

position to appreciate such stylistic nuances. Certainly the opposite is suggested by the pages in *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution* (pp. 132-133) where he finds it appropriate to place in the mouth of the Imam--in an imaginary dialogue with Kasravi--expressions such as "great!" and "big deal."

When it comes to the reviewing of a translation (not to mention other and more important tasks of scholarship) fashionable flimflam about "the pragmatics of speech" and "the problems of transmission" is no substitute for a sound command of the language (or languages) involved. The editors of *Iranian Studies* might do well to bear this in mind if they wish to salvage anything of the scholarly potential of their journal.

Hamid Algar

To the Editor:

Mr. Algar does himself no service in his "rebuttal," for he merely confirms all the primary points of my review. By omitting, as he admits, such information as the phrase "gerye-ye hozzar," he has reduced the vitality and accessibility of the translation. This is a general problem for translations, not only for this particular one. I tried to point out a variety of devices which translators might use to help in the process of *cultural* as well as *literal* translations. This includes comparison of variant texts (the Persian and Arabic versions in this case, but also and more importantly the original tapes of the spoken delivery), which Algar only partially and belatedly acknowledges in his "rebuttal."

Many readers of this journal will know enough Persian and Arabic, and certainly English, to judge for themselves whether my review has done Mr. Algar's literal translation any injustice. They will, as well, be able to read my book and see how Mr. Algar has fabricated his references to it.

(The reference to p. 291 is not a definition; the one to pp. 132-33 is not a verbatim translation; a full description of *rawzeh* is provided with illustrative texts, not a lone gloss.)

The tapes of Khomeini's delivery do indeed have him saying that usually one ends with the *rawzeh*, but he will begin with it. Whether or not this sentence is included in Algar's texts, the *rawzeh* form is very clear: the comparison of the fourteen-year-old *talabeh* Yunes with Ali Asghar at Karbala, and it is for this reason that four times "*gerye-ye hozzar*." The point here is that the Persian text is not, as Algar claims in his "rebuttal," the original and that problems of transmission are indeed crucial. (The first Persian texts were distributed in polycopy form, and only later were they edited with additions and published; they have subsequently been re-edited.)

The point of my comparisons between the JPRS and Algar translations is that they are very similar: Algar's is not the great improvement he claimed; this, he now seems at pains to stress himself. The points of difference about the *fuqaha* and Muslim domination of the state were cited not because I alleged false translation on Algar's part, but because they were the only potential substantive differences on issues about which there was considerable interpretive debate during the course of the revolution. I certainly agree, for instance, that Iranians should have known enough about Khomeini not to trust his and his defenders' obfuscations about his political intentions. It remains an interesting historical fact, however, that his defenders (including the disseminators of the Arabic translation), his (deluded?) allies like Bazargan, and Khomeini himself in Paris gave people to understand that he was not calling for the *faqih* to become official head of state but only a supervisor, and that clerics should not hold political office. Given this, as well as the prior availability to English readers of the JPRS version, a translator might have had (and a reviewer certainly has) an obligation to comment on the differences. Likewise, I don't think Algar could argue that the "infidel" clause from the JPRS/Arabic version falsifies the intent of Khomeini's discourse: There is enough support for the subordination of non-Muslims (and now even non-*maktabi* Muslims) elsewhere in this text and other statements by Khomeini. That the

JPRS/Arabic text is stronger here is at least an interesting (informative?) clue to the general discourse in which Khomeini and his followers are engaged. At issue, again, is not literal translation, but transmittal of the discourse within which a particular textual formulation is but a fragment, particularly where weighted with political implication.

As to the word *hakem*, it does indeed appear on p. 179 of the Persian texts (even the most recent and re-edited ones), as does the word *zamandar*. Of the two words, *hakem* is key to a passage (and a series of lectures) which contrasts unjust and just rulers. The point here is that key words need to be pointed out and explained: *hakem* does not have the same resonance, range of meaning, or implication (Saussure's "valeur") as the English word "ruler." (Only in a secular society, incidentally, would it make a difference to distinguish between *hakem-e shar'* and *hakem-e 'urf*.) As to the passage on learning, this was one of the examples I cited where Algar's translation is superior to the JPRS version: that Algar should object is only a mark of the perversity and mischief that pervades his "rebuttal." I did say the translation here would have been enhanced for the general English reader if the doctrinal point at issue had been pointed out (something which would be obvious to the Persian reader but not to the ordinary English reader).

In sum, the challenge of translation is never merely language skill. Attention to the pragmatics of speech, the problems of transmission and of political implication could have brought these texts more fully alive for the English reader and could have generated a real feel for the Iranian revolution. Few translations live up to such challenge. It is to the nature of the challenge I wished to draw attention.

Michael M. J. Fischer