradigm of Otherness can in fact be seen as a fruit of the ever perpetuating (Aristotelian) paradigm of Sameness, since the former, as François Raffoul rightfully puts it, owes an awful lot to the latter “*precisely insofar as it determines itself as its reversal.*”⁶ The underlying contradictions in the aforementioned paradigm can only be bypassed successfully if one is also willing to reflect on the ongoing deconstruction of the Self. A reflection on this matter might reveal the cracks in the egological edifice that was constructed by René Descartes and that seems to have stood the test of time even after the publication of Levinas’ masterpiece *Totalité et Infini*.⁷

In this article, we seek to make room for the metaphoricity underlying the translational ethical debate. As previously shown, Schleiermacher already signals that motion is of great importance in the process of translation.⁸ This is of little surprise, since the German word “*Übersetzung*” clearly hints at a transfer from one place to another. What remains absent in Schleiermacher’s text is a description of the specific nature of these “places”. Perhaps this description is formulated by another German philosopher: Martin Heidegger. He unconsciously extended the conceptual metaphor of Schleiermacher when he wrote that “language is the house of being.”⁹ So, when translating a text into another, one is, metaphorically speaking, introducing something or someone into a “house”, into one’s “home”. Here the term ‘hospitability’ may come in handy, for it seems to render explicitly the metaphoricity that governs the ethico-translational debate. In the context of this issue focused on the “place of translation”, the Heideggerian image, as well as our own, can become even more useful and relevant, for we would like to propose a (further) conceptual blending of the domains of *wohnen*

⁵ Gys-Walt Van Egdom, “Hospita{bi}lity. Welcoming New Difficulties: the Difficulty of Welcoming” (paper presented at Hospita{bi}lity. Textual, Lingual and Cultural Heterogeneity in Literary Translation, Antwerp, Belgium, December 1, 2011). Needless to say that this term contains a reference to Jacques Derrida’s writings on (conditional and unconditional) hospitality. His presence is, to put it in spiritual terms, felt in the course of this whole article. Cf. Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *De l’hospitalité* (Paris: Calman Levy, 1997).

⁶ François Raffoul, *The Origins of Responsibility* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2010), 165.

⁷ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totalité et Infini: essai sur l’extériorité* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1961).

⁸ Schleiermacher, “Ueber die verschiedenen Methoden des Uebersetzens,” 47.

⁹ Martin Heidegger, “Brief über den Humanismus,” in *Wegmarken*, Martin Heidegger (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1976), 313.

(dwelling) and *übersetzen* (translating) by attempting a “grammatization of at-homeness”.

To get a clear idea of how we must interpret such a “grammatization of at-homeness”, we first have to recall a contemporary definition (and the primary example) of “grammatization”, offered by the French philosopher Bernard Stiegler, who states that “grammatization” [is] the process whereby the flux and flow networking our existences become discreet elements: writing is thus, as the breaking into discreet elements of the flux of speech (let us coin the word “discretisation” for this possibility), a stage in grammatization.¹⁰

Although the process of grammatization may seem beneficial to our understanding of some aspects of human existence (such as language use), there is no denying that this process might always have negative consequences in the long run. The far-reaching consequences of the (possibility of) “discretisation” of aspects of humanity and human experience, has lead Stiegler to a relatively negative valuation of the term. In “Nanomutations, hypomnemata and grammatization”, he indicates that the rise of nanotechnology, for example, is one of the main causes of the loss of existential coherence in the twentieth century.¹¹

In this essay, the concept of grammatization will be used only to move in an opposite direction, swinging from partial observations to a more encompassing insight into the identity of the Other and the translational depiction of that identity. In the first subsection of this article, we will introduce a simple grammatical model for the analysis of the notion of “at-homeness”. Next, we will apply this model to the short story “De verloren zoon” (the Prodigal Son)¹², so that we can extract the partial notions of at-homeness. These partial notions will lead to a text-specific notion of the translatable Other (represented in the source text). Eventually, this specific notion can be compared with the notion of this Other, as it is represented the target text in (the) terms of Sameness.¹³ We hope to elucidate the self-deconstruction of the notions of Sameness and Otherness, of the Proper and the Foreign, and to propose, subsequently, a paradigmatic shift in the ethics of translation.

Building Bricks: Constructing Selves and Others

We have taken on the difficult task of elaborating a grammar of at-homeness to stimulate further contamination of two important domains of human experience: dwelling and translating. Translation is hereby spatially conceived as the transfer *of* something/someone *from* one place to another. Following Heidegger’s logic, we described both places as linguistic constructions or houses. At this point, we could consider that we have provided sufficient grounds to present our ideas on the grammatical structure of at-homeness. This, however, would be a gross misperception, since being in a house can hardly ever be equated with being at home, unless one favours ascetic existence. We will first have to delineate the difference between language as the house of being and language as the home of being.

¹⁰ “Bernard Stiegler: Nanomutations, hypomnemata and grammatisation,” *Ars Industrialis*, accessed August 22, 2012, <http://www.arsindustrialis.org/node/2937>.

¹¹ “Bernard Stiegler: Nanomutations, hypomnemata and grammatisation.”

¹² Hafid Bouazza, “De verloren zoon,” in *De Voeten van Abdullah* (Amsterdam: Arena, 1996), 119-131.

¹³ Hafid Bouazza, “Le fils prodigue,” in *Les pieds d’Abdullah*, trans. Daniel Cunin (Trouville-sur-Mer: Le Reflet, 2003), 101-112.

This delineation poses a true challenge to us, for everyone understands that there need not be any (empirical) difference between a house and a home. Therefore, we have to turn to Heidegger who was one of the first philosophers to seize upon the importance of the being-there, i.e. the meaningful existence *as* being in situ. Whereas traditional philosophy has always considered the subject a self-sufficient being embedded in a space that has no constitutive meaning to the core of subjectivity, Heidegger contends that the “subject” cannot be thought of as self-sufficient since being will always rely on its “being-*there*”. In fact, being is, in the German philosopher’s acception, essentially the “concernful comportment” of the Dasein towards his being-there (*primäre Wozu*).¹⁴ For this very reason, Heidegger rejected the equation of “space” and “spatialized space”, and introduced the idea of a “spatializing space” which pivots around the belief that human kind is procured the ability to “trace out space.”¹⁵ In this respect, we can state that the subject is never to be conceived as an “earthly” creature, but must be regarded as a “worldly” creature: he does not simply dwell on earth but designs a “world” as he is always *meaningfully involved* in his life on earth.¹⁶ On a lower scale, the same logic holds for the notions of the house and the home. A house is only a home to us, if it *serves* (us) as a home, i.e. in a particular *meaningful way*.

This insight will prove to be very useful. However, we have not yet given full account of Heidegger’s notion of *Heimlichkeit* (at-homeness). To acquire a thorough understanding, we must take a close look at his gradual expansion of the notion of the dwelling place (epitomized by the word “home”). In light of the above, we may argue that for Heidegger the dwelling place of man is not simply a construction in which man is able to pass time or find refuge (against elements of nature or against his foes). What constitutes a dwelling place is –and this is far more important– the feeling of familiarity, the presence of a positive affect that originates from one’s being in a particular environment, which could be described as a sense of “familiarity” – which is granted a crucial position in the conceptual framework of *Sein und Zeit*.¹⁷ Therefore, home is no longer situated within the walls of a house; far more than this, the word home refers to our “concernful comportment” in the space we use to inhabit – in this context, we could use the Heideggerian term “everydayness” (*Alltäglichkeit*).¹⁸

This assertion compels us to re-evaluate our concept of at-homeness (*Heimlichkeit*). On the one hand, this is positive, given that the awareness of the weight will enable us to avoid the dangers we might otherwise incur during the elaboration of our grammatical frame. On the other one, this vital realization has a paralyzing effect: the Heideggerian concept of at-homeness hints at the idea that what is most familiar (*Heimlich*)¹⁹, will forever remain unnoticed (even to the Self). This implicit discouragement was already lurking in the terminology used by the German philosopher: the term *Heimlichkeit* does not only refer to the homy dimension, it also touches on the secret (*das Geheimnis*) and even on the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*). Thus, we are not only entitled to have a secret, we are obliged to have a radical one.

¹⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1967), 84.

¹⁵ Cf. Maurice Merleau Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Paul Kegan (London: Routledge, 2002), 244-347.

¹⁶ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 83-88; cf. Martin Heidegger, “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes”, in *Holzwege*, Martin Heidegger (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977), 55.

¹⁷ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 54.

¹⁸ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 252-255.

¹⁹ Cf. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 3.

One of the dangers of discretization, i.e. the possibility of breaking a conceptual unity down into segments, is that we lose touch with the reality of our object of knowledge. In this case, we risk seeing the senses of at-homeness merely as a sum of empirically deduced data, instead of as abstract, even transcending structures. To avoid this risk, we must always take into account that the facts that we shall wield in this paragraph and in the course of this contribution will still be partial and perhaps of speculative nature. However, speculation and partiality, being a result of incomplete observations and the sheer clumsiness of the researcher, need not hinder our research, since the four *topoi* we will refer to here can always be traced back to some theoretical writings on Sameness and Otherness.

In his paper “Bauen, Wohnen, Denken”, already extensively discussed in this paragraph, Heidegger offers a first glance at how the connection between ontology and dwelling is established by arguing that dwelling is the mode *par excellence* of our being on the face of the earth. “The basic character of dwelling is to spare (*bewahren*), or to preserve (*schonen*)”.²⁰ Preservation is, of course, aimed at an object. This object is not primarily a Cartesian-like Self, but a Self that has come to know itself, love itself in its being in the world, one that is entirely glued together with the world.²¹ So, what man tries to preserve (in the act of dwelling) is the entwinement of the Self and the “things” (*Dinge*) that are constitutive of his world – for, ontologically speaking, man always *stays with things*.²² These are not described as *natural* objects; they can only be

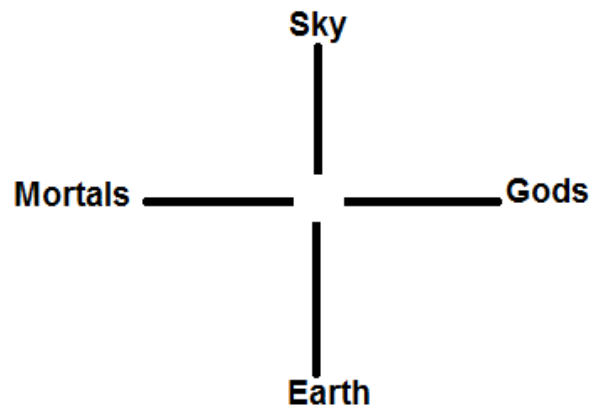


Figure 1. *Das Geviert*

perceived as things from the moment that their functionality or instrumentality is placed on the foreground, or, to put it in Heideggerian terms, from the moment the four fundamental dimensions (*Grunddimensionen*) of being are gathered (*versammelt*) in them. At this point the inevitable question must be raised: which fundamental dimensions are gathered in the ‘things’ that constitute the world we dwell in? To answer this question, we can introduce the figure of the Fourfold (figure 1: *das Geviert*).²³ Heidegger believes that the “cultivation” or “edification”, so to speak, of the world depends heavily on the intricate gathering of the dimensions earth, sky, mortals and gods. One can say that humans dwell *on* (or possibly *under*) the surface of the earth, which is without exception situated *under* the sky. We can redouble this statement, thereby providing an extra existential meaning, by asserting that humans reside *among* the mortals and *before* the gods. Of course, with this redoubling of the opposing terms, Heidegger illustrates the paramount influence of not only the finite but also the infinite in human life. Traditionally, the four dimensions are placed on two axes and form a

²⁰ Heidegger, “Bauen, Wohnen, Denken”, 143; cf. Heidegger, “Bauen, Wohnen, Denken”, 143-146.

²¹ Cf. Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time. Disorientation* (Stanford: Stanford University, 2009), 2; Jacques Derrida, *Chaque fois unique. La fin du monde* (Paris: Galilée, 2003).

²² Heidegger, “Bauen, Wohnen, Denken”, 145.

²³ Heidegger, “Bauen, Wohnen, Denken”, 143-145.

cross shaped figure. These axes demonstrate the absolute necessity of the opposition of the four dimensions.²⁴ The gathering of the four fundamental dimensions of being can therefore not be perceived as “material” gathering, but must be seen as gathering these *Grunddimensionen* in the “material”.

In the next subsection, Heidegger’s Fourfold will be used, yet abstraction is made of the four fundamental dimensions cited above – given that the inclusion of these dimensions in our scope, would only lead to a rigid “ontological” analysis of at-homeness. Besides, the awareness that this scheme could be less accurate in present day society – as a result of globalization and secularization – has trickled down into the mind of many scholars and rendered the scheme less valuable, if not obsolete.²⁵ The dimensions we will analyze are the linguistic (re)presentations of the Self and the Other, and the references to the worldly and to discourse (cf. figure 2: Fourfold of the Grammatical Home). However, the blank spot in the center of the scheme still points toward a constant interplay – or, indeed, a gathering – of the four dimensions we are about to analyze. Time has come to briefly draw attention to the four dimensions presented in figure 2 – briefly, due to the fact that our research into the grammatical dimensions of at-homeness is still in its incipient phase.

1) *The Self*. How do we determine the representations of the Self in the literary text?

Of course, the answer to this question depends heavily on texts types and on the focalization in the texts. In order not to complicate matters, our present research will focus on notions of Selfhood in a short story of Hafid Bouazza (“De verloren zoon”) – one with a homo-diegetic narrator (an anonymous “I”).

2) *The Other*. Since the demise of the ethics of Sameness, fixating the Other has always remained a precarious undertaking, since, according to postmodern thought, the Other always eludes our understanding. However, there is no denying that the Other exists and that s/he contributes to the understanding of the Self/Proper – analogously, the idea of nearness only arises when there is a vague idea of remoteness. When attempting, a grammatization of at-homeness, we also have to take up the challenge of analyzing the linguistic representation of the Other. The parameters of the analysis of this particular dimension also depend heavily on text types and focalization. With the case of “De verloren zoon”, we have opted for a short story that probably offers a clear-cut picture of the dimension of Otherness.

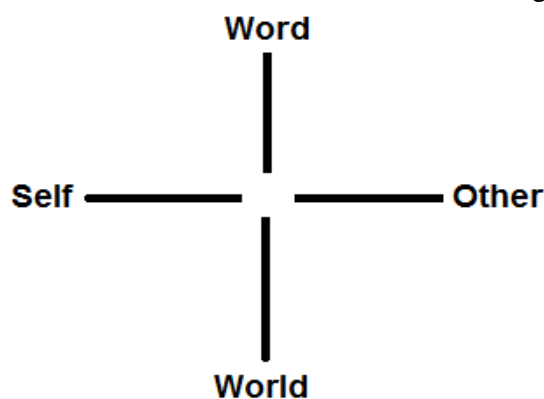


Figure 2. Fourfold of the Grammatical Home

²⁴ As translators we know that this divide is something to be reckoned with: the myth of the tower of Babel has shown that every attempt to join heaven and earth will be forcefully hindered (by the gods).

²⁵ Cf. Alain Badiou, *Logiques des mondes* (Paris : Seuil, 2006) ; Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge : MIT Press, 2009).

- 3)The *World*. Now that we have discussed the dimensions on the horizontal axis, we can draw the attention to two dimensions that, contrary to the dimensions of the Self and the Other, are not automatically set in opposition. The first dimension on the Y-axis that we encounter is the World. How should we analyze a world? First of all, we must bear in mind that, to paraphrase Heidegger, the world is to be conceived as the space *in* and of *which* the significance is revealed to the *Dasein*. In this sense, it does not precede existence, but it “coincides” with existence. For this reason, it is not our intention to offer a simple description of the objectal setting within a story, our main objective is to describe this setting in a phenomenological fashion – i.e. by describing how this setting is experienced *by* someone.
- 4)The *Word*. The second dimension on the Y-axis is the Word. As mentioned, these dimensions are rarely considered to be opposing terms. In fact, in the Classical Era and the Middle-Ages, language was seen as a referential system, a system that allowed us to *pronounce a word* and *mean a thing*.²⁶ Using language was therefore nothing more than a presentation *in absentia*. For Heidegger, man makes use of discourse (“Rede”) not merely to verbally present an objective reality, but mainly to articulate his understanding of the world.²⁷ In everyday life, discourse might well seem intended to connect human beings – to collaboratively create a common ground²⁸ –, at the same time we know very well that words, because of their dynamics, often fail to establish this connection. The experience of the “failure of language” leads not only to frustration, but it also opens up a space in which human beings can wrench open language itself. This space is called “the space of literature”.²⁹ Literature often serves to highlight differences, even to stimulate differentiation. From this perspective, we might conclude that oppositionality of the world and the word is not fully defensible. To justify this antithesis, we will draw the parallel between the finite and the infinite dimensions in the *Geviert* of Heidegger. Today, the Other is consistently described as the *tout Autre* (wholly, yes even Holy Other) – just like the gods in Heidegger’s scheme – and therefore He pertains to the realm of the infinite. Language, or the Word, is also something that forever eludes our grasp, that is infinitely Other – whence the etymological relation of identity between the verbal and the divine (“Logos”). This dictum establishes the correlation between the World and the Self, both being a dimension of the realm of the finite.

We can pass on to our analysis of our source text, “De verloren zoon”. In this analysis, the order imposed by the Fourfold will be followed. We will begin with an analysis of the linguistic representation of the Self and the Other (both pertaining to the X-axis). In accordance with Heidegger, we suggest that the four dimensions will only be meaningful to us, from the moment that they are gathered in the ideal blank spot in the center of the scheme. In the final part of our source text analysis, we will try to combine

²⁶ Valentinus Rose and Herman Müller, eds, *Vitruvii de Architectura Libri Decem* (S.L.: Bibliobazaar, 2009).

²⁷ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 162.

²⁸ Cf. Herbert Clarck and Deanna Wilkes-Gibbs, “Referring as a Collaborative Process,” *Cognition* 22 (1986): 1-39.

²⁹ Cf. Maurice Blanchot, *L’espace littéraire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1998).

and oppose the result of our separate analyses, in order to determine the sense of at-homeness that is expressed in the text. This final step is necessary for two different reasons. On the one hand, “discretisation”, Stiegler contends, only leads to a fragmentary understanding of a phenomenon. In other words, it would never be possible to get an idea of what “at-homeness” might mean as long as we discuss the dimensions separately. On the other hand, by blending the four dimensions, we are enabled to provide a notion of “at-homeness”, of the Self of *the Other*, that is entirely text-oriented. By doing so, we can steer away from the abstract notion of Otherness that has governed the ethico-translational discourse in the past centuries, as well as from the more concrete notions that remain hopelessly restricted to language and/or culture.

Being at Home in Hafid Bouzza’s “De verloren zoon”

In 1996, Hafid Bouzza, who was born in Morocco in 1970 and moved to the Netherlands seven years later, published a booklet containing eight short stories. The publication of *De voeten van Abdullah* (“The Feet of Abdullah”) did not pass unnoticed: for this debut Bouzza received the prestigious E. du Perron Prize. The reading audience was amazed by the rich vocabulary and by the unusual approach of the migrant writer to a quite typical thematic³⁰. In this book, the author offered a remarkable insight in the obscene obverse that seems to sustain the conservatism in the small towns of Morocco. A recurring location in his short stories is the (non-existent) hamlet Bertollo, in which the mosque stands tall, as a sign of piety and conservatism, but in which, at the same time, the imams violate little boys, by claiming that it is a part of the initiation into Islamic religion.³¹ The semblance of rigidity and devotion is sharply contrasted by the image of the Netherlands Bouzza presents. This country is presented as a den of debauchery. Nonetheless, the fact that the Dutch culture seems completely devoid of hypocrisy, that it celebrates the superficiality of life (by drinking alcohol and being overtly promiscuous) makes the country exquisitely alluring.

In “De verloren zoon”³², the unbridgeable divide between two cultures is thematized more than in any other story in the bundle. The nameless protagonist (with Moroccan roots), who, up to the moment when the story begins, has led a sinful life in Amsterdam, has decided to seek redemption and, returns to his childhood home, located in small village in the Netherlands. In the seven years that separated the protagonist from (his) family life, the young man had indulged in the pleasures of the flesh, up to the point where he got (emotionally) attached to the flesh of one particular Dutch woman (Mirrianna). This reckless lifestyle, the protagonist freely admits, has been the cause of much emotional upset in his family. For this very reason, his return to his childhood home is not a self-evident event. He is not sure what kind of welcome awaits him: will he be rejected or welcomed with open arms? When the front door opens, the answer, as is often the case, appears to be lying in the middle. He is invited into the house, but the members of the family are somewhat ill at ease. Soon, (probably) after the first night at his parents’ place, his mother discovers that the poison of dissoluteness

³⁰ Ton Anbeek, “Doodknuffelen: Over Marokkaans-Nederlandse auteurs en hun critici,” in *Europa buitengaats: koloniale en postkoloniale literaturen in Europese talen*, ed. Theo D’haen (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2002), 289-301.

³¹ Hafid Bouzza, *De Voeten van Abdullah* (Amsterdam: Arena).

³² Hereafter shortened as DVZ with page references in the text.

still runs through his veins, that the itch to give in to his physical cravings is still present (DVZ, 127). Immediately, she resolves to free him of the torment by announcing that they will arrange a proper Moroccan wedding. In the days following her resolution, the whole family heads off to the country of origin, where they go in search of a fitting wife for the protagonist. It does not take long before the father has found the perfect bride. Yet the identity of the bride remains a mystery not only to the reader, but – what is more striking – also to the main character of the story. In the final pages of the short story, we are offered a description of the typical Moroccan wedding: we are told that men and women, including the respective groom and bride, are separated during the course of the festivities. Man and wife are, so it appears, only allowed to see each other for the first time during what is ambiguously called the “night of the entry” (*lailat-ul-dukhul*, DVZ, 130). This specific night, when he is united with his (traditional) virgin, seems to be the one thing that is captivating to the newlywed man, given that it would offer him an insight in the sexual behaviour of Moroccan women. However, for the reader the story ends on a disappointing note: just moments before the caftans, *gandouras* and veils are removed, s/he is excluded from the scene. Hence, we will never know whether the protagonist’s decision to return to his origins (and, consequently add deeper meaning to his life), has generated the desired effect.

We will try to cast new light on the notion of the *Self* (of the Other) by performing an analysis of the (four) grammatical dimensions of at-homeness on Hafid Bouazza’s text. First, we will perform an analysis of the dimension of the Self. Since the story is relayed by a narrator who happens to be the main character, it seems logical that hardly any difficulties have been encountered in the course of this analysis. The protagonist is a man of Moroccan origin, probably in his mid-twenties, who spent the mayor part of his life in the Netherlands. Seven years earlier he had fled the quiet and conservative Dutch village where he was brought up, only to settle down in Amsterdam, where he would adopt a lifestyle seemingly typical of Western civilization – one of sex, drugs and rock roll. Seven years later, at the brink of maturity, our protagonist gladly admits that this lifestyle, alluring as it may have been, could hardly be described as “satisfying” – and certainly not in the long run. He starts to feel the pangs of conscience and overtly declares that time has come to shake off the shackles of this reckless past filled with doubt and agitation (DVZ, 121). He must head home, he told himself, for in his past could lie the key to a happier, a fulfilling present. Not long after having made love to his Dutch concubine, the protagonist sneaks out of bed, tells the woman that he is going out for cigarettes and returns to his parents whom he had left – sad and somber – years earlier. But what did the young man hope to find there? What solace could this return offer him? Perhaps the answer is formulated in the following passage:

Ik wilde geloven dat ik in de onderwereld van mijn jeugd uit eigen vrije wil kon omkeren en beslissen of de zoutpilaar van mijn ongehoorzaamheid niet waardevoller was dan de beloning voor onverbiddelijke onderwerping. Ik was jong en dacht met een mythische injectie mijn leven betekenis te kunnen geven (DVZ 123-124).

[I wanted to believe that I could willfully turn my back to the underworld of my youth and determine freely whether the pillar of salt of my disobedience was more valuable than the reward for inexorable submission. I was still young and thought that a mythical injection would render my life meaningful]³³

³³ All English translations in the text are mine.

In the passage, we are confronted with a vast array of images. We encounter references to the not entirely dissimilar stories of Orpheus and Eurydice and of Lot and his wife. All are implored to no longer look back, literally as well as figuratively (i.e. in time). Unfortunately, the female characters cannot withstand the temptation and they are condemned to eternal damnation. Like Orpheus and Lot, the anonymous protagonist in “De verloren zoon” is (initially) determined to withstand the temptation. What he can truly cherish, he hopes, only lies ahead of him. Paradoxically, his true treasure (*de belonging*) lies in his inexorable submission (*onderwerping*). Needless to say that this submission is a spiritual one: the voluntary submission to Allah.³⁴ We might feel inclined to describe the protagonist, not as an essential entity, but rather as a, to put it in pseudo-Hegelian terms, “processual Self”. He has found himself at a crossroad in his life, and now deliberately opts for the way of God. By opting for this particular way, he *becomes* who he is.

However, we believe that, by making such an obvious statement, we would fail to penetrate the mystery of this short story, and even of the sequence cited above. In the above-cited sequence, we do not simply have a rich intertextual imagery that confers literary value to the text. The intertextual elements are tightly woven together to form an intricate whole with great significance. In a first attempt, the protagonist presents himself as a modern-day Orpheus who will not succumb to temptation. Despite an allusion to the underworld – Hades – the (re-)presentation is, more or less, neutral and devoid of religious markers. The narrator/protagonist breaks with the neutrality of the image when the “pillar of salt” is inserted in the text. From this point on, religion creeps into the story. Together with the destruction of the whole town of Sodom, the transformation of the curious wife of Lot into a pillar of salt is one of the most gripping events in the book of “Genesis” (chapter 19). What is remarkable about this specific reference is that the story of Lot (and his family) is not only relevant to our Judeo-Christian culture, but also even more relevant to Islamic culture. In Judeo-Christian culture, Lot is simply a righteous man. In the Qur’an, however, Lut (Lot) is even a prophet. Yet, after having performed a micrological reading of the “Genesis” chapter, we get the idea that Lot does not fit the profile of a prophet. Granted, he has tried to persuade the inhabitants of Sodom to do what God made lawful – which is: marrying someone of the opposite sex. But after his flight from Sodom that had been leveled to the ground, and after the transformation of his wife into a pillar of salt, Lot, in a state of inebriation, impregnates his two daughters. In the end, his behavior proves to be

³⁴ The keywords of Islamic faith “Islam” and “Moslem” are often related to the term submission. “Islam”, Monaco maintains, “means “total submission to the One God”. A Moslem is “one who submits to Allah”. Cf. Anthony John Monaco, *The Recitations of Mohammed. The Symbolic Version of the Koran* (Bloomington, AuthorHouse, 2004), xii. Due to the rise of Islamophobia, this etymological relation has been questioned. Falaturi and Tworuschka, for instance, focus on the s-l-m paradigm. They stress that these three consonants (in this particular order) refer to a state of being “whole and unharmed”. As a proof of his theory, he adds *salām* (peace) to the aforementioned keywords Cf. Abdoldjavad Falaturi and Udo Tworuschka, *Der Islam im Unterricht. Beiträge zur interkulturellen Erziehung in Europa* (Frankfurt: Diesterweg, 1992), 13. Remarkably, Martin Heidegger also started an inquiry into the meaning of this keyword in relation to man’s dwelling on earth. The German verb *wohnen* (living or dwelling) is etymologically related to the word *wunian*, which also refers to a state of being content (*zufrieden*), at peace (*zum Frieden gebracht*), and to remaining in that particular state (*in ihm bleiben*). When one is in a peaceful and happy state, Heidegger adds with a short reference to the etymological kinship between the words *Friede* (peace) and *fry* (free), one is protected against damage and against menace (*bewahrt vor Schaden und Bedrohung*). Heidegger, “Bauen, Wohnen, Denken”, 143.

immoral. Yet he is regarded as a righteous man and a sound believer by Jews and Christians. But the fact that Lot has been called a prophet, i.e. an example of spiritual rectitude, that, we might say, is a downright shame. How could it be that such a hypocrite person has gone down in Islamic history as a prophet of God? The answer lies in the omission of certain segments in the Quranic text, which enables us to demonstrate the significance of the protagonist's choice between overt sin and sheer hypocrisy.

Bearing in mind this sequence, we can assume that the choice of the protagonist to walk forward in the way of God was never one between impurity and purity. When he forced himself to make the choice between a Western and an Islamic lifestyle, he had indubitably taken the obscene obverse that sustains conservative Islamism into account. Quite frequently he pours scorn on the Islamic authoritative figure *par excellence*, the Imam (DVZ, 128-130), and on the precepts of the religion (DVZ, 131). No wonder that the young man, unashamedly, admits that his return to his roots is nothing but a sham (*drogdaad*, DVZ, 127). Surely, he wanted to believe in the possibility of moral and spiritual rectitude; but what belief can there be when one is confronted, time and time again, with the contamination of the pure by the impure (DVZ 123-124)? We must conclude that the return to his so-called roots, merely was a consequence of sexual inquisitiveness: "I was anxious to know more about the sexual behavior of Moroccan girls" (DVZ, 128).

This anxiousness brings us to the opposite dimension on the X-axis: *the Other*. The French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas has taught us that the Other needs to differ radically from the Self (to be rightfully called the Other. According to him, we have already grown accustomed to the idea that an attention shift (from the Self to the Other) is needed. Unfortunately, this attention shift has hitherto only led to a consolidation of the primate of Selfhood.³⁵ It appears that we have only opened up to others with whom we already shared a strong bond. Levinas stresses that we could even say that they do not even belong to the dimension of the Other, but mainly to that of the Self – since they consolidate our patterns of thinking and behavior.³⁶ This is why he invites us to abandon every conceptualization of the Other and open up a(n empty) space for *radical* Alterity. The present article does not avoid such conceptualizations, since the Other is never presented as absolutely unfathomable. Levinas's remarks remain useful, given that they make us aware, once more, of the fact that Otherness depends on its difference to the Self. What is striking in Bouazza's text is that the reader is confronted with some disturbing and distorting descriptions. Initially, one expects to read about the *homecoming* of the character to which the title refers. However, when the prodigal son is embraced by his parents, the reader becomes tangibly aware of the rift that separates the young man from his parents and from the culture that is likely to be called his own. His mother could *no longer* be the cause of an Oedipus complex (DVZ, 128) and his father was *no longer* the man who had initiated him, in a godless way, into the sexual preferences for the opposite sex (DVZ, 123). To back this thesis, we can refer to passages in which the protagonist blatantly pours scorn on the appalling habits of the Iman (sexual behavior, eating habits) (DVZ, 128-130), he ridicules the fact that his life partner (to be) is named "Fattúma bint Fátima bint Futayma bint Fatáma" (DVZ, 128, 132) and that she is dressed according to the Islamic tradition. In relation to the Islamic dress code, the protagonist states:

³⁵ Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre nous. Essais sur le penser-à-l'autre* (Paris : Grasset, 1991), 13-23.

³⁶ Levinas, *Entre nous*, 121-127.

ik kon mijzelf er niet van weerhouden te denken dat de barmhartige islam het levend begraven van meisjes alleen maar verbood om ze in plaats daarvan onder textiel te begraven (p. 131)

[it could not help thinking that live burial of young women had only been prohibited by good old Islam to stimulate vestimentary burying]

As far as the dimension of the Other is concerned, we are inclined to say that there is a reverse logic of reason at work. But if Hafid Bouazza has followed this logic to the end, we must also expect that the characters who are thought to be the “others” in this story can be conceived as elements that play a paramount role in the formation and consolidation of the realm of the Self. In the first two pages of the story, when the first and most important “antagonist”, the aforementioned Mirianna, is introduced, we already notice that this is, in effect, the case. From the start, the protagonist admits that, before turning his back to his reckless life, he had been an open book to his concubine (DVZ, 122). With constant dedication, she had always comforted him when he was moaning over the lack of peace and tranquility in his life (DVZ, 122). She had probably even anticipated his plan to pack his bags and return to his childhood home. Still, in spite of the fact that he would eventually abandon her, she stood by him, for she understood his suffering. There was more love and understanding between them than he ever dared to admit. For this very reason, the young man also blatantly confesses that he had only managed to flee from the physical relationship with Mirianna; mentally, he remains fully attached to her (127). The urge to return to his concubine will remain constant throughout the story, and is exemplified in a few sentences. The most exemplary would be: “Het afscheid van mijn wonderland was pijnlijk” [It was painful to take leave of my wonderland] (DVZ, 126). But why does he leave this wonderland? It stands to reason that what he leaves behind is nothing more than a safe haven. In spite of her “repelling” background, Mirianna, evokes a feeling of belonging. More than any other character in the story, she had defined and continues to define the contours of the Self; his longing for her – as Heidegger would say – had been a sort of “homesickness”.

The *World* the protagonist has come to call his own can be perceived as an amalgam of habits and things that are usually condemned and frequently censored in order to procure an illusion of purity (of Selfhood or Totality).³⁷ What really stands out in the story is the overt glorification of physicality, of sexual excesses, which is exemplified by the many colorful references to the intercourse between the protagonist and Mirianna, in opposition to the lack of sex in the days following his return to his childhood home:

Ik had haar achtergelaten in bed, nadat zij de nastroom van onze routineuze spasmen had afgeveegd en zich tegen mij aan had willen drukken. (DVZ, 121)

[I left her when she was lying in bed, after she had wiped away the fluids of our customary spasms and after she had tried to press herself against me.]

Het was vreemd wakker te worden zonder de ochtendwellust van Mirianna naast mij. Het was moeilijk nuchter te slapen en zonder bevrediging in de lendenen. (DVZ, 127)

[I found it strange to wake up in the morning without Mirianna’s friskiness at my side. It was hard to fall asleep sober and without satisfaction in my loins.]

³⁷ Here, we are indebted to the writings of George Bataille on “heterology”. The French author was one of the first to defend the study of “the waste products of intellectual appropriation” (such as trash, vermin, erotically cathected objects/acts...). Cf. George Bataille, “The Use-value of D.A.F. Sade (an open letter to my current comrades), trans. Allan Stoekl, in *Sade and the Narrative of Transgression*, ed. David Allison et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2006), 16-32.

In the second example, the reminiscence of the heydays of sexual libertinism, and the feeling of estrangement (*vreemd*) that has crept into the story, suggest that the world of excesses he has come to call his own in none other than the Western world!

However, there is a nuance here. For the glorification of sex reaches its absolute apogee in the final pages of the story, in the description of “the night of the entry”. How could it be that the reference to sexuality reaches its climax in a sequence where the protagonist has submitted himself humbly to the will of his parents (who embody Islamic culture)? To provide an answer, we must recall the reasons why our young man has said goodbye to his life in the Dutch capital: he abandoned his concubine because he had grown tired of the sexual behavior of the Dutch (DVZ, 125) and because he was desperate for a “mythical injection” in his life (124). Now that we have realized that “De verloren zoon” circulates entirely around sex, we can try to combine these two (different) reasons and try to merge them into one striking reason. More than in need of a true injection of faith (in God), the prodigal son is craving for some spirituality, some mystery in his sex life (DVZ, 131).

We believe that the protagonist’s turn toward Islamic culture would have been unthinkable, had this somewhat rigid culture not been sustained by an obscene, seemingly heterogeneous, sexually charged supplement. For the latent existence of this particular supplement allows our protagonist to “find *himself*” in the (cultural) Other. Its existence, clearly a sign of the Self inhabiting the Other, is the *conditio sine qua non* of his reconciliation with Islamic faith.

However, this does not imply that this story is a strict coming-of-age story in which the protagonist embraces every facet of his new life. Until the very last page, we are confronted with the uncanniness of Islamic culture. We clearly see that in the analysis of the dimension of the *Word*. As we have seen, the protagonist has used words like “strange” (DVZ, 127) and “not familiar” (DVZ, 131) to refer to his new life. This experience of estrangement becomes even more manifest in the sequence where he pours scorn on his own mother, a Dutch woman converted to Islam. She was brainwashed by her new faith, had become a bigot who condemned everything that was foreign to Islamic culture. In the eyes of her son, she had taken “a step back in evolution” (DVZ, 123). No wonder that her new name was Maimuna, “a jolly little nickname for an ape” (DVZ, 123). These contemptuous remarks about Islam and the Arabic language abound in the text. Not without a sense of humor, the protagonist cites some Arabic expressions. Earlier on we have already encountered the ambiguous expression “the night of the entry” (DVZ, 130).

It seems that the references to Selfhood and at-homeness have been pinned down quite easily. All these references seem to indicate that the protagonist of the story feels more at home in Western culture. This sense of at-homeness is provided by the presence of his Dutch concubine, Mirianna. It is of little surprise that she is of the opposite sex. The reason why the young man identifies so strongly with Western culture is because it is seen as a den of debauchery. Mirianna epitomizes these repellent yet alluring excesses of this culture (DVZ, 125). However, we are reminded of the fact that there is no such thing as full and definite identification with a culture. At the end of the story, the protagonist plunges into Islamic culture and hopes to merge with it, only to rediscover the mythical dimension in the (sexual) excesses he had committed. This initiative, the desired identification is to be described as an attempt to *decenter* the Self. In the next

section, it is up to us to verify whether these particular identifications are retained in the French translation of “De verloren zoon”.

Being at-Home in Translation: “Le fils prodigue”

When casting a first, inquisitive glance at the French translation, “Le fils prodigue”³⁸, the reader familiar with the source text is immediately struck by the lexical richness of the text. Almost immediately, we have the impression that Daniel Cunin, the translator, has attempted to push and extend the boundaries of his mother tongue in the target text, just like Hafid Bouazza did in the source text. This first intuition normally proves to be very valuable to translation studies scholars. For instance, we can recall Gideon Toury’s research apropos translation laws. A well-known general translation law, observed especially in literary translations, is that of growing standardization. What we generally see in the translation of literature is that “textemes” that can be encountered in source text are “converted into repertoremes” in the target texts.³⁹ This means that certain signs that carry only a textual function are replaced in the target text by a sign that is already a part of an institutionalized repertoire. Supposedly, this law is “enacted”, be it consciously or not, and “sustained” because translators tend, on the whole, to play it safe. By doing so, translations are generally said to “flatten” the literary text stylistically. This, of course, affects the signification of the literary text, since the tensions and ambiguities encountered in the source texts are ignored and discarded in the translated text. In our target text, we note that Daniel Cunin has seldom resorted to prototypical idiomatic distribution, and made a true effort to install the idiosyncrasies of the sources text in his own translation. We cite but two exemplary sentences:

Zij meende zichzelf verheven boven haar landgenotes, die in Amsterdam met gastvrije schoten op mannen zoals ik wachtten. (DVZ, 123)

Elle croyait être au-dessus de ces compatriotes qui, à Amsterdam, attendaient les hommes de mon genre en proposant leurs cuisses accueillantes. (TT, 103)

[She thought herself superior to her female compatriots, who waited for men like me in Amsterdam with hospitable laps.]

[H]et was zeer opwindend om kledingstuk voor kledingstuk af te pellen. (DVZ, 131)

[J]’étais très excité à l’idée de la peler habit après habit. (TT, 110).

[The idea of peeling her cloth by cloth excited me very much.]

At times, the reader remains under the impression that the translator has made an attempt to emphasize a thematic layer in the source text. For instance, we note that Cunin has used the word *plaisir* (pleasure) in relation to the meal the protagonist is offered by his parents, shortly after returning home (TT, 106). This particular word can have a clear sexual connotation in French. In the source text, this potential reference to sexuality seems absent, since the protagonist uses the word *genoegen* (delight) to describe the effect the meal has on him (DVZ, 126). This additional layer in the target text seems fully justified when we take a close look at the description of the wedding

³⁸ Hafid Bouazza *Les pieds d’Abdullah*, trans. Daniel Cunin (Trouville-sur-Mer : Le Reflet, 2003). In case of reference to this short story, page numbers are also put in parenthesis, along with the abbreviation TT (target text).

³⁹ Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (Amsterdam-Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1995), 267-268).

ceremony. When describing the ceremony, the protagonist has only taken the time to discuss the Imams prayers, the main dishes and the beginning of “the night of the entry” (DVZ, 128-132). What we must not overlook here, is that these seemingly separate events tend to overlap continuously in expressions that overtly reinforce the connection between sex and food: the protagonist refers to the final course by calling it “an orgy of sweetness” (DVZ, 130), he uses the metaphor of “peeling” (a fruit) to touch on the subject of foreplay in the Islamic world (DVZ, 131) and he seems very interested in the conditions the “Venus shell” of his bride will impose (DVZ, 131). However, the impression that Cunin has (only) reinforced some lexical networks in the text is dispelled when we compare the discussion of the wedding ceremony in the original text and the translation. Cunin has clearly failed to preserve the orgiastic dimension in the dinner sequence, as well as the full gastronomic dimension while translating the foreplay sequence: the “orgy of sweetness” has simply become a *véritable friandise* (a real sweetmeat, TT, 130) and the “Venus shell” is blatantly turned into a *mont de Vénus* (literally: Mount Venus), the French common name for the *mons pubis* (TT, 131). These shifts seriously affect the consistency of the text; the specific window on the world that is offered by the protagonist becomes distorted.

An equally important distortion is observed where the protagonist depicts the words of his mother. This kind, but simple-minded character, warns her son that he is about to squander his youth indulging in carnal pleasures with loose Dutch rejects. She tries to convince him to return to his childhood home by stating that she will find him a bride, “een meisje van je eigen klei en land en geloof” (“a girl of your own soil and homeland and faith”) (DVZ, 122). In her study entirely dedicated to the works of Hafid Bouazza, Henriëtte Louwse comments that this subordinate clause is quite significant; for here it becomes manifest that the Selfhood of the son, as well as that of herself is strongly anchored in the Western world – in spite of her contempt for the inhabitants of this world. The bride the mother aims to find is not simply of their own *soil*; literally she must be of their own “clay” – and clay, Louwse adds, “is not a geological feature of Morocco”.⁴⁰ In the French translation, this “unconscious and [...] damaging admission” to her native culture is entirely omitted. Daniel Cunin has opted for the term “milieu”, thereby leaving the soil thematically untouched (TT, 102).

These alterations have a serious effect on the grammatical Self of the Other that is represented in the target text. The staging of the (almost literal) *roots* (in Western clay) of the protagonist is ignored in the French version. This had led to the obfuscation of the reason for the shift from Western culture to Islamic culture is not to be sought in a quest for origins. The quest is merely a pretext: what the protagonist truly yearns for is a rediscovery of sexuality. This reasoning is easily sustained by the intertext. First, we must stress that the parable of the “Prodigal Son” is first told by the founding father of *Western* culture (Jesus Christ): it is rooted in Western soil. The parable of the New Testament presents the theme of repentance, but it also focuses on the return to the origins. After the organization of countless bacchanals, wasting his part of the inheritance, the prodigal son, now financially ruined, returns home. What is startling, however, is that his father welcomes his son without even finding fault with him for wasting a fortune. In fact, the father throws a feast. Paradoxically, the feast – first a negatively charged symbol – is turned into a symbol of heavenly redemption. This same paradox is encountered in Bouazza’s short story, in which the (ever-abundant) presence

⁴⁰ Henriëtte Louwse, *Homeless Entertainment. On Hafid Bouazza’s Literary Writing* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), 116.

of excesses in Amsterdam troubles the protagonist's mind heavily. Logically, he decides to turn his back on these excesses by returning home. The fact that he is homeward bound, however, does not imply that his peace of mind will be restored through abstinence. Paradoxically, redemption can only be found in sexuality (the evil) itself – this is why the night of the entry is foregrounded. At this point, we can understand more readily, why the relinquishing of the intricate nexus between food and sexuality in “Le fils prodigue” can never be overestimated; the lexical linkage reminds us of the presence of an intertext.

An-Other as One-Self

The ethico-translational debate has always revolved around the possibility of representing the Other in the realm of the Self. However, the discussion regarding the specific nature of the key terms in this debate (*das Fremde* and *das Eigene*) has been muted for centuries as a result of the strident arm struggle between “sourcerers” and targeteers, who both claimed to provide a fitting solution for the central problem in translation.⁴¹ The Other/Foreign and the Self/Same seemed destined to remain deprived of substance. Admitted, many theorists, starting with Schleiermacher, have hinted at the idea that this Other that was to be welcomed, was nothing other than the *oeuvre* (the original work of art) itself. However, instead of paying attention to the *oeuvre*, they turned the language and the culture (that the *oeuvre* is embedded in) into their focal point. For this reason, we have decided to sparkle the debate on the welcoming of the Other once more, this time focusing on the textual constitution of the Other Self and the Self.

The conclusions that we can tackle, after our grammatical analyses of Bouazza's “De verloren zoon” and its French translation, are of a triple nature. It is wise to first discuss the conclusion drawn from the analysis of the target text. It appears that the translator who at first glance had clearly attempted to and succeeded in following the source text as closely as possible in terms of semantics and style and who has undoubtedly and swiftly avoided the dangers it was likely to incur – the dangers of normalization and explicitation –, thereby following the instructions of many proponents of “non ethnocentric” translation, has still restructured the grammatical image of the Self of the Other in “De verloren zoon”. In other words, the Self of the Other has been transformed in the realm of the Self (i.e. the French target text). How can this transformation be accounted for? To answer, this question, we have to evoke the synthetic image of at-homeness generated by the source text. As mentioned, we have opted for an analysis of a short story written by a migrant author. Migrant authors are said to undermine the notions of Selfhood and Otherness, since they tend to *inhabit* an in-between space⁴² – thereby defying nearly all tenets in translational ethics. However, contrary to general expectations, our textual analysis showed that this notion of *in-betweenness*, coined by *cultural* theorists (mind the use of words), was not useful to us here, since the Self of the source text was deeply rooted in Western (European) culture. Yet, what the source text analysis also revealed, was that it would also be wrong to assert a full attachment of the textual Self to Western culture, provided that the

⁴¹ Cf. Jean-René Admiral, “Sourciers et ciblistes”, *Revue d'esthétique* 12 (1986): 33-42.

⁴² Cf. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Routledge: London, 1994).

story evolves thematically around the rejection of this app(e)alling culture of excesses. To conclude, we might say that (linguistic and) cultural notions of Selfhood are undermined in “De verloren zoon”. However, this undermining was not the result, of a fusion of cultural identities; in fact, and this is paramount, it must be perceived here as a textual effect.

In short, our grammatical analysis of “De verloren zoon” has shown that the ideal notions of Selfhood and Otherness, of the Same and the Foreign, are constantly *textually* deconstructed, redefined. We must conclude that this one case-study provides us with sufficient arguments to claim that, in order to capture the Other (-to-be-translated), we must abandon the abstract and the strictly cultural approach to translation, and pay close attention to the purely textual presentation of this Other. Hopefully, our grammatical model, despite the fact that it probably generates partial information, can stimulate or even secure the effectuation of this shift.

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Etica translațională și gramatizarea faptului „de-a-fi-acasă”. O analiză gramaticală a povestirii lui Bouazza „Fiul Risipitor” și traducerea franceză a acesteia

Dezbaterile etico-translaționale circulă neîncetat în jurul a două noțiuni: Sinele și Celălalt. Acest fapt nu ne surprinde, având în vedere realitatea că traducătorul este deseori descris drept mediator, a cărui responsabilitate constă în a trece un text, desprins dintr-o cultură străină, nu doar într-o altă limbă, ci și într-un cadru cultural nou. Însă, pentru ca Sinele și Celălalt să nu rămână niște simplii termeni abstracți, am elaborat o schemă, bazată pe scrierile lui Bernard Stiegler și Martin Heidegger, care ne permite să performăm, ceea ce am numit în acest articol analiza gramaticală a conceptului „de-a-fi-acasă”. Această analiză ne va oferi suficiente motive pentru a determina Sinele Altuia - în cazul nostru textul ce urmează a fi tradus. Această determinare se va dovedi utilă când comparăm textul sursă cu textul țintă. Aici, vom compara noțiunile sinelui, constituite gramatical în povestirea „De verloren zoon” (Fiul risipitor), scrisă de Hafid Bouazza, autor marocano-olandez care a devenit un scriitor influent și aclamat de critica literară, și traducerea franceză a acestei povestiri în versiunea lui Daniel Cunin, intitulată „Le fils prodigue”.