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New Hermeneutics Motion:

**A New Motion Towards the Hermeneutical and Artistic
Understanding of Meaning in the Translation of
Rubáiyat of Khayyam**

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IN the Name of God

Dedicated to:
The Founder of Kerman University
“Afzalipoor, the Great”
(PBUH)



Hope to be his Followers

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Abstract:

Is the hermeneutics of translation applicable to translate Classic Persian Literature into English? To most people, Edward FitzGerald's Rendering of Khayyam is being realized as a 'Translation'. For others, 'Hermeneutics of Translation' as an approved paradigm for this translation by Steiner only obfuscates with generalizations the complexities and confluences of different civilizations of the globe. Cognizant of its potential deficiencies, this project utilized Betti's comparative paradigm as a systemic methodology for examining the strategies used in the hermeneutics of translation by Steiner in renderings of inter-communal and intercultural problematic spots that are manipulated by the translator in Khayyam hermeneutically. This study sketches a brief analysis of the Source Text and the secrecy behind it and the way it is introduced as a distance and acrimonious conflictual school of thought to the West. But, yet, despite its varying order of ideological supremacy over the East, this translation cannot remain uncriticized for the Source Text critics and translation expertise as a manipulated fidelity in the West.

Keywords:

Hermeneutics of translation, Source Text, Target Text, Khayyam, Fitzgerald, Steiner

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List of Abbreviations

ST.....	Source Text
TT.....	Target Text
SL.....	Source Language
TL	Target Language

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Translation studies was once strictly surrounded by linguistics, and highly influenced by the linguists' theoreticians. Linguistics itself, in the modern sense of the word, did not exist in some countries like Great Britain 50 years ago except, perhaps, in some form of school studies (like School of Oriental and African Studies). In this wake, translation theory is slowly developing from a series of rather general reflections and essays on the merits of faithful and free translation to represent an identifiable and somewhat peculiar discipline (Newmark, 1988). Nowadays, there is an independent academic discipline as 'Translation and cultural Studies', as it is called among academic league, completely independent from linguistics to name a few, to study cultural differentiations too, but strictly related to linguistics and other majors. By its nature it is multilingual and also interdisciplinary, encompassing languages, communication studies, philosophy, and a wide range of types of cultural studies (Munday, 2001). As a technical definition, according to Nida (1984, p.161), translation

consists of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, firstly in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style. This natural equivalent has been under debate from the onset of translation life, regarding different points of view. A good exemplification of such debates involves Translation and the sub-disciplines that are related. Translation Studies, is in direct relationship with so many fields of study, to name a few, Literature, philosophy, Sociology, Political Science, Psychology, History of Idea, Communication and Cultural Studies, and so on. Regarding the afore-mentioned fields of study, and as far as translation typologies come to fore, the modern philosophical approaches to translation and their influences over translation in the second half of the third millennium should not be marginalized. Therefore, the present study aims to show the way philosophy has influenced translation theories in contemporary translated texts. The following questions may clarify what the present study claims better: Is there any kind of text that is philosophically translated? Is there any relationship between the kinds of translation as a product and philosophical theories as a process? These are the questions that are recently tossed up and debated among translation studies theoreticians over

the translation of different texts, specifically the translation of literary and sacred texts. Among the various theories discussed by scholars, *Hermeneutics* remained under debates for many years. As earlier mentioned from three decades ago, a “New Philosophical wave” of theories has been emerged to enhance the understanding of the source text (ST henceforth) so that the different interpretations of the layers of meaning can be easily and naturally conveyed to the target language (TL henceforth). This new philosophical wave of theory is called “Hermeneutic translation theory”, originating from “Hermeneutic motion”, emerged from 17th century (i.e. 1645) by different scholars (Palmer, 1967,p.43). But the Oxford dictionary defined hermeneutics for the first time as a newly coined linguistics element not earlier than 1737 as ‘of interpretation’, ‘the science and the methodology of interpreting text’, taken from the original Greek *hermeneutikos* (Turner, 1987) or *hermêneuein* (Palmer, 1967). Hermeneutics has well been documented as a philosophy of enquiry, with its roots already evident in late antiquity where ‘the Greeks, the Jews and the Christians’ had been reading and re-reading their religious texts, namely the Homeric epics, the Torah, and the Holy Bible, respectively. Notwithstanding of the ancient roots of this

controversy, hermeneutics is still under the debates through different theoretical frameworks. These theoretical frameworks separated their ways in two different clines, namely, the Traditional and the Contemporary one. Although the influences that have been resulted from traditional theories, marked by interpretation of sacred texts, had been overwhelmingly significant, in the present study presented what is discussed in contemporary school of hermeneutics thought. Among contemporary scholars, Gadamer is of utmost important figure who had been seriously working on hermeneutic as a new motion with a new perspective. In his masterpiece, Gadamer (1960), mentioned that, words, that is, talk, conversation, dialogue, question and answer, produce *worlds*. In contrast to a traditional, Aristotelian view of language, where spoken words represent mental images and written words are symbols for spoken words, Gadamerian perspective on linguistics emphasized a fundamental unity between language and human being. According to Gadamer (1960) interpretation never can be separated from language. In his book (1960), Gadamer attempted to highlight the fundamentally linguistic nature of interpretation through understanding. “To understand is to perform the separation of the meant from the said

through instantiating the same in the different” (Palmer, 1969, p. 66). There have been so many controversy over these concepts. The problems of interpretation became particularly acute where one is dealing with texts, the correct interpretation of which is a matter of some importance, and which were written at a time or in a situation that is very different from those of the interpreter. In the New Dictionary of the History of Idea (2005) , Grondin expands on this idea by comparing **understanding** to a process of *Translation*. The debates that have been provoked over new hermeneutics have their source exactly from here, namely from what Gadamer proposed. Gadamer (1962) faced so many criticisms by different contemporary scholars from different parts of the world. Among them, it was Emilio Betti, the Italian Jurist and philosopher, who announced his oppositions to Gadamer and responded his method of interpretation. He (1990) claimed that Gadamer’s methodology invalidated the interpretation of the text and later, he proposed a set of four Canons and emphasized that only through these four canons we are able to do a genuine hermeneutical task. A good exemplification of such interpretation is that of *Rubaiyyat of Omar Khayym*, translated by more than thirteen translators from different parts of the world. In the

aforementioned translations, although most of them have a big majority of the translation in common, but, hermeneutically, each scholar had translated the ST differently and consequently led the reader to diversity of interpretations. The discussion here is whether the personal interpretation that the translators had been used as their theoretical frameworks are used just irrespective of the appropriate meaning of the ST? Here the adequacy of translation, the enhancement of ST, (as it is elaborated by Steiner (1975, p.316) and the imbalance resulted from ‘an outflow of energy from the source and inflow into the receptor’ is under debate. These imbalances in the translations of Rubaiyyat of Omar Khayyam are examined through a hermeneutics process of translation.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Based on “Language Determinism Hypothesis” of Sapir & Whorf (1929), that language differs in the way it is perceived, and how it determines our viewpoints of the world, the way languages influenced people have been something extraordinary.

Regarding this hypothesis, Hatim and Mason (1990,p.30) ,using Sapir & Whorf hypothesis, stated that:

“Any strict interpretation of Sapir & Whorf hypothesis would imply that the gap between views of the world held by different linguistics communities is almost unbridgeable. This in effect would exclude the possibility of successful translation. There would be little point in denying the validity of some of the observations made by those who work within this hypothesis. It would be however futile to deny the possibility of translating. Cross-cultural communication through language takes place all the time and is generally successful”.

As it is clarified, Hatim and Mason (1990) opposed untranslatability of different language elements just for the sake of the diversity of people’s viewpoints. They believed (1990, p. 31) that “There is sufficient shared experience even between users of languages which are culturally remote from each other to make translatability a tenable proposition.” Regarding what Hatim and Mason claimed, the obsession on some questions about different translations of the same book introduced to the world, may to some

extent invalidated what they claimed just if the translations themselves are dealt with. This is not a problem that the especial nations are faced, to name a few, Swift's Gulliver's Travels, as an exemplification, just if the political and social philosophy behind the book ignored, as it is ignored, remained the novel as a comic work for children. This has nothing to do with language determinism although, since different hermeneutical '*understanding of understanding*' and also the aim and the purpose of the translator (using Machiavelli's and Vermeer's language that is called "Skopos") has influenced their translators, actually the minds of the translators, and the result led the readers to the diversity of interpretations. In more recent years, since translation studies move beyond purely linguistics approaches, some other elements appear to play a role to represent models of translation. Among them, cultural studies and discourse analysis represented the way the translation studies would be changed theoretically in what Snell-Hornby, (1990) called a "Cultural Turn" in translation studies that in her words it is the move from translation as text to translation as culture and politics. In placing cultural studies within the extra-linguistics framework, translation studies relates the linguistics choices to dominant culture and dominant ideology,