

Achieving Consilience

Achieving Consilience:

Translation Theories and Practice

Edited by

Margherita Dore

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Achieving Consilience: Translation Theories and Practice

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INTRODUCTION

ACHIEVING CONSILIENCE: TRANSLATION THEORIES AND PRACTICE

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1. Overview

Since its proposal in 1999 and its acceptance by 49 countries, the Bologna Process has contributed to reshaping and harmonizing the European Higher Education System (cf. the Bologna Declaration, 1999). All the European academic institutions in the countries that have signed the Bologna Declaration have complied with its regulations and adapted their systems accordingly. This has led many institutions to restructure undergraduate and postgraduate courses, especially as far as Master's degrees are concerned. The EU has also placed great emphasis on language learning in higher education and fostered the creation of many vocational language training courses so as to give Europeans more opportunities to travel across Europe for studying and working purposes (cf. Council of Europe 2001 and Communication 24.07.2003). Consequently, language teaching has grown exponentially over the last two decades.

However, as far as translation is concerned, its teaching at the academic level has been almost entirely removed from the undergraduate syllabi for language learning. Translation theories and practice have become the main subjects of specialist courses whose curricula aim to offer formal training for prospective translators and interpreters (Popescu 2011: 1183). A large number of academic institutions in Europe (and elsewhere; cf. Munday 2007) have developed a wealth of Master's courses in Translation Studies (henceforth, TS; cf. Munday 2013: 11-12 for a detailed account of the Master's programmes offered in the UK). The

growing interest in TS has freed it from its ancillary status as a subfield of Linguistics and turned it into a research field in its own right.

Drawing on the traditional distinction between Pure (Theoretical and Descriptive) and Applied Translation Studies (Holmes 1998: 71), the scholars appointed by several academic institutions have devised Master's programmes that offer both theoretical and practical insights into this field and include modules devoted to its many subfields (e.g. Literary Translation, Audiovisual Translation, Technical Translation, etc). Nowadays, students can complete their Master's Degree by choosing between compiling a Dissertation by Research or a Dissertation by Translation Commentary. In general, Dissertation by Research projects deal with the critical investigation of one or more texts previously translated by professionals. The student is asked to discuss both the translation on the whole and any hurdles that the official translator(s) may have had to overcome during the translation process. This approach falls into the framework of Descriptive Translation Studies, which investigates translations "as they manifest themselves in the world of our experience" (Holmes 1988: 71). This framework also entails the investigation of the translators' behaviour according to the socio-historical context they work in as well as the translation norms such a context has established (Tourey 1995; cf. also Vorderobermeier 2014, which contains a number of studies based on Bourdieu's idea of *habitus* as a mediating factor in the translator's decision-making process). Hence, this type of dissertations results in substantial pieces of research projects that often become published papers (cf. for instance, Dore 2009 and Puddu in this volume).

By contrast, Dissertations by Translation Commentary involve detailed discussions of the strategies and procedures students opt for when translating a Source Text (ST) of their choice (any language combination is allowed, as well as any type of text, be it literary, audiovisual or technical). They defend their translation choices in light of the theories they study during their Master's course and this helps them reflect on the relevance of theoretical thinking in everyday practice. Unlike dissertations by research, the vast majority of these dissertations by commentary usually remains stored in university libraries. They rarely result in any sort of publication, despite their great theoretical and practical potential.

By and large, it can be argued that both types of dissertations can provide valuable insights into the procedural patterns and translation process involved. They both aim to help transcend the received wisdom according to which theorists and practitioners share little common ground (cf. Aijmer and Alvstad 2005 for similar considerations). Indeed, it is my belief that theory and practice of a discipline can be considered valid to the

same extent because, as Ulrych (2000: 410) puts it, they are “simply two sides of the same coin: theory informs practice, which in turn contributes towards a theoretical framework”.

Unfortunately, in my experience as lecturer in TS at both undergraduate and Master’s level, I often notice that students tend to consider theories developed in the field of TS merely as a set of rules they need to learn about. Despite offering a wealth of examples that accompany the explanation of such theories, students seem to effectively reflect on the latter’s significance only when called to complete a practical task. In this light, this essay collection proposes to bring the potential of dissertations by commentary to the fore. Moreover, it helps to further contribute to and encourage ongoing research in TS.

2. The Aims of This Collection

As anticipated above, the main objective of this volume is to demonstrate how theories in TS can be **fruitfully**, **consciously** and **systematically** applied during the translation practice by means of real students’ commentaries. Moreover, it seeks to show how this can be achieved by adopting a broad interdisciplinary approach that draws on knowledge in an array of fields.

This project has been inspired by Jeremy Munday’s (2012, 296-299) proposal to bring translation theory and practice together by acknowledging the validity of the translation commentaries that students write at the Master’s level. However, this volume mostly draws its inspiration from Chesterman’s (2005a and 2005b) notion of *consilience* (or “unity of all knowledge”), which emphasises the interdisciplinary nature of TS and suggests an approach “to cut across boundaries in the search of a deeper understanding of relations between texts, societies and cultures” (Chesterman 2005a: 25). Drawing on Wilson’s (1998) use of this term to show how different sciences are connected with each other and with the humanities, Chesterman (2005b: 20-21) has aimed to demonstrate that the interdisciplinary nature of TS may well be the real strength of this field. As he has further pointed out, the emergence of new disciplines and their intersection with others helps us enhance our knowledge, learn more and solve problems. Nevertheless, researchers and scholars willing to adopt an interdisciplinary approach need to work closely with experts in different fields to avoid using inappropriate models and producing further fragmentation of new fields (*ibid.*; cf. also Munday 2007: 1 for similar considerations). Clearly, acquiring a broader perspective offers the advantage of looking at reality from a different angle that we had not

previously considered. In turn, this can help disentangle knotty situations in translation, according to a causal chain of causes and effects, which can ultimately contribute to achieving *consilience* (Chesterman 2005b: 24-25).

Hence, the title of this collection, *Achieving Consilience: Translation Theories and Practice* stems from the attempt to fill in the gap between translation theories and practice via an interdisciplinary approach. As the papers included in this volume demonstrate, all the contributors have carried out extensive research to complete their translation tasks. They have drawn the needed knowledge not only from Linguistics, TS and its subfields, but also from Literary Studies, Medicine, Psychology, Advertising, Chemistry and so forth to solve terminological, language- and culture-related issues. Also, they have made use of such knowledge to explain and back up their translation choices. It should furthermore be noted that all contributors have demonstrated their ability to apply a research-driven approach to their analysis by comparing their work with the official translation(s) of their source texts. In the event such official translations were not available, contributors have compared their work with translations of texts produced in the same reference field(s); moreover, some of these contributors have checked other non-translated texts in the target language to justify their choices in terms of fluency and naturalness (e.g. medical (non)translated corpora, etc.; cf. Niki Karagianni's study in this volume; also cf. Chesterman 2005b: 23 for a similar procedural proposal and Chesterman 2010: 39 for a discussion).

As mentioned above, this volume includes contributions from former TS students who are now working as professional translators. Hence, this collection provides an insight into these professionals' real-life practice, which is supported by means of a solid theoretical framework. Furthermore, some of these contributors have chosen to pursue an academic career as Research Assistants or PhD students in TS. Therefore, this volume has given them the opportunity to enter the academic arena and hopefully pave the way for them to approach the research field for the first time.

In general, it is hoped that the contributions in this book can help other scholars in TS better understand the translator's decision-making process and offer future students in TS valuable guidelines regarding the procedure normally followed in completing a dissertation by commentary at the Master's level. To my knowledge, this essay collection is the first of its kind, which also makes it a ground-breaking publication in TS and a valuable asset to any institution that offers Master's degrees throughout Europe and beyond.

3. The Contributions to this Volume

This essay collection comprises an extremely diverse set of contributions. The source language (SL) of almost all source texts (ST) under scrutiny is English, apart from Jafar Shokrollah Zadeh's and Cristian Lako's case studies, which have Persian and Romanian as their SL in the STs. Yet, in both cases English is still involved as it is the target language (TL) used. Erja Vottonen's paper is the only real exception, as it discusses a Russian into Finnish translation project. That said, the high percentage of papers involving English in this volume confirms the importance and fascination that this language has held for different languages and cultures, given that it is the lingua franca in many scientific fields and the global language used in research in general. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the target languages into which the English STs discussed here are translated include Spanish, Italian, Polish and Greek.

This volume is divided into three main parts: Literary Translation, Audiovisual Translation and Technical Translation. These three main sections have been devised so as to provide an ordered categorisation of the contributions according to the subject matter at hand. Nonetheless, a certain degree of overlapping has been inevitable. For example, Stefania Puddu discusses the translation of medical terminology in one episode of the TV Series *E.R.* (1994-2009, John Michael Crichton). It should, however, be noted that the categorisation is determined by the ST type, which in this case is an audiovisual text.

Part I contains a paper that seeks to explore translation practice in literary works. As anticipated earlier, **Mohammad Jafar Shokrollah Zadeh** devotes his discussion to the translation of a famous Persian collection of poems into English, the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. In order to explain and justify his personal translation choices regarding the linguistic and cultural peculiarities of this text, Mohammad Jafar Shokrollah Zadeh carries out a detailed discussion of Steiner's hermeneutic model. He contends that this theoretical framework can effectively be applied during the translation decision-making process. Moreover, he analyses and compares his translation to FitzGerald's renderings of the same text, which were published in 1859 and 1868. By means of a descriptive approach (Toury 1995), he also considers FitzGerald's professional and cultural context to understand the reasons behind his translation choices. This effectively contributes to demonstrating how a comparative and well informed analysis of sources can serve as an inspiration for new endeavours.

Part II includes four articles entirely devoted to **Audiovisual Translation**, which is one of the fast-growing subfields in Translation Studies and can even be said to have become a research field in its own right (Dore, 2009, Chaume 2013). **Monica Bartz** proposes the translation of an episode of *South Park* (1997-, Trey Parker and Matt Stone) which is compared to the official dubbed and the fansubbed Polish versions. Monica Bartz comments on the recent trend of dubbing in Poland, where voiceover had previously been the traditional AVT mode. Dubbing has quickly proved quite popular with the Polish viewers, although this also seems to be due to a high level of manipulation of the ST to appeal to the target-audience. Bartz uses the term “Polonisation” to define this trend. Her extensive analysis of the three datasets shows that her own version and the official dubbed one display a mostly domesticating approach (Venuti 1995, 1998) as far as vulgarity and humour are concerned. Conversely, her analysis of the fansubbed version demonstrates a higher level of literal translation and faithfulness to the original ST (or foreignisation to use Venuti’s terminology). Monica Bartz argues that vulgarity (and its consequent humour) is almost always literally transferred in this type of amateur translation. Yet, and most importantly, retaining potentially humorous cultural-reference in the target language does not result in an equally funny effect.

Similarly, **Joaquín Bueno Amaro**’s translation of an episode of the TV series *Downton Abbey* displays a more foreignising approach when compared to the official translation aired on Spanish television. Bueno Amaro looks in particular at the social and tonal register used by the scriptwriter to mark distance between the characters in the series, who belong to two main groups: the British aristocracy and the working class (mainly servants). Although such differences are not extremely significant as far as the general tone of the series is concerned, Bueno Amaro convincingly explains how the use of cultural borrowing (e.g. “milord” versus “señor”) can help compensate for the lack of differentiation and distance, in Spanish, which terms such as “Lord” and “sir” denote in English.

Guillermo Parra López’s article also deals with the translation of audiovisual material from English into Spanish. It considers a translation issue that is not often considered in the literature but which seems to deserve greater attention. Guillermo Parra López concentrates on what he defines as *disorderly speech* (DIS) in audiovisual texts. This phenomenon refers to the representation of the linguistic output of characters that are temporarily unable to articulate language or concepts because of drugs or alcohol abuse, lack of sleep, or psychological instability. In order to

explain this challenging issue and suggest how it can be tackled in translation, Parra López carries out a contrastive analysis of his own translation and the official dubbed and subtitled versions of the film *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1998, Gilliam). Through a wealth of examples, he confirms the relevance that such linguistic peculiarities have within the fictional world of the movie. Unlike the official translators who tended to adapt and/or evoke (i.e. neutralize) them, Parra López applies a more creative approach that helps salvage the effect, which might otherwise be lost. Further research on this phenomenon is certainly needed.

As mentioned earlier, **Stefania Puddu**'s contribution concentrates on the translation of medical language used in the successful TV series *ER* (1994-2009, Michael Crichton). Unlike the other paper included in this collection, Puddu's analysis does not include a commentary of her own work but is based on the critical comparison of the official dubbed and subtitled versions of an episode of the series into Italian. This exception has been accepted for its extensive investigation of technical terminology and its usage in real professional contexts as well as fictional ones. The findings are extremely interesting and sometimes surprising; for example, Puddu finds that domesticating is often opted for by the official subtitler whereas foreignisation is at times used in dubbing. Most importantly, her research confirms a general trend that sees foreignisation as the strategy mostly opted for in both datasets. This seems to oppose Venuti's (1995) idea of the translator's invisibility but confirms his view of English as a hegemonic language, to which only Latin and Greek seem to resist, at least as far as medical language is concerned.

Part III include four contributions that deal with Technical Translation, drawing on texts in fields such as medicine, marketing, advertising and chemistry. **Niki Karagianni**'s thorough discussion of the intricacies associated with the translation of the information leaflet for a medical product further confirms the need for high-level translation competence as well as L2 competence (Popescu 2011). Like Puddu, Niki Karagianni deals with challenging medical terminology, abbreviations, and language- and culture-specific terms that require extreme handling and care. However, unlike Puddu, Niki Karagianni's task has relevant implications, since the very life of the product end-users may depend on the correct translation of its information leaflet. Karagianni's mastering of reliable medical sources also corroborates the necessity of adopting a multiple, interdisciplinary approach to ensure translation quality.

Similarly, **Cristian Lako**'s contribution demonstrates that translation practice can benefit from an approach that draws on translation theories,

statistics, marketing, search engine optimization, and communication theories. He applies his knowledge in these fields to describe how the translation of marketing material can be enhanced. In particular, Cristian Lako's project deals with the (preparatory) pre-translation stage by giving a thorough account of the steps that a translator needs to take in order to ensure precision and naturalness in the advertising of cosmetic and plastic surgery services on the Internet. Cristian Lako tests his suggested translation procedures against a plastic surgery website translated from Romanian into English. In so doing, he shows the usefulness of database compilation in technical translation and how it can also be used for research and comparative purposes.

Sara Román Galdrán's article works on a type of text that is not traditionally looked at in commentaries, as it deals with the translation of a scientific research article concerning Chemistry. She offers a systematic account of the challenges that this type of text poses by pondering the possible misinterpretations and mistranslation that may occur while dealing with collocations, morphosyntactic structures, verb tense patterns, etc. Most importantly, Román Galdrán corroborates the idea that research in TS can take advantage of the use of electronic corpora, which can help translators acquire sufficient expertise in other specific research fields. In turn, this can ensure the creation of accurate and precise target texts (Olohan 2004).

Erja Vottonen's article concludes Part III and the volume. Like other papers in this book, her study engages in the discussion regarding foreignisation and domestication as postulated by Venuti (1998). Moreover, she introduces and explains the concept of "the golden mean", an alternative translation strategy proposed by Russian TS scholars. However, unlike the case of other papers in this collection, Erja Vottonen ventures into a more experimental analytical process. She first produced three extremely different translations from Russian into Finnish of the same marketing text, abiding strictly to foreignisation, domestication and the golden mean strategy. She also kept a diary of her decision-making process for each task (resembling to some extent the Think-Aloud Protocols particularly popular in the 1990s and the early 21st century; cf. Bernardini 2001 for a detailed account). Her detailed analysis of the procedures outlined in each diary has helped her conclude that to some extent translation theory can effectively influence or inform practice.

All the articles collected in this volume have contributed to shedding some light on the process at work when young professionals and/or researchers venture into practical translation tasks. Their informed reflections and

explanations show how theory does play a relevant role in everyday practice; hence, the two can be fruitfully reconciled. I hope that this essay collection will foster similar projects in the future, which may seek to strike a balance between TS theories and professional practice.

To conclude, I would like to thank all the members of the Scientific Committee for their valuable insights and support throughout this endeavour. I am also indebted to the peer reviewers who kindly provided their expertise to ensure that the contributions in this volume could achieve high quality standards.

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PART I:
LITERARY TRANSLATION

CHAPTER ONE

STEINER'S HERMENEUTIC MODEL AND THE TRANSLATOR'S DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: A PRACTICAL TRANSLATION OF *RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYAM*

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Abstract

This case study shows how far the fourth movement in Steiner's hermeneutic model, as a research-driven approach, is applicable in compensating the Persian-specific philosophical and cultural concepts in translating *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* into the English language. Khayyám's poems are replete with complicated Persian cultural concepts regarding philosophical themes, which are highly translation resistant. Using Steiner's hermeneutic model, decoding the cultural concepts is done in the form of annotated critical observations from Khayyám's Persian interpreters, and then they are translated from Persian into English through the compensation strategy that Steiner proposes.

The official translations that I compared my work with are Edward FitzGerald's renderings of 1859 and 1868. On publication, FitzGerald's translation attracted a great deal of attention, and it was welcomed with much admiration. However, I believe that comparing these versions, FitzGerald's preface to his translations and related letters where he justifies his choice of word (imbued with Persian concepts of the twelfth century in the language of nineteenth century) is more beneficial for me as a translator to grasp his strategy.

Nevertheless, Steiner's hermeneutic model is largely helpful in rendering the idea in the sense that, when translating and comparing one's

work with hermeneutical versions like FitzGerald's, Steiner's model makes "elective affinity" against "resistance difference" polemically visible. This translatability reveals itself further in analyzing the interpretive act of the translator, a task which, in turn, renders the decision-making process much easier while translating literary works.

Keywords: Steiner's hermeneutic model, compensation, cultural translation, literary translation

1. Introduction

"The existence of literature in translation shows that something is presented in such works that is true and valid for all time" says Gadamer (1989:61) when he elaborates the historical mode of being of literature and its cross-attraction with other disciplines such as literary theories, cultural studies, religious studies, etc. As can be construed from his quotation, in Gadamer's view translation is not just decoding the meaning and pouring it into other languages. It is rather an unavoidable engagement with so many other modes of being, which are determining factors in the ultimate decision-making process in a translation project. Therefore, these entities put translators inside a maze of different manners of translation. All these manners are discussed by different translation scholars within various translation theories, such as the linguistics approaches to Translation Studies (Linguistic-inspired debates), the cultural turn in Translation Studies (henceforth, TS), and the philosophical turn in recent years.

Even though an array of factors should be taken into consideration (depending on the translation project at hand), Kelly (1979) believes that all translators end up approaching texts in manners that are either hermeneutical or instrumental. The purpose of this paper is to examine a hermeneutical approach proposed by George Steiner, known as "new hermeneutics motion", and its considerable influence on the field of Translation Studies. This case study shows the extent to which Steiner's hermeneutic model, especially the fourth motion of the model, helps the translator of literary texts to reconstruct the decision-making process involved. After a brief summary of the history of hermeneutics and its shared conceptions with the translation process, the influence of hermeneutics approaches on literary translation theories is discussed. Then I go through Steiner's hermeneutic model as an interpretive hermeneutics theory for literary translation by providing evidence from Edward FitzGerald's renderings of *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, published in 1859 and 1868, and comparing them with my own rendering. I believe that

FitzGerald's preface to his translation (and the letters he wrote about it), acquaints readers with his translation approach and infuses his nineteenth-century language of translation with conscious links to the Persian tradition without readers getting any feeling that the gap between them is more than half a millennium.

2. Hermeneutics and Translation Studies

In the course of its development down through the centuries, hermeneutics was employed for purposes such as Homeric interpretations and disputations in ancient Greece, the rabbinical interpretations of the Torah, biblical exegesis and, during the Protestant Reformation in Europe, to address theological controversies (Gadamer et al 1988; Palmer 1969). Being traditionally introduced as "the art of interpretation (*Ars Hermeneutica*)" (Grondin 1991), hermeneutics was used as a tool to explore what is called 'the truth and the divine revelation.' But hermeneutics revealed its influence on all disciplines very quickly. Historically speaking, Slattery & Kemp (2007) believe in the shift of hermeneutics from its traditional sense towards "inter-subjective understanding and aesthetics." This shift is more visible if one takes into consideration inquiries such as autobiography, narrative research, experience, etc. Slattery & Kemp draw on their predecessors' scholarship – e.g. Gallagher (1992), Haggerson & Bowman (1992), and Bleicher (1980) – to sum up the existing trends of hermeneutics, dividing them into six categories as follows:

1. Traditional theological hermeneutics
2. Conservative philosophical hermeneutics
3. Contextual hermeneutics
4. Reflective hermeneutics
5. Post-structural hermeneutics
6. Critical hermeneutics

These understandings of hermeneutics are each based on theories that scholars developed while practicing hermeneutics in different periods of time. In the first category, for instance, hermeneutics inquiry deals with interpretation of ancient religious texts, and it decodes the scriptures' meaning by strictly following the historical and cultural backgrounds through which the texts are conveyed. As for the rest, Slattery & Kemp mention the pioneers of each category, such as Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Gadamer, Ricoeur, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Marx, Freud, Habermas, Marcuse, Gramsci, and the Frankfurt school. In this brief list of the

historical evolution of hermeneutics, translation has limited space, and sometimes hermeneutics is referred to translation in its seventh sense (Palmer 1969). However, hermeneutics tradition in literary translation takes on a new design with the emergence of Schleiermacher's seminal book, *Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens* (*On the Different Methods of Translating*). Schleiermacher opens up new horizons between hermeneutics and translation with the intention of expanding the tradition qualitatively and quantitatively. These horizons turned into some canonical inspiration for later thinkers in hermeneutics and TS.

In developing the nature of understanding and general hermeneutics, Schleiermacher is the first scholar to relate hermeneutics not only to deciphering and interpreting the sacred text; rather, by inter-relating the nature of understanding to all kind of human texts, he goes beyond the religious borders and introduces a general hermeneutics. He considers the hermeneutical understanding of a text as an art which is constantly in flux on its unstable foundation. In doing so, the interpreter's main mission, from Schleiermacher's point of view, is to recover the author's originally intended meaning, since "Interpretation has two, equally important, aspects: grammatical (or objective) and psychological (or subjective)" (1977:99), the former of which, briefly, displays the general ideas that compose a text, while the latter goes through the detailed combination of the work as a whole. It is almost impossible for the interpreter to grasp the meaning of a text unless s/he focuses on both aspects of language (though these aspects have no special rules to follow).

Thus, in order to grasp the meaning, the interpreter should overcome unintelligibilities that are also universal, "Comparing the text with other texts from the same period and even from the same writer, while continuously keeping in sight the uniqueness of the particular work" (Ramberg & Gjesdal 2005:6). Therefore, Schleiermacher gives hermeneutics a *universal* characteristic in which, "Interpretation and understanding are closely interwoven (...) and every problem of interpretation is, in fact, a problem of understanding" (Gadamer 1975:162). Hence, hermeneutics as an art of understanding is always predisposed to misunderstandings, and, according to Gadamer, this endangerment takes the form of two different praxes: on the one hand, there is a looser praxis in which understanding happens immediately; on the other, there is another praxis in which what follows from approaching a text is misunderstanding *per se*. That is why? Schleiermacher defines hermeneutics as "the art of avoiding misunderstandings" (ibid. 163), the misunderstandings that should be avoided by means of knowledge of grammatical and psychological laws. Understanding Schleiermacher's reading of hermeneutics is essential

because Steiner uses some technical terms in his creative hermeneutic model, such as “reconstruction” and “reproductions”, which are used within a Schleiermacherian framework.

3. Steiner’s Hermeneutics Model

In his seminal book, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, George Steiner sets forth a comprehensive historical analysis of language and translation theory. Himself a translator, literary critic, novelist, and philosopher, by excluding communication among languages with their specific complexities and their own private aspects, Steiner starts his discussion by considering translation as a form of general communication. As Steiner points out, there are two sources of linguistic supply, one being “the current vulgate corresponding to his level of literacy” and the other “a private thesaurus” (1975:46). He puts more emphasis on the second source, which is an attached element of the subconscious since it helps to verbalize the memories that reveal the individual’s characterized somatic and psychological identity. Then he goes against the linguistic trends of his time and focuses more on “the vital disorders of literatures,” which means, *per se*, a move away from Chomsky’s “deep structure” in transformational grammar to a “deeper structure” that resembles what a poet uses in his or her poetry.

Although the deeper structure, Steiner claims, is nothing more than a complex superficiality that we use in our general communications, it will nevertheless convince us that “reasonable procedures of translation are in general possible” (1975:106). Steiner’s view is opposed to that of Sapir (1929), for whom language differs in the way it is perceived and how it determines our viewpoints in the world, an idea that would later become known as “language determinism hypothesis.” Steiner was extremely uncomfortable with Sapir & Whorf’s claim that translation is impossible just because the manners of perception vary tremendously among languages. He believes in a shared root among languages in which the ‘surface’ of the languages is the main partaker of communications:

In short, whether consciously or unconsciously, every act of human communication is based on a complex divided fabric which may, fairly, be compared to the image of a plant deeply and invisibly rooted or of an iceberg largely under water... Much of this content is irreducibly individual and, in the common sense of the term, private. When we speak to others we speak ‘at the surface’ of ourselves. We normally use a short hand beneath which there lays a wealth of subconscious, deliberately concealed or declared associations so extensive and intricate that they

probably equal the sum and uniqueness of our status as an individual person (Steiner 1975:172).

Given this individualistic approach to the language, Steiner (ibid. 198) seems to consider a Wittgensteinian private language approach in his analysis when he says: "All communication 'interprets' between privacies." The only differentiation regarding the private language between Wittgenstein and Steiner transpires when Steiner's language "privacy" represents an extra aspect of translation on the side, an aspect which is absent in Wittgenstein's Ordinary Language Philosophy. This is where we have to add our own interpretation about the unspoken translational aspect of communication in our private language. This act of translation, for Steiner, is a communal act with the chief purpose of providing an embedded understanding of the texts to comprehend simulacra of the languages. Basil Hatim and Ian Mason (1990: 31) also highlight this communal act by acknowledging that: "There is sufficient shared experience even between users of languages which are culturally remote from each other to make translatability a tenable proposition (...) [C]ross-cultural communication through language takes place all the time and is generally successful."

Thus, by reducing all human communications to the act of translation that happens through languages, Steiner challenges the conventional view of language and accordingly, by going beyond the complexities of translation, he departs from conventional translation theory. In replacement, he proposes a new hermeneutic-driven translation approach that is used as "the investigation of what is meant to 'understand' a piece of oral or written speech and an attempt to diagnose this process in terms of general model of meaning" (Steiner 1975:237). With an initial focus on the psychological functioning of the translator's mind, Steiner uses a quasi-Schleiermacherian analogy to precede this theory as follows:

A theory of translation, a theory of semantic transfer, must mean one of the two things. It is either an intentionally sharpened, hermeneutically oriented way of designating a working model of all meaningful exchange, of the totality as semantic communication (including Jacobson inter-semiotic translation or transmutation) or it is a subsection of such a model with specific reference to inter-lingual exchange to the mission and reception of significant message between different languages (Steiner 1975: 279).

By bringing Jacobson's third category of translation into the picture (viz., translation from text to screen, from page to stage, and from word to image), and also by having semantics as his main encounter, Steiner

launches a discussion in which hermeneutics is used as a means of understanding and defines (ibid. 286) the *hermeneutic motion* as “the act of elicitation and appropriate transfer of meaning” in a process that consists of four phases, i.e. Initiative Trust, Aggression (or penetration), Incorporation (or embodiment), and Compensation (or restitution). He devotes ten pages of *After Babel* (ibid. 296-306) to describing his hermeneutic motion, with the rest of the book focusing on examples. Steiner explains this new motion in hierarchical phases as follows:

Initiative Trust: There is always something in the original text to be understood, to be elicited, and to be translated. This disclosure has a complex base and it is “an operative convention which derives from a sequence of phenomenological assumptions about the coherence of the world, about the presence of meaning in very different, perhaps formally antithetical semantic systems, about the validity of analogy and parallel” (ibid. 286).

Aggression (or penetration): The second move of a translator has a Heideggerian aspect of ‘understanding’ to it when Steiner claims that: “Heidegger wanted us to focus our attention on ‘understanding’ as an act” (ibid. 297). In Heidegger’s words, “Understanding itself is a primary *Dasein*. Therefore, ‘being’ consists in the understanding of the being into the more naïve, limited axiom that each act of comprehension must appropriate another entity [that we are going to translate into]” (ibid. 297). Steiner calls this phase an aggressive and violent phase since, like Heidegger, he believes that translation and comprehension are both violent acts.

Incorporation: This phase is an integration of the first and the second phases. In this phase, the form and meaning that are explored, comprehended, and extracted will be embodied in the target text. According to Steiner, this process of importing, dislocating and relocating meaning and structure creates problems. To resolve them, he suggests that the meaning should be incorporated through “sacramental intake and infection”, in such a way that the target culture will be positively influenced by this incorporated embodiment.

Compensation: The hermeneutic act must compensate the imbalances that result from the previous motions. This is crucial since “The enactment of reciprocity [in order to restore balance] is the crux of métier and morals of translation” (ibid. 300). This is a constructive motion to undo the violent destructive act of the hermeneutics of translation. The enigmatic sections and the ambiguous parts of the translation are revealed in this move appropriately, to prove that re-energized language of translation is as easy to understand for the TT’s reader as for the ST’s.

4. Corpus

The corpus of this study is a text that appears to have a very complex translation-resistant language. It is a collection of poems composed in Rubā'ī (or quatrain in English) style. Rubaiy (or Rubā'ī) is a Persian poetry style, and it is usually written in a four-line stanza with a rhyme schema pattern of AABA or AAAA. *Rubā'iyāt of Omar Khayyam* was written by Ghiyāth ad-Dīn Abu'l-Faṭḥ 'Umar ibn Ibrāhīm al-Khayyām Nīshāpūrī, known as Khayyam, a Persian astronomer, philosopher, mathematician, physician, polymath, and a great poet, born in 1048 AD in Neyshapur, the Seljuk capital of Khorasan, Iran. He is also globally known for his theories such as binomial theorem and extraction of root, heliocentric theory, calendar reformation, and the most important treatise on algebra before modern times, collected in a book titled *Treatise on Demonstration of Problems of Algebra*.

Regarding his collection of poems, due to its controversial thematic inspirations, there have been many quatrains attributed to Khayyam at different periods of time. Sorting out the authentic quatrains from unauthentic ones has been a matter of great importance for critics, comparatists, and translators. The partial identification that resulted from sorting out these quatrains has led to different translations that now exist for eighty quatrains out of one thousand two hundred of them, all of which are known as *Rubā'iyāt of Khayyam*. At the same time, there are some serious thematic analyses of the poems in different languages by famous Iranian literary authors and critics such as Dashti (1971), Hedaiyat (1973), Minavi (1933), Jafari (1992) as well as foreign orientalists like Christensen (1927), and Rosen (1994), among others. In his book titled *An Analysis of Khayyam*, Allameh Mohammad-Taqi Ja'fari (1992) classifies all Khayyamian authentic or unauthentic poems into three thematic groups. The first group is the poems written with the intention of expanding Nihilism within Islamic philosophy through poetry, which is in contradiction with Khayyam's philosophical scholarship. Compared to the rest of Khayyam's books, these poems (attributed to him posthumously) seem to share nothing with his general school of thought. The second group comprises the poems with Epicurean attitudes that oppose his theological views and do not accord with his philosophical interpretation of the *Genesis* in his other books. The last group includes the authentic Khayyamian poems, with their highly coded concepts that are accompanied with epistemological-ontological themes such as the fatality of all entities, the genesis, the temporality of life, the permanent fight between good and evil, and limitation of human knowledge vs. God, among others.

By comparing FitzGerald's renderings of the *Rubáiyát* that appeared in 1859 and 1868 with its Persian version, and also with my own translation, while taking Steiner's hermeneutics process constantly into account, I clarify and analyze the relevance of theory in practicing translation throughout the study. This analysis will be accomplished at a micro and a macro level. At the micro level, the focus is on some markedly coded philosophical and culture-specific concepts. This can also be called a lexicon level because there is a heavy focus on diction. However, the rhetorical characteristics of these poems at the lexical level are not included in my translation analysis. At the macro level, which is a theme-based level, the focus is on Khayyam's general school of thought, along with the translation strategies that are used in English renderings. For my discussion, I have selected the most genuine Khayyamic quatrains, the authenticity of which has been expertly researched by the Persian scholar Ali Dashti (1971).

5. Translation

As for the micro-level analysis, there are a number of words and phrases in Khayyam's poems that set him apart from other Persian poets. Words and phrases like 'fate,' 'death,' 'pot,' 'circle,' 'the blanket of earth,' 'the potter,' 'the sphere of Heaven,' 'the existence,' 'the compositions of a pot' among others, are the most common Khayyamic words. These words and phrases have complicated culture-specific conceptual definitions, and each one is interpreted in many different ways (e.g. 'pot' and 'potter' have been interpreted by some Persian scholars, like Hedayat (1973), as interactions between creature and creator). Of equal hermeneutical interest, especially as it will serve to make the usefulness of Steiner's model evident, is 'compensation,' a motion in which the translator finds a way to get the poet's style working adequately within the target language structure. By doing this, and by following Steiner's indications, the translator finds him/herself in the position of dislocating word formation in translation. Examples of such dislocations are profound and reach the micro level. I shall limit them to the following samples:

The word "**pot**": One of the main enigmatic concepts that is Khayyam-specific, to the point that Persian scholars recognized it as a visible criterion to distinguish genuine Khayyamic quatrains from the unauthentic ones. This word (which is also sometimes used in combinations like 'the pot-buyer') is replicated in a substantial number of original Khayyamic poems. According to Dashti (1971), it conveys an allegorical meaning

composed of different parts, such as handle, head, body, lip, neck, and every part has its own special meaning. As is highlighted in Table 1, in translation this concept is either replaced with an irrelevant but culturally appropriate word (like the English word 'vessel', which is different from Persian 'pot' but it still functions well), or it is totally deleted from the translation to retain the internal rhyme. FitzGerald also uses some other lexical correspondences? to the substituted dictions that are changed by replacing the word "pot."

Table 1

Khayyam	FitzGerald	My translation
این کوزه چو من عاشق زاری بوده است در بند سر زلف نگاری بوده است این دسته که بر گردن او می بینی دستی است که بر گردن یاری بوده است	I think the vessel, that with fugitive Articulation answer'd, once did live And Drink, and Ah! The Passive Lip I Kiss'd How many kisses might it take- and-give	I had this vessel that with escape Created head adorable like wave And kiss and kiss her lip as it states She is being kissed by the vessel aid
در کارگه کوزه گری بودم دوش دیدم دوهزار کوزه گویا و خמוש هر یک به زبان حال با من گفتند: کو کوزه گر و کوزه خر و کوزه فروش	And strange to tell, among that Earthen Lot Some could articulate, while others not: And suddenly one more impatient cried-- "Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?"	To a pottery I went a night So many pots I saw in plight Moaning out, moaning out in the light Potter's out, they cried potting bright

The word "wine": There is no need to emphasize the importance of this word in Persian poetry. Although Khayyam did not use this concept any more than Hafiz, another celebrated Shirazi poet, did, Khayyam is renowned as the poet of wine. There are even some famous wines produced in Italy and France that use Khayyam's name and image on their bottles. As a matter of fact, this reputation stems from an increasing number of fake wine-centred quatrains that have been attributed to Khayyam posthumously. However, the references to wine create different images in the mind of reader, which are extremely different from Khayyam's wine of wisdom. As Dashti says:

The many quatrains in the anthologies of Khayyam's verse that praise wine in exaggerated terms do not accord with the image we already have of a dignified and ascetic scholar; they suggest rather a frivolous drunkard inclined towards heresy, and even then not a heresy born of deep thought and philosophical enquiry (Dashti 1971: 157).

Nevertheless, by using this concept in a compensational form, FitzGerald applies a hermeneutic strategy to adjust his translation in a different way. He uses the word wine figuratively in the sense that its absence, for instance, causes lots of difficulties in life. I tried to use the same strategy to show the *actual* meaning of wine, while using FitzGerald's framework. Examples of this are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Khayyam	FitzGerald	My translation
می خور که به زیر گل بسی خواهی خفت بی مونس و بی حریف و بی همدم و جفت زنهار به کس مگو تو این راز نهفت هر لاله که پژمرد نخواهد بشکفت	Ah make the most of what we may spend , Before we too into the Dust descend; Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie, Sans Wine sans Song , sans Singer, and – sans	Every drop that you take boast Without beloved in dust we grossed Dust into Dust, don't let it go Sans potter wine, you bottommost
گویند بهشت و حور عین خواهد بود آنجا می تاب و انگبین خواهد بود گر ما می و معشوق گزیدیم چه باک چون عاقبت کار همین خواهد بود	Said one—"Folks of a surly Tapster tell, And daub his Visage with the Smoke of Hell; They talk of some strict Testing of us--Pish! He's a Good Fellow, and 'twill all be well."	Then said of nymphs and paradise With eternal wine coming in Edelweiss Worry not! with beloved I drunk that wisdom Telling us, of Paradise, do thrice, do thrice

The word “**Saghi**” or “**Saqi**” (or cup bearer): Another concept that is used in different classic Persian literary works is Saghi. There are different hermeneutical interpretations of this word in Persian glossaries (since there is the same concept in poems by Rumi, Hafiz, and a number of other Persian poets). For instance, Dehkhoda Persian dictionary¹ interprets Saghi according to mystic beliefs as the figure who encourages you to seek the truth. Compared to other Persian poets such as, namely, Hafiz, Khayyam's school of thought appears to be very different. Although this word is one of the most frequently used in Hafiz's, Rumi's and Khayyam's poems, each poet uses it in a different way. Rumi, for example, follows Sufi doctrine and uses Saghi in his poems by making references to Sufism, while Khayyam uses Saghi to put forward a completely Anti-Sufi philosophy (Hedayyat 1934). Accordingly, this word, in translation, should also be treated in the same way, due to the distinctive ideas it aims to convey. In FitzGerald's translation, the word is normally deleted, or, if translated, it seems to convey the Sufi doctrine in order to retain balance and compensation in a hermeneutic way. Personally, I have benefited from the manipulative hermeneutic strategy that FitzGerald uses in translating