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## **TRANSLATION AS CREATIVE WRITING**

Translation has a very long history, particularly in Iraq, where it has been practiced for thousands of years. Archeologists have found translations in many languages of the epic of Gilgamesh and the code of Hammurabi. By the fifteenth century, Arabs knew the art of translation widely and very well. They had two primary methods of translation: the way of Ibn Naima Al-Himsy, the first translator, which we can call 'literal translation', has the translator interpreting the text word by word. The second way, that is translating the meaning, was pioneered by the two most important translators at that time, Al-Batreeq and his son Yehya Ibn Al-Batreeq, who in that manner translated the most important Greek books in philosophy and medicine into Arabic during the golden age of Islamic civilization.

If literary logic leads us to take the second way, I guess we need a third way in order to be able to translate both the meaning and form of literature. This third way should concern itself with conveying what is beyond the surface structure of the text, which is the text in its whole expressive style and its ability to convey the vision of the author. This means that the translator stands in front of the challenge of a language against another language. Often, the translated text becomes confused because it lacks coherence. Sometimes the uncreative translator misses the underlying rhythm of a text. Of course, the translator needs to have a special sense of the text, so that he can convey that rhythm in a professional and charming style, at once very loyal to the foreign text and at the same time creating a new text. In this sense I support here the idea that sees the translator as the second creator of the literary text. This second creator scrutinizes his message and language which should take its active and more impressive role, if we agree that the translated text is a creative work and the language here is not only a means but also a target.

Concerning the translation of poetry, this may need, in my opinion a fourth way. And I see this way as more purely artistic. It may require poetic sensibility and intuition, more than an adherence to the rules. For this reason it is difficult to imagine that anyone can translate poetry, except the one who has the talent of creating poetry himself, because translating poetry is nearly impossible, as the linguist Jacobson said. What is possible is to rewrite the text and the most important is the effect that the text has on the reader when there is no alienation between him and the text. From that idea comes what we can call the creative voice of the translator, as well as his effective role.

Some theorists, like Benjamin, see that translation goes beyond the enrichment of the target language and culture, goes beyond the borders of renewing the original text, and it even goes beyond the limits of expressing the interrelationships among languages, to become an introduction to an international language. That means translation provides an advanced cultural incubator for human understanding on the base of comprehending and never ignoring the Other.

Some people argue that the poet might be affected by his translations of poetry, and begin to imitate that foreign style. However, I think of the translation process as a deep and close reading of the foreign text;

furthermore, it is a good opportunity to analyze and deconstruct this text in order to discover its creative and artistic secrets and rebuild it again in another language. This process of reading and rebuilding can play a positive cultural role, and the poet who works on translations shouldn't be afraid of any negative effects on his style and theory of writing poetry. On the contrary, I think translating poetry can polish a writer's poetic experiences through a very close acquaintance with those of the Other, especially if he is wary and employs them effectively in his writing. I think that the poet-translator is luckier than other poets because he is able to grow very close to texts, and feel their charm as he translates them. In my experience I spent a very long time reading and then translating the work of many English and American poets, and learned much about their skills in all their transformations. As a result that didn't negatively affect my poetic orientations or my own writing style.

From another corner I see translation as a way to work creatively during the temporary absence, which might be long or short, of the ability to write poetry, which of course depends on the circumstances around my mood.

I presume that there is a secret or a magic relationship between myself and the poetic text that I intend to translate. This relationship might not happen with the other poems of the same poet because there are texts that won't let you catch them whatever you try, and if you force yourself to translate them, the birth will be a damaged creation. So, provoked by the essay of the brilliant critic P. R. King, I found myself drawn to Ted Hughes and not Philip Larkin, as the poetic world of Ted Hughes was closer to my mindset. I saw myself translating his work as if I were writing my own poems, though the world of Hughes is very distinct from my own, and his poetic style is unique, especially in his explorations of wildlife. Inevitably there must be a special sensitivity that attracts the poet to translate a specific other poet, and this sensitivity is embodied in the special style or use of the language and ideas in which the foreign poet deals with the subjects, words, images, metaphors and all the tools that help him to create his poetic vision.