

On the Translation

Gone are the days when the translator was seen as a traitor. The publication of Walter Benjamin's text entitled "The Task of the Translator" conferred distinction on the translator, who would come to be seen, in the course of the 20th century, as a mediator (Paul Ricoeur), an interpreter (George Steiner), a negotiator (Umberto Eco), a transporter of meanings (João Barrento), moving between texts, cultures and languages.

Once the inevitable period of mourning for the ideal translation had passed, what remained was the more modest expectation of successful linguistic hospitality. In Ricoeur's words, translation is equal to receiving what is foreign into our own home and to sharing the pleasure of being mutually sheltered by the process of linguistic exchange. As we are under such reciprocal influence, our perception of the losses must not obscure the gains; what is perchance lost in translation is regained in the readers' re-translation, since they are prompted to revisit the Other in order to better understand the message conveyed by their mother tongue.

A bilingual edition fulfils this intention totally. The translator, Rosa Neves Simas, herself a bilingual traveller in/of this *Itinerary*, solved the difficulties presented by the cultural terms by utilizing the strategies of *transference* and *explanation* (in order to compensate for the effect of strangeness) whenever equivalent correspondence proved impossible. The Translator's Notes reflect her concern in reducing the losses resulting from the untranslatable references to Azorean culture. The difficult job of understanding and shedding light on the specialized vocabulary of the various domains, therefore, went hand in hand with the task of accompanying the visitor on a journey in which the translator becomes, by the power of words, both host and foreigner.

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