
TRANSLATION METHODOLOGIES: RE-CREATIVE DYNAMICS IN POETIC TRANSLATION

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Abstract: Translation is a difficult task especially when the subject happens to be poetry. It is popularly believed what survives after translation is the essence of poetry. An ideal situation for the translator is a balanced and intermediate posture where he is faithful as the linguistic syntactic, semantic and structural levels. He creates a framework of references and connections for proper appreciation of the original in the Target Language (TL). Sometimes the situation demands him to use simple words to build up a structure of complex emotions. The Present paper titled: "Translation Methodologies: Re-creative Dynamics and poetic translation with reference to recent movement poetry translation" focuses on the relations of mutual sustenance and nourishment of both the languages. The feel and the worth of the poem seem to be the sole criterion of its translation exposure. The exposure to literatures outside of American and British literatures should be considered an essential feature of any college or university literature program. Yet, works from other languages and countries have to be read in translation in most instances, since very few people will be in a position to read fluently more than one foreign language.

Keywords: poetry translation, linguistic, semantic, structural, dynamics of translation, SL and TL.

Introduction: Each language is a way of interpreting the world. The involvement of Translator in the literary imagination expands our own view of the world. He introduces us to the various perspectives with which situations and emotional states can be interpreted and experienced. To enter the exoticness of other languages, we have to be willing to open ourselves to the realization that people from other countries perceive and understand the world through the window of their own language. Natural phenomena are the same in different cultures, yet the perceptions are different from language to language. The Asian moon is not very different in appearance from the American moon. However, the way that the moon has been interpreted and transplanted into metaphorical images greatly changes from one nation to the other. In German, the moon is masculine (der Mond), in French it is feminine (la lune), the sun is masculine in French (le sol) and feminine in German (die Sonne). These words have taken on unique affinities in the writings of novelists and poets in the respective languages throughout centuries.

Through the process of reading, the reader is transplanted into the atmosphere of a new situation that establishes the possibility of diverse realities rather than one clearly defined reality. Whenever we are confronted with a contemporary text or one from previous centuries, readers have to translate the textual situations into their own sensibility. Readers are left with various options that they can interpret within the context of that atmosphere. The formulation allows for the reader's imaginative interpretive approach to emerge within the context of a literary work. Each reader has to establish an interpretive perspective in order to make an entrance into a fictional and poetic work possible.

For a moment, it will be helpful to contemplate on the nature of words. The Translation process has to start with the assumption that each word reflects an inherent uncertainty, both as an isolated phenomenon and as a semiotic possibility of a sentence, a paragraph, or the context of the entire work. The rediscovery of that uncertainty in each word constitutes the initial attitude that the reader has to bring to the text. Translation becomes the making of meaning and not the description of already-fixed meanings. The imaginative text does not offer readers a new comfortable reality but rather places them between several realities among which they have to choose in order to arrive at a meaningful and convincing interpretation. Multiple layers of interrelationships are active between "words": sound, meaning, cultural heritage, contextual placement, they all contribute to the effectiveness and power of the word, which changes connotations as it is linked to other words in the structure of sentences and paragraphs.

The main function of translation must be not only to reconnect the reader with the text but also to make the reader experience the text. I feel that the methodologies derived from the art and craft of translation can revitalize the act of reading. They also engage the reader in a meaningful and fulfilling interpretation of a literary text. Reading activates a constant effort of transplanting the situations encountered in a work into the sensibility of the respective reader. Methods have to be developed that make that transplantation possible. As a first step in that direction, I quote English to English translation of the Francis Bacon essay, "Of Studies." History tells us that Bacon's essays had a very powerful impact when they were first published. To the contemporary

reader, these essays appear somewhat foreign. However, a translation into contemporary American English will bring the reader closer to the ideas and the structure of an essay like "Of Studies."

STUDIES serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability.

Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best from those that are learned. (Of Studies – 1625, OUP, 1985)

The research begins with the investigation of the underlined words as to their etymological and philological background. The first tool to be used is the Oxford English Dictionary, which is an indispensable tool for reading and deciphering English texts of the past. Words are not only explained by themselves but also documented with specific examples from various works written around the same time.

Using the dictionary definitions for the word "ability," for example might not necessarily provide us with a totally intelligible meaning for the way the word is used in this line. Yet, the various choices given in the dictionary generate in the reader ways of thinking about the text that otherwise would not have happened. Here are some definitions given for "ability" in the Oxford Dictionary: suitability, fitness, aptitude, faculty, capacity, bodily power, strength, wealth, talent, cleverness, mental power or capacity. The gamut of associations could probably be extended. Somewhere in between all of these definitions lies the meaning of "ability" that the translators must decipher in their act of interpretation.

Once the various semantic possibilities for these words have been established, the next step will be the translation of these sentences into contemporary American English to demonstrate the multiple possibilities of interpretation and translation. A major insight can be gained from this exercise. There is no such thing as the only definitive interpretation or translation of a text. The acquisition of knowledge serves for pleasure, eloquence, and aptitude. Its main use for pleasure is in private affairs; for eloquence is in conversation and discussion; and for aptitude is in a good attitude and wise decision-making in daily affairs. The private nature of the acquisition of knowledge brings us pleasure. Through learning our ability in reasoning and communication is

strengthened; we become better judges of our daily affairs. Education provides satisfaction, enhancement, and aptitude. The chief uses of education are for personal pleasure and satisfaction, for the expression of ideas, and for ability, which is judged by those that are members of the profession.

These examples show the specific interpretive perspectives that each reader as translator has pursued. The choices reflect the multiplicity of possible approaches that can be generated by Bacon's essay. Obviously, to judge the quality or the non-quality of each transformation is not an issue at this point. Students begin to realize that no two readers will see the same things in a text and that each reading will be slightly different from the previous one. The most important aspect of any interpretive approach must be seen in the ability to notice the details in each paragraph and how these details are related to the context of a text. It creates an interest in thinking through a text.

Ilse Aichinger, the Austrian short story writer, novelist, and poet, has written one of the most memorable and exciting short stories in the 20th century, "The Bound Man" (*Der Gefesselte*), a story that should be included in any world literature course. First, attention is being paid to the key words that are repeated throughout the story; in this case the two key words are "rope" and "play," which are the structuring principles of the entire story. After a first reading of the story, a second reading is initiated that isolates the moment each time the words "rope" and "play" are repeated. In this particular story, the horizontal reading of these words reveals that the writer has slightly modified each repetition and the situation within which the words reappear. At the beginning of the story, we find a man who wakes up and finds himself bound by a rope. Aichinger introduces us to various perceptions of the rope in the first paragraph of the story: "A thick rope cut into his arms" ... "a single length of rope was tied round his ankles," ... and "he discovered that the rope allowed his legs some free play." Through these repetitions, the writer has carefully visualized the "rope" in a slightly different position each time: first the rope is cutting into his arms, then the rope is tied around the ankles, and then the rope is loose enough to provide the man with some kind of "play," the introduction of the second most important word in the story. The second time "play" appears, the sentence reads: "His chances all lay in the amount of free play allowed him by the rope." To isolate the repetition of "play" and "rope" with all their variations gives the reader an idea of how the story is actually constructed.

In the case of Aichinger's story, the reader can rapidly search the electronic version of "The Bound Man" and find those moments in the text when certain words,

images, metaphors, and expressions have been repeated. This method of horizontal reading allows the reader to witness how a particular word or image has been expanded by the author throughout a story, a novel, or a poem. Once a story has been taken apart on these multiple levels, the reader will gain a sense of how words, images, and situations interact in a given work. These methods are derived from the art and craft of translation. Reading from a translator's point of view represents a continuous process of opening up new possibilities of interactions and semantic associations. In the translation process, there are no definitive answers, only attempts at solutions in response to states of uncertainty generated by the interaction of the words' semantic fields and sounds.

The translator's model of approaching verbal texts develops the faculty of "associative thinking" in readers. Translators place themselves inside the word to think out its magnetic field, to uncover the streams that flow into the semantic fields of other words. As soon as a word is surrounded by other words, it begins to lose some of its clearly defined contours and generates new ways of thinking about the word. That process of visualization requires a constant activity from the reader and translator to see words in relation to others. Our attitude toward the word changes. Even though the word appears as a static sign on the page, the reader must recreate the internal directions of thinking and visualization that are active in words. I, the reader, have to uncover the direction of thinking that the author is pursuing. If a poet uses the word "stone," then the qualitative connotations are different from those of a leaf. In order to create a particular atmosphere or aesthetic experience within a given work, writers choose words that indicate a similar direction of thinking. To understand the complexity of a poem, the reader has

to move from a linear way of reading the poem to an associative reconstruction of those words and expressions that are linked by a similarity of what they suggest. The reader's mind has to be trained to continually engage in establishing associations within the visualization of situations in a given text.

Poems written in foreign languages should always be studied through the medium of multiple translations, which constitute an invaluable tool to increase that reader's comprehension of a given poem. Whenever several translations of a poem are available in English, the reader can identify those moments when translators have chosen different word equivalencies for an expression in the original language. It is in those gray zones, those moments of ambiguity of a poem, that the interpretive perspectives of the reader and translator are at work. The reader undertakes an increasingly stimulating interpretive approach to the poem through the various translations, since no one translation ultimately succeeds in transferring the entire poem from a foreign language into English. Each choice made by the translator with respect to a particular word enlarges the reader's understanding and experience of the poem. The actual poem, its possible meanings and aesthetic dimensions, resides somewhere between the solutions offered by each individual translator.

No reading of a poem can be more intense than that which proceeds through the study of multiple translations. A short look at several translations of "The Panther" by Rainer Maria Rilke should illuminate this interpretive process. The first step is the preparation of a "trot," a word-for-word correspondence. Ideally speaking, the discussion of poems written in a foreign language should begin with the preparation of a trot. I quote the first two lines of the Rilke poem in the form of a trot.

Der Panther (The Panther)

Sein	Blick	ist	vom	Vorübergehen	der Stäbe		
his	glance	is	of the	passing	of the bars		
so	Müd	geworden,	dass	er	nichts	mehr	hält.
so	Tired	made	that	it	nothing	no longer	holds

Here are several solutions by various translators:
 His gaze, from sweeping by the bars, has worn so thin,
 there's nothing more that it can hold. (John Felstiner)
 From seeing the bars, his seeing is so exhausted that it
 no longer holds anything anymore. (Robert Bly)
 His sight, from glancing back and forth across the bars,
 has grown so weary it catches nothing more. (James L. Dana)

His sight from ever gazing through the bars has grown
 so blunt that it sees nothing more. (C.F. MacIntyre)
 His vision from the passing of the bars is grown so weary
 that it holds no more. (M.D. Herter Norton)
 His vision, from the constantly passing bars,
 Has grown so weary that it cannot hold anything else. (Stephen Mitchell)
 The German word "Blick" has been rendered by the words gaze, seeing, sight, glance, and vision. No exact equivalent is available apparently in English to render

the full impact of the German word. The entire English words project a common ground of semantic connotations, but each word signals a series of associations that are different from the other. The activity of visualization contained in "glance" is different from that of "vision" and of the other equivalencies that the translators have chosen to capture the magnetic field of "Blick." What makes the translation of the word "Blick" so terribly difficult is the fact that it comprises as word-visualization both an outgoing and in-taking movement. The panther's "Blick" moves toward the outside world, but through the "Blick" he also stores what he sees. The "Blick" represents both the activity of seeing and the content of that seeing. None of the English equivalencies can recreate that double image. However, the study of these various translations of "Blick" imparts to the reader a sense of the complex interactions that surface in this word. The very fact that each translator has chosen a different word for "Blick" heightens the interpretive curiosity.

The comparison of the translations also reveals that Norton's and Mitchell's rendering of the first line is distinctly different from the others. They have placed the movement into the bars rather than into the eyes of the panther. They are the only ones who have chosen to transfer that nuance into their English versions. Without the presence of the other translations, the reader would probably not have noticed this intriguing poetic creation on Rilke's part. The study of a poem through the medium of various translations displays the complex associations of poetic thinking and induces the reader to ask questions about the nature of the poem that otherwise would not have been asked. Out of all these various interpretations, readers can then

formulate their own ways of seeing and interpreting the poem. This kind of reading offers an extraordinary richness of perceptions, a living inside the poem, which could rarely be reached by reading just one translation of a given poem. Multiple translations engage the reader in a continuous dialogue with the poem. Thus, the act of interpretation initiated by each translator changes our concept of what a text is: not a fixed entity but rather a dynamic environment in which readers find themselves.

The previously discussed techniques and approaches clearly indicate that the methodologies derived from the art and craft of translation change our attitude toward the interpretation of literary works. Translation by its very nature promotes dialogue between the text and the reader. The essence of translation thinking resides in the recognition that translation continuously builds bridges from the reader to the foreign text, as the foreignness is being translated into the sensibility of the reader. Therefore, translation should be considered a paradigm for the revitalization of the act of reading and interpretation, since a text comes to life through the visualization of the movement inherent in words and situations. Students and readers, who look at the works through the eye of a translator, recreate the complex layers interacting in a literary text, which leads to an experience of the text rather than a description of the text. The interpretation of novels and poems from the translator's point of view is renewed with each reading as the reader reassembles the details of a work in a slightly different way, which means that no two interpretations are exactly the same. Translation approaches teach us "how a text comes to mean."

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