

Translating Across Cultures: The Case of I.L. Caragiale's *Abu Hassan*

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Abstract

The reason why I decided to choose Ion Luca Caragiale's *Abu Hassan* as the topic of investigation for my MA dissertation is not difficult to understand or to explain from a cultural, as well as a translation related point of view. The story of Abu Hassan, everybody knows, comes from the famous *Arabian Nights* (Scheherazade's 1001 nights of storytelling in order to save her own life) and as such was written in Arabic. Ion Luca Caragiale wrote a version of Abu Hassan in Romanian. Using Caragiale's text I attempted to translate it into English and comment on translation issues of a cultural nature. I regard this as an experiment which has far reaching cultural implications as three cultural perspectives are involved, all referring to the translator himself.

To explain: as a translator I have been exposed to the three cultures at stake in the process of translation. I come from Iraq where I was born and raised, I came to Romania where I was exposed to the Romanian culture and language and I became a student in a MA programme of translation studies focusing on English and Romanian. Even though subjectivity will influence greatly my study, I view this as a strength, not as a weakness, especially when it comes to my familiarity with the Arabic culture and civilization but also when it comes to my getting acquainted with the English culture as well as the Romanian culture, in the process of learning these languages.