Literary Translation

الترجمة الادبية

University of Mustansiriyah

College of Arts

Translation Department

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4th stage/ Morning and Evening classes

Lecture 8:

4– صومعتي هي الدائرة الصغرى من عالمي المحسوس, تحيط بها دائرة اكبر, هي هذا الدير الذي هويته يوم دخلته أول مرة, قبل سنين, و نعمت فيه بالسكينة التي طالما تمنيتها قبل مجيئي الى هنا.

My cell is the small circle within my concrete world. It is enclosed within a larger circle which is this monastery, and which I fell in love with the first time I entered it some years ago. From that day forward, I remained here, blessed with inner peace which I had desired for so long before coming here.

1. يا الهي, أتسمعني؟ أنا عبدك المخلص, الحيران: هيبا الراهب و هيبا الطبيب و هيبا الغريب.. على ما يدعونني به الناس في بلاد غربتي! و انت وحدك يا الهي تعرف اسمي الحقيقي, انت و الناس في بلادي الاولى التي شهدت مولدي. يا ليتني لم أولد اصلا, أو ليتني مت في طفولتي من دون آثام, حتى اضمن عفوك و رحمتك.

O my God, do Thou hear me? I am Thy faithful, but perplexed servant: Hiba the monk, Hiba the physician, Hiba the stranger, as people are calling me in my land of exile! Thou alone, O God, knowest my true name, Thou and the people in my land of origin, the land that witnessed my birth. Would that I have never been born. Or would that I had died in infancy, without sin, that I might be assured of Thy pardon and mercy!

Since translation between Catford's levels is totally governed by translation equivalence, then, shifts from grammar to lexis and vice-versa are the only possible level shifts in translation; and such shifts are, of course, quite common. These texts reflect many examples of level shifts which are sometimes encountered in the translation of the aspects of Arabic and English seen most clearly in the past (past perfect tense):

كنت قد نويت (lexis)

(grammar: past perfect) I had intended

طالما تمنيتها

I had desired for so long

These examples reflect a most completed event which is completed in an unspecified time before another complete event. It is preceded by the lexis: [كان] + [قد], or the past verb [طال] + [ما]. The Arabic past perfect tense has no tense-to-tense equivalent in English. However, some translators suggested translating it as: [had] + [past tense verb].

Also there is an important difference between the two aspect systems (present continuous) of both languages. In Arabic, the lexical item [الآن] refers to the *continuous* aspect of the event. In English, the *development of the action of the verb* is referred to by using the grammatical items: [verb] + [-ing] instead of a lexical items. The following example shows this:

إن الدوائر كلها تدور برأسي الآن (lexis)

(grammar) All circles are spinning in my head