



*Samira Begman Karabeg*

### **Literally translation<sup>1</sup> as mediator of the art of language**

I was born and raised in the former Yugoslavia, while nearly two thirds of life I live and work in Switzerland. My own conception of the world and patterns of thoughts I expresses through literary creations in both languages. During one of the literary performances in Switzerland, one of the listeners asked me when I write on one and when on the other language, in other words, whether there is a tension for the specific language derived from the content of the creation? I had no answer to this question, but when I later carefully analyzed my own creations I noticed that there is a noticeable dependence on the content, in other words, the conception of the world and language. Contents with imaginings of the emotional, affectionate, used the BCS, or Slavic language, while contents with ideas from the world of thoughts, spiritual were going to German or Germanic language. This substantially and linguistic ties are not limited to mental and psychological circuit of me as an individual since I, in first stage of life, in which the sensibility are the driving force, creating the conception of the world, lived in Yugoslavia modeling these

---

<sup>1</sup> Translation is too harsh word, and I prefer the use of the word "rendition" so that when I quote "translation" or "translating" I think on the "rendering" because with each new translation the poem and /or prose text gets the more quality , it becomes even a new creation, depending on the understanding of the way of translation, in other words rendition.

conceptions with BCS language. During mature age, in which the intellectually, spiritually are predominant worldview, spend in Switzerland and used German language. Already that linguistic content is based mainly on the language. German is the language of philosophy and spirituality while the Slavic languages are more languages of sensitivity and emotionality. Mentality of the people and the language are mutually conditioned and upgraded. This legitimacy in unequivocal way confirms with the language of music - almost all Slavic composers of classical music have composed in a minor key - the mode of sensitivity, while all the major German composers did it in major key - music that expresses the mode of spirituality.

It was an entirely natural impulse that I, for different conceptions of the world serve them according to different languages.

On one further stage of his literary work I started translating in both directions. At this stage, parallel with translating analytic showed us I translated poetry in comparison to the original. I noticed that very few Slavic poets have been translated into German. For example, one of the Slavic-speaking cult poet Sergei Yesenin, in the German-speaking world is completely unknown. Just mentioned as husband of prima ballerina Isadora Duncan.

In the work of translation, I noticed that in the process of translation is not only changing the order of words and syntax, but also symbols implied in the creation, of the conception of word. The language in which a creation is made, determines primarily philosophical thought out, and in the process of the aesthetisation of designed, his formed world. Transfer the literary creation in another language means that you should manipulate determinants of the language so that, eventually, occurs, through the content and aesthetic way, something identical. This manipulation of determinants takes place two levels: linguistic - grammatical structures that deform the meaning in the relation to the original text, and literature way - philosophical consequences of linguistic transformation of the creation caused by inequalities of the linguistic systems. On the one hand, those changes of the meanings that occurred because of changes in gender nouns and on the other hand, the use of temporal structure of the language. Because it is in the German language that gender is determined by a noun and in BCS languages with finals, and it is derived from the grammatical features of the languages. About this

depends not only understanding but also the symbolism of the translated fragment of the creations.

Take, for example, the word "bridge". In German Bridge (Die Brücke) is feminine, but in the BCS language is masculine. What happens in the process of linguistic transformation of this word? First, the symbolism behind the word is changing. Changing of gender does not only lead to another psychoanalytic classification of symbol but also towards another language, ethnological and culture-historical relationship. „The bridge“ resembles Germans on something elegant and harmonizing, while South Slaves on something binding, dangerous, but at the same time separating. Sensitivity arising from such associations at South Slavs is resulted because a complex and complicated history treated in literary or narrative tradition, such as the "The Bridge on Drina" by Ivo Andric or Bulgarian folk poem about a live woman erected in a bridge as a symbol of the sacrifice for the arising of something new.

Experienced translator knows that the meaning of one word does not have to necessarily be identical within different languages. Difference for linguists is in grammatical rules, while for the philosophers and writers is in the symbolism, and in other words, in the notion of the world that the word evokes, especially when it comes to words with one key philosophy function in the creation. Translator of literary creation has the task to convert an image of the world and this image is dependent on the implied language. German critic and philosopher Martin Heidegger<sup>2</sup> says: "The literary work is still only one to BE within the time, its existence is realized and explained within the categories of time, and once conceived, it survives as a constant work of art in relation to time, does not change with it." In contrast, a translated creation does not belong to the category „to BE“ but to the category of becoming existing. It is always a copy of the original, and it is not timeless. For example, translations of Göthea does not differ only from the original of the author, but also from one to another. Because the copy is and should be improved, but original creation - never. George Steiner<sup>3</sup> in his "Nach Babel"<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Sein und Zeit, Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen 1963

<sup>3</sup> Nach Babel, Aspect der Sprache und des Übersetzens, Surkamp Verlag 1994

<sup>4</sup> after Babel

argues that every human language opens up to the world in his own unique way. Translated creation, therefore, opens up a world of original creation in a manner characteristic of its own language. Because literature today is not, as in the 19 and 20 century, medium influencing the collective consciousness of the political and economic classes, but in the world of modern communications, it is increasingly concentrated on the preservation of consciousness. This preservation of consciousness, as a holder of timeless literature, translating reproduces in different languages and cultures. If we look at literary translation in this context, it becomes clear that it has a significant role. For this reason, for the literary translation, as one discipline of the art, and the translator as mediator of cultures, is given increasing attention.

But, unfortunately, not in all languages and all cultures equally. Although in Europe there are no accurate statistics on representation of translated literature between languages and cultures, it is obvious that the translations from the English language makes up about 60% of all translated books, with about 10% from the French and German with about 7%, which the three native languages make up 4/5 of all translated books in Europe. In contrast, only a small number of books from other native languages are translated into the dominant languages. One important reason for this imbalance is that publishers are trying to buy in the rights for the translation of creations made in the dominant languages.

Starting from the fact that literature has been increasingly focused today on the preservation of consciousness within one culture, literary translation can be approached in terms of expansion of consciousness and cultural horizons. Through that the cultures itself are seen as less homogeneous, closed entities, but as open systems arising on exchange and are mutually constituted and transformed, and that puts access to culture within national borders into disposition. By that even intercultural, because it presupposes the exchange between indigenous, homogeneous concepts. In this area is, in particular, an interesting theory of the philosopher Homi Bhaba<sup>5</sup>. Bhaba does not start from the fact that cultures are essentially homogeneous, or, within his notion said, hybrid, because within the mutual pervadation from the center and the periphery, he sees a decisive dynamics

---

<sup>5</sup> Die Kultur der Verortung, Tübingen 2000

which is opposed to the hierarchical stiffness and centeredness. This area of interaction Bhaba calls the "third space". At the same time, he warns that this third space does not open easily, but is a arena of the processes of social influences on concepts and definitions. In analyzing the representation of translated literature between languages we realized that this impact is not equal.

The opening of the third area, therefore, only follows through exchange processes between foreign and own, from which results the change in perspective. Because, only when you take the other position, it can reflect your own. This shift in perspective is the process of translation and the translator is conceived as a single node of languages and linguistic systems. Multiculturalism is carried over from the territorial concept to the personal. The translator is not just a mediator of the art of language, but above all one bicultural person. Only bi-culturality of the translator is able to mediate between the two cultures that does not have much in common. Take the example of South Slav phraseologisms and their equivalents in the German language. The vast majority of these is not adequate any of phrases in a German equivalent and for transfer to the German language must be used with one or the other or one motivated phraseologisms or one periphrasis. Untranslatability of these phraseologisms lies in the divergence between the South Slavic languages and German made up on cultural-sepcific peculiarity. One bicultural person is in a permanent process of overcoming this divergence.

Finally, I want to, on behalf of DIOGEN pro culture magazine and Einhorn Verlag, to express deepest gratitude to the association "Society of Writers" and the organizers for the invitation to participate in this esteemed event and especially to participate in the discourse on "The literary translation as a mediator of the art of language", which itself is a reflection of the process from to interculturalism over the multiculturalism and up to transculturalism.

*Translation from BHS language in English by Sabahudin Hadzialic*

PR  
DIOGEN pro kultura  
<http://www.diogenpro.com>