



TRANSLATION AS LITERARY CRITICISM

By: *Khayitbaev Otakhon Shokirovich*

Occupation: *Lecturer in Mamun University*

E mail: khayitbayev_otaxon@mamunedu.uz

Phone number: +998996225999

Abstract: *Daniel Weissbort, one of the anthology's two editors, participated in "literary translation workshops" at Iowa University and elsewhere in the 1960s. These courses combined poetry and translation through attentive reading and creative writing to recreate each poem's uniqueness (somewhat in the spirit of the New Criticism). Such a quest is far from the "scholarly" goal of formalizing or explaining translational choices using broad models, categories, or theories.*

Key words: *Translation, board model, literary text.*

Introduction

Since the 1960s, people have gradually stopped thinking that literary meanings can be captured and communicated in the same way in another language. Instead, they have come to realize that the meanings of the source text are always elusive and that their representation in the translation will always be incomplete and problematic. This change mirrors the shift in literary theory from New Criticism to Deconstruction, which has become its main fact. But one thing that has stayed the same in this tradition of authors and translators thinking about their work is their close, creative, and personal relationship with literary texts and their reluctance to sacrifice the unique intensity of these experiences on the scholarly altars of generalization, logic, or maximum neutrality. In her 1997 book *Translation and Literary Criticism: Translation as Analysis*, Marilyn Gaddis Rose talks about a practice she calls "stereoscopic reading" that uses "both the original language text



and one (or more) translations while reading and teaching. So, translations and the study of them can be used to improve the literary experience in a way that goes against strict logic and is best described by a metaphor or a new word ("interliminality").

Too many translators have written eloquently and intimately about literary translation. Ezra Pound, Vladimir Nabokov, Robert Bly, Gregory Rabassa, Suzanne Jill Levine, and Douglas Hofstadter are on many recent English-language lists. Walter Benjamin's "Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers" is a highly significant essay outside English (and after its 1968 translation). It was a prelude to his 1923 translation of Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens*. Benjamin's vague manner and abstract philosophical theories (such as his concept of the "reine Sprache" that translation supposedly reveals) haven't stopped it from becoming "probably the single most important item of modern Translation Studies" (Weissbort & Eysteinnsson 2006: 297). Benjamin inspired hermeneutics and deconstructionists. Other 20th-century literary translators outside of English who wrote notable prefaces and essays include Valery Larbaud, Haroldo de Campos, Henri Meschonnic, and Yves Bonnefoy.

Conclusion

It goes without saying that their work is different from the practical handbooks that some literary translators and teachers have written for newcomers. In these books, they explain how to write a literary translation and how to get it published. An example of this hands-on approach is Clifford E. Landers's *Literary Translation: A Practical Guide* (2001).

References

Clifford E. Landers's *Literary Translation: A Practical Guide* (2001).

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