

# THE PROBLEM OF MEANING IN LITERARY TRANSLATION

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## **Abstract**

This paper deals with the interpretation of the meaning of the source language text (SLT) in literary translation taking into consideration the relationship of the SLT with the author's personal experience and his way of conceptualising things. The author's intention in a literary text cannot be determined easily and might be interpreted subjectively by the translator. Some examples taken from Sarwat Okasha and Antonius Bashir's translations of Gibran's *The Prophet*, show how these two translators could have avoided a subjective translation of the concepts of « love » and « God » if they took into consideration Gibran's concept of *love* and *God* which govern the meaning of *The Prophet*. This paper is an attempt to show how translators fail to achieve objective rendition of essential concepts in the SLT because of their neglect of the relationship that exists between the author's concept and vision of the world and the meaning of *SLT*.

### **Key words**

Literary translation - interpretation of meaning - source language text - author's experience - subjectivity.

يهتم هذا المقال بتفسير معنى النص في اللغة المنقول منها في ميدان الترجمة الأدبية مع الأخذ بعين الاعتبار علاقة هذا النص بتجربة المؤلف الشخصية وطريقة تصوره للأشياء. ولا يمكن بسهولة معرفة ما يقصده الكاتب في نص أدبي، وبهذا قد يُترجم النص وقد طغت عليه ذاتية المترجم. ولتوضيح ذلك، أخذنا بعض الأمثلة من ترجمات ثروة عكاشة وأنطونيوس بشير لكتاب «النبي» لجبران خليل جبران. وأظهرت هذه الأمثلة أنه كان من الممكن للمترجمين تجنب تفسير ذاتي لمفاهيم كلمتي «love» و«God» إن أخذوا في الاعتبار المفهوم الذي يحكم معنى «النبي» والذي تحدده كلمة «الحب» و«الرب». ويعتبر هذا البحث بمثابة محاولة لإبراز كيف يفشل المترجم في إنجاز ترجمة موضوعية للمفاهيم الأساسية في نص اللغة المنقول منها بسبب إهمال العلاقة الموجودة بين مفهوم المؤلف وكذا رؤيته للعالم ومعنى النص في اللغة المنقول منها.

### الكلمات المفتاح

الترجمة الأدبية - تفسير المعنى - اللغة المنقول منها - تجربة الكاتب - الذاتية.

## Résumé

Cet article traite l'interprétation de la signification du texte de la langue de départ (TLD) dans la traduction littéraire prenant en considération la relation qui existe entre le TLD et l'expérience personnelle de l'auteur et sa manière de conceptualiser les choses. L'intention de l'auteur dans un texte littéraire ne peut être facilement déterminée et pourrait être interprétée subjectivement par le traducteur. Quelques exemples pris des traductions de Sarwat Okasha et d'Antoniush Bashir de l'œuvre de Gibran khalil Gibran *The Prophet* montrent comment ces deux traducteurs auraient pu éviter une traduction subjective des concepts des mots «love» et «God» s'ils avaient pris en considération les concepts d'*amour* et de *Dieu* chez Gibran et qui régissent la signification de l'œuvre de Gibran. Cet article tente de montrer les difficultés que peuvent rencontrer les traducteurs dans l'interprétation objective des concepts essentiels dans le TLD si la relation qui existe entre le concept ainsi que la vision du monde de l'auteur et la signification du TLD n'est pas prise en considération.

### Mots clés

Traduction littéraire - interprétation de la signification - langue de départ - expérience de l'auteur - subjectivité.

Speaking about human language, Lowe (see : Baker M., 1992 : 45) says :

« Reality, the world of experience, consists of a continuous, interrupted flow of expressions of all sorts which man can perceive with his physical senses. Human language by categorising these impressions through the various representational systems it has developed has introduced some sort of discontinuity into this flow of impressions - Hence, the expression « to split » the world of experience - by providing man with a mental vision or representation of experience. In fact, by providing man with a certain conceptualisation of reality, every language proposes an original, discontinuous vision of the universe of experience. And in a sense, any meaningful unit of a given language participates in some way in the creation of the global mental vision of the world this particular language proposes to its speakers »

Lowe here reveals an undeniable reality of the human language that does not consist simply of words but is rather a combination of linguistic units and human experience. If this consideration raises a controversial issue in translation, it is a real debatable point in literary translation. The interpretation of the meaning of the source language text in literary translation is indeed a difficult task that any translator encounters no matter how perfect and accurate is his knowledge of the norms and rules of both the source language and the target language texts. This is because the author's text is not a « semantic or a linguistic entity » (see : Boushaba S., 1988 : 49) which exists solely but has a relationship with the author's personal experience and his way of conceptualising things. This implies that the author's intention in a literary text cannot be determined easily and might be interpreted subjectively by the translator especially if we bear in mind that the latter is a reader first of all and has « his own discontinuous vision of the universe » as Lowe says (see : Baker M., 1992 : 45). The translator in approaching the original message is, in a sense, like a tourist who, looking at a landscape, responds to it in accordance with a background of aesthetic and artistic values. From these observations, it becomes clear that the risk of subjectivity in literary translation is intense. This risk emerges from the fact that the translator is faced with a twofold task : he should first feel the author's feeling on the one hand and then render this feeling in another language which in turns has its own concepts and aesthetic features on the other hand.

The translator's subjective interpretation of the meaning of a literary text is, therefore, considered by translation theorists as inevitability. Catford (1965 : 94), speaking about communicative equivalence, says :

« a decision in any particular case as to what is functionally relevant in this sense must in our present state of knowledge remain to some extent a matter of opinion »

Similarly, Jery Levy (see Bassnett-McGuire, 1980 : 36) dealing with the rendition of the meaning of a literary text from the SL (Source Language) to the TL (Target Language), stresses the intuitive element in the translator's interpretation of the original message and claims : « As in all semiotic processes, translation has its pragmatic dimension as well ».

This notion of subjectivity in the interpretation of the original text is stressed even more by Delisle (1984 : 74) who warns that various interpretations of the original text can be predicted and it would, therefore, be unrealistic to expect to find one exact rendition of the original message :

*« To detect the intentions of an author is sometimes a very difficult task (.....) which can give place to two interpretations that are both valid ».*<sup>1</sup>

In fact, anyone well acquainted with the complexity of languages can realise that Delisle's view reflects an undeniable truth. Languages are very complex systems determined by various factors some of which are related to the structures of these languages and others are extra linguistic such as the social and cultural contexts, the collective as well as the individual use made of them.

It seems that up to this stage, the problem of an adequate interpretation of the meaning of the SL message is still determined by the translator's subjective approach to it.

A way out of this dilemma might be found if the translator does not restrict himself to look for equivalence at word level but to focus on the function of words in the SL message.

In this context, Palmer (1976 : 21) states :

*« The word of a language often reflects not so much the reality of the word but the interests of people who speak it ».*

Indeed the vocabulary of any language could be regarded as a set of words referring to various semantic fields that in turn refer to various fields of experience that can vary from one speech community to another. However, if this complicates the translator's task while trying to achieve an objective interpretation of the SL message it could, paradoxically enough, help him to reach a somehow objective rendition of the original message. Taking into consideration that the vocabulary of a language is influenced by the way the speakers of this language analyse and report the word of experience would lead us to the conclusion that the translator has, then, « a reference » to which he can turn to in his interpretation of the author's message in the SL text.

He would first read the SL message, then through a further process of decoding it, would establish a relationship between its lexis and the author's thought and vision of life, which condition that lexis. Such approach in translation that we suggest here is expressed by Diethyl (see Jankovic, 1980 : 29) when he speaks about his concept of a literary text :

*« The work of art (is) an experience converted into an artistic form. Everything contained in experience, the profound and unmediated comprehension of life included is projected into the form and exists only in that form ».*

From such conception of a literary text derives an interpretative strategy, which I believe could serve as an argument against the belief that an accurate rendition of the

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<sup>1</sup> *« Décélérer les intentions d'un auteur est une opération parfois fort délicate (.....) qui peut donner lieu à deux interprétations aussi valables l'une que l'autre ».*

SL message is an impossible task. Since a literary text is « an experience converted into artistic form » as it is suggested, we could then assume that the author's intention in the text is not « absolute » and « independent » but is related to the author's cultural background, his personal experiences and concepts of life which Diethyl also calls « the other world of the work » (Jankovic, 1980 : 29). Such suggestions which can be compared to conception of a literary text as being the product of the relationship between « the intrinsic structure of the work » and « the concretisation of that structure » (ibid.: 27) leads us to the conclusion that subjectivity can, in fact, be avoided in the interpretation of the author's intention. The relationship which the translator establishes between the author's experiences/concepts and the meaning of the text and which converts his role from one of mere subjective reader to that of an objective interpreter is expressed by R. Barthes (1974 : 74) in terms of a distinction between the two notions of « work » and « text ». The former he considers as « concrete occupying a portion of book-space » (ibid.: 78) whereas the latter is « experienced by an activity ». A text interpreted without a relationship between its meaning and its author's experiences or concepts is therefore seen by Barthes as a text read without « the father's signature » (meaning the author's) (ibid.: 78).

On the basis of these considerations it becomes clear that subjectivity in the interpretation of SL message can be avoided only by an accurate reading of the original message, a reading through which the translator would attempt to draw parallels between the form of the text and « the author's unmediated comprehension of life », to recall Diethyl's statement.

This reading and interpretative strategy which we theoretically outlined above will be illustrated by some examples taken from Sarwat Okasha and Antonius Bashir's translations of Gibran's *The Prophet*. I shall, therefore in the following part of this paper, show how these two translators could have avoided a subjective translation of the concepts of « love » and « God » if they took into consideration Gibran's concept of love and God which govern the meaning of *The Prophet*. For this purpose, I shall, first, give an account of Gibran's personal experiences and thought and show the relationship between his thought and the meaning of the two concepts of « God » and « love » in his work. Finally, I shall show how Sarwat Okasha and A. Bachir failed to achieve objective rendition of the two essential concepts in *The Prophet* because of their neglect of the relationship which exists between the author's concept and vision of the world and the meaning of *The Prophet*.

### **Gibran's Experiences and Thought and the Meaning of *The Prophet***

As to Gibran's thought, following M. Naimy (1950), I shall divide its development into two phases. Though being, mainly interested in the second phase, the phase during which *The Prophet* was written, I shall also deal with the first one ; for a study of it would reveal what it was in Gibran's private life and early concepts which later lead him to have a pantheistic vision of the universe, which, as we shall see later, is the essence of *The Prophet*.

Gibran's thought was influenced by various experiences. The long years of poverty, his education in « Madrasat al Hikma », his first disappointing love affair in Lebanon, the self-imposed loneliness after the death of his sister, half brother and mother; and the two

years he spent in Paris. All these events had a great impact on the formulation of his ideas. The development of his ideas can be divided into two phases.

The first phase starts in 1897 when he entered « Madrasat Al Hikma » and end in 1918 when he settled in New York having spent two years in Paris. As a student in Lebanon, Gibran spent his summer days in Besharri. While there he fell in love with a Lebanese girl whose social class was far above his own. The girl's brother, who wanted to honour the country's traditions, forced his sister to stop seeing Gibran for whom he did not have much respect because of his poverty. Although being a common one, this experience had a great impact on Gibran's thinking. He came to realise that life is dominated by man-made rules and social practices that stand against the individual and his happiness.

Judging by the context and themes of his work, following his return to America in the autumn of 1899, it is easy to see that his stay in Lebanon had had a profound effect on him. From that date until 1918, he became mainly concerned with man and his problems; with nature which symbolises for him the most elemental state of man and which is anathema to social organisation; and also with the earthly life and its antithesis, the spiritual world beyond.

These general ideas are reflected in the early writings in « دموعه وابتسامته » *Dam'a wa ibtisāma* (A Tear and a Smile) and « عرائس المروج » *'Arā'is al-Murūġ* (Nymphs of the Valley) (1906). For instance, he stands against society, its man-made rules and oppression, and praises nature which he considers the ideal world of freedom and love. In nature, every thing speaks of love which is the basic bond governing the relationship between all creatures. This concept of prevailing love is expressed symbolically in *A Tear and a Smile* where a wave declares her love to the shore saying « *when the flow comes, I embrace my love and fall at its feet* »<sup>2</sup> and the rain reveals her tender love to the flowers claiming : « *if I see a beautiful garden I descend and kiss the lips of its flowers and embrace its bough* »<sup>3</sup>.

In praising nature and glorifying its prevailing love, Gibran compares the law of nature to the law of society. The law of human nature is dictated by the heart and its passions. The passions of the heart have in Gibran's eyes a kind of religious sanctity. Anyone who stands against them stands against God because God is love or nothing<sup>4</sup>. Whereas what is called « law » in society is no more than the tyranny and oppression which powerful people exert on the helpless. Gibran attacks social practices in « المواكب » *Al-Mawākib* (processions) (1918) condemning the structure of human society, declaring that governors who violate the law of nature, by creating their own laws and priests who pretend to be equal to God and who ignore the heart and its passions are all « حفارو القبور » *Haffārū al Qubūr* (grave diggers) who bury the living by burying the essence of life which is love. Gibran's love for human nature blended with mysticism and a

<sup>2</sup> Khalil Gibran, *A Tear and a Smile*, translated by H.M. Nahmad, London, 1950, p. 153.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.156.

<sup>4</sup> Khalil Gibran, quoted by Barbara Young in her book *This Man From Lebanon*, 8<sup>th</sup> Ed., New York, 1956, p. 153.

metaphysical view of the Universe. Besides his glorification of nature, he also believes in the spiritual world beyond and regards it as eternal world of love and happiness. Poor and weak people and lovers whose passions are not fulfilled in the fallen world because of man-made rules, will be given eternal happiness in the spiritual world beyond.

Longing for death, thus becomes a normal process since death is an escape from the misery of the earthly life. It is the end of a sordid existence and the beginning of a better one.

The belief in the transcendence from earthly life to the spiritual world beyond will remain a characteristic of Gibran's thought in the second phase of the development of his ideas which starts in 1918, although in this phase his mind reaches the peak of optimistic pantheism. In the works he produces in this time, *The Madman* (1918), *The Forerunner* (1920) and *The Prophet* (1923), he deals with the question of life and the destiny of man in a pantheistic spirit which seems to have had its genesis in his intensive reading of William Blake<sup>5</sup>. Dr Jamil Jabr (1983 : 72) highlighted Gibran's acquaintance with William Blake.

Indeed, influenced by William Blake, Gibran in this phase of the development of this thought considers man as a manifestation of one universal truth : God. God is universal, omnipresent and can be seen in all men and all things in the universe. God, for Gibran, is not the creator of the earth but is part of man and the earth. In 1916, two years before his mind reaches the peak of pantheism, Gibran wrote the following letter to Mary Haskell in which he speaks of his pantheistic creed which he called at that time his « new knowledge of God » :

« This perception, beloved Mary, this new knowledge of God is with me night and day. I cannot do anything else but be with it and be moved by it. When I sleep there is something in me that keeps me awake to follow it and to receive more from it and through it. My very eyes seem to retain that slowly - developing picture of the birth of God. I see him rising like the mist from the seas and the mountains and plains....

God is not the creator of the earth God desires man and the earth to become like him and be part of him »<sup>6</sup>

Gibran's pantheism starting from 1918, became an optimistic pantheism. In this phase of the development of his thought, Gibran does not only consider God as a universal truth dwelling in all men and all things, but he also sees him as a universal bond of love which unifies all men and all creatures of the universe melt and interpenetrate. The work which he produces in this phase, namely *The Madman* (1918), *The Prophet* (1923), *Jesus The Son of Man* (1927), *The Earth Gods* (1931) and *The Garden of The Prophet* (1933) are all a revelation of his optimistic pantheism.

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<sup>5</sup> Gibran's acquaintances with William Blake has also been mentioned by Gibran's closest friends and biographer : Barbara Young in *This Man from Lebanon* (1956) and Mikhail Naimy in : جبران خليل جبران : حياته، موته، أدبه، فنه، *Gibran khalil Gibran , Hayatuh, Mawtuh, Adabuh, Fannuh*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, Beirut, 1953.

<sup>6</sup> A letter of Khalil Gibran to Mary Haskell, quoted by Annie Salem Otto in her article « Gibran : The Man and His Art » in : Suheil Badi Bushri and Paul Gotch (Ed), *Gibran of Lebanon*, New papers, Beirut, 1975 pp. 18-19.

This belief in the unity of life through God (= the universal bond of love) is expressed with all its implications in *The Prophet*.

« And if you would know God, be not therefore a  
solver of riddles  
Rather look about you and you shall see him  
playing with your children  
And look into space; you shall see him walking.  
In the cloud, outstretching his arms in the lightning  
and descending in rain.  
You shall see him smiling in flowers, then rising and  
waving his hands in trees »<sup>7</sup>.

God in *The Prophet* is therefore not seen as the creator of man but part of him, for he can be seen « playing with the children ». God is not the creator of the earth but part of it since he is present in the cloud, the rain, the flowers and the trees. Man and every thing in nature, thus, melt in the totality of God.

God in *The Prophet* is not a power but that universal bond of love through which all men and all things are unified. As a living being, man in his earthly life is seen by Gibran as a shadow of his real self. To be one's real self is to be one with the infinite and universal God (= love) to which man is inseparably related. Self-realisation, therefore, lies in growing out of one's spatio-temporal dimensions so that the self is broadened to the extent of including anyone and everything. Man should love all men and all things in order to be part of God who is all men and all things. Almustafa, in *The Prophet* is therefore a prophet of love who urges the people of Orphalese to grow out of their individual self and identify themselves with the greater and universal self which is love. Thus, love is the opening sermon of Almustafa to the people of Orphalese :

« When love beckons to you, follow him  
Though his ways are hard and steep.  
And when his wings enfold you yield to him  
though the sword hidden among the pinions  
May wound you  
And when he speaks to you believe in him,  
Though his voice may shatter your dreams as  
the north wind lays waste the garden.  
For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you.  
Even as he is for your growth so is he for your pruning »<sup>8</sup>.

Love, as seen by Gibran is an emancipation and a suffering at once. It is an emancipation because it « crowns » man by leading him to that stage of broader self-consciousness whereby he loves everything to the extent of being all things and consequently be as great and as infinite as God (= love). It is a crucifixion because it shatters

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<sup>7</sup> Khalil Gibran, *The Prophet*, published by William Heinemann Ltd, 1980, pp. 91-92.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp.10-11.



man's individual self into pieces so that it grows out of its spatio-temporal dimensions and be part of the infinite, universal and eternal love.

The Concepts of « God » and « Love » in *The Prophet* were misinterpreted by many arabic translators who did not take into consideration Gibran's pantheistic creed which govern the meaning of *The Prophet*.

### **Sarwat Okasha's and Antonius Bashir's Misinterpretation of the Concepts of 'God' and 'Love' in *The Prophet*.**

The word «God » of the original English version has been rendered by Allah « الله » in both Sarwat Okasha's and Antonius Bashir's arabic versions of *The Prophet* (see appendix 1).

By translating the word « God » by Allah « الله », I believe that the translators have distorted the meaning of the concept of God in *The Prophet*. If we take into consideration Gibran's pantheistic creed which govern the meaning of *The Prophet*, it becomes clear that the word Allah « الله » is not the right rendition of the word « God ». The concept of God in *The Prophet*, as we have seen, is a revelation of Gibran's pantheism based on the universality of God (= the universal bond of love). By translating the word « God » by Allah « الله », the translators gave an islamic connotation to *The Prophet* which has been suggested by Gibran, and therefore did not render the concept of the universality of God which is the essence of the work. For this reason, I believe that the word ar-rab « الرب » is the right rendition of the word « God ».

The word ar-rab « الرب », contrary to the word Allah « الله », does not have an islamic connotation, but rather refers to God in general, and therefore renders better the concept of the universality of God which is suggested by Gibran.

Indeed, a reading of *The Prophet* followed by an attempt to establish a relationship between Gibran's pantheistic concept of God - and the theme of God in *The Prophet* would reveal that one of the main intentions of Gibran in *The Prophet* is to enhance the universality of God. Gibran, as we have already mentioned, sees God, as a universal bond of love which unifies all men through love and understanding. Gibran expresses this concept of universality symbolically by making Almustafa a universal prophet.

Indeed, Almustafa who preaches the universal religion of love is a universal prophet for he embodies the characteristics of a Muslim, a Christian, a Jew and a Buddhist :

- 1- He is called «Almustafa» which is a nomination of the Muslim prophet Mohammed (pbuh).
- 2- He uses the « aye », the « nay », the « behold », the « unto » and the « verily » of the (English version of the) Christian Bible as we can see from the following examples :

« Aye you shall be together even in the silent  
memory of God »<sup>9</sup>

« Some of you say, 'joy is greater than sorrow' »

<sup>9</sup> Khalil Gibran, *The Prophet*, published by William Heinemann Ltd, 1980, p.16.

and others say 'nay sorrow is the greater ' »<sup>10</sup>

« But I say unto you..... »<sup>11</sup>

« Verily you are suspended like scales between  
your sorrow and your joy »<sup>12</sup>

« If you would indeed behold the spirit of death  
open your heart wide into the body of life »<sup>13</sup>

3- Like Hebrew prophets, he lives in the hilly wilderness beyond the city walls :

« And in the twelfth year, on the seventh day of Ielool, the month of  
reaping, he climbed the hill without the city walls »

« But as he descended the hill, a sadness came upon him.... »<sup>14</sup>

4- Finally, like a Buddhist, he believes in reincarnation for he claims :

« A little while, a moment of rest upon the wind, and another  
woman shall bear me »<sup>15</sup>.

The combination of all these characteristics in Almustafa clearly reflects the author's intense desire to enhance the universality of God. Almustafa, is thus not the prophet of Islam, Christianity, Judaism or Buddhism but a universal prophet who preaches a universal religion which does not separate men and differentiate between them, but rather unifies them be they Muslims, Christians, Jews or Buddhists.

By translating the word « God » by Allah « الله », Sarwat Okasha and Antonius Bashir have, thus, failed to render the universality of God which Gibran symbolically suggests in *The Prophet* and which he has once expressed in the following terms :

« I love you when you prostrate yourself in a mosque and kneel in a  
church and pray in your synagogue for you and I are sons of one  
religion »<sup>16</sup>

Another example of subjective rendition that is due to the translator's neglect of the author's thought and its impact on the meaning of the work can be found in Sarwat Okasha's version.

Sarwat Okasha has translated the word « love » of the original English text by *al hub* « الحب » (see appendix 2) :

By translating the word « love » by *al hub* « الحب » Sarwat Okasha has again failed to achieve an objective rendition of an important concept in *The Prophet* because of his neglect of the author's thought which dictates the meaning of the work.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p.36.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.37.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.93.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.1.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p.114.

<sup>16</sup> *A Tear and a Smile*, translated by H.M.Nahmed; Introduction by Robert Hilleyer, London, 1950, p. 168.

The word *al ḥub* « الحب » in Arabic, though it can refer to affection in general is nevertheless used most of the time to refer to the affection between a man and a woman. I therefore believe that the word *al maḥabba* « المحبة » would be a better translation of « love ». Love in *The Prophet*, as we have seen, expresses Gibran's concept of love not as being an affection between a man and a woman but a universal bond of love which unifies all men and all creatures of the universe.

By way of concluding this study, on the concept of subjectivity in the interpretation of a SL literary text, I would say that the translator can avoid a subjective rendition of the meaning of the SL text if he takes into consideration the author's thought which dictates and governs its meaning.

We have, in the present paper, assumed, in a sense, the role of the translator as a reader. Then, on the basis of the relationship which we have established between the author's concepts and the meaning of *The Prophet*, we tried to determine the author's intention in the work and therefore managed to show how Sarwat Okasha and Antonius Bashir have subjectively rendered some concepts because of their neglect of the relationship which exists between those concepts and the author's thought.

We can say, then, that the meaning of a literary text is bounded by two elements : the meaning of the text itself and the author's concepts, and is, in a sense, the product of the two. It becomes clear, then that in aiming for an adequate rendition of the author's intention in the SL message, the translator should consider not only the meaning of the work but also the author's concepts which govern its meaning, i.e., the reality behind it.

Finally, it would be perhaps appropriate to end up our suggestions in this paper by what Gibran himself said about the relationship between a literary text and its author's thought when he said that any image is a mirror and a reflection of the self and each poem is a history of a life.

## Appendix 1

1- « Prophet of God in quest of the uttermost long have you searched  
the distances of your ship »

(Khalil Gibran, *The Prophet*, published by William Heinemann Ltd., 1980, pp. 91-92 )

« يا نبي الله، يا من سعى وراء أسمى الغايات، يا من ظل يتطلع إلى الآفاق بحثا عن سفينته »

« Yā nabiyyallāhi, yā man sa‘ā warā’a ’asmā al-gāyāti, yā man ḍalla yatataḷla‘u ilā al-’āfāqi baḥṭan ‘an safinatihi »

(*Al Nabi*, translated by Sarwat Okasha, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Dar El Maarif, Egypt, 1966, p. 66)

« يا نبي الله، قد طالما كنت تسعى وراء ضالتك المنشودة مفتشا عن سفينتك التي كانت بعيدة عنك »

« Yā nabiyyallāhi, qad ṭalama kunta tas‘ā warā’a ḍālatika al-manšūdati mufattišan ‘an safinatika al-laṭī kānat ba‘īdatan ‘anka »

(*Al Nabi*, translated into Arabic by Antonius Bashir, edited by Yusuf al Bustani, Dar al Arab lil Bustani, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1985, p. 19)

2- Among the hills, when you sit in the cool shade  
of the white poplars sharing the peace and serenity  
of distant fields and meadows - then let your heart  
say in silence, ‘God rests in reason’

And when the storm comes, and the mighty

wind shakes the forest and thunder and

lightning proclaim the majesty of the sky - then let your

heart say in awe, ‘God moves in passion !’

And since you are a breath in God’s sphere,

And a leaf in God’s forest, you too should rest

in reason and move in passion »

(Khalil Gibran, *The Prophet*, published by William Heinemann Ltd., 1980, p. 60)

« وإذا جلست بين التلال، في ظل الأشجار الحور البيض ظليل، وشاركت ما ترامى من الحقول والمروج هدأتها

وصفاءها، فدع قلبك يردد في سكون : 'إن روح الله تسكن في العقل'.

وإذا هبت العاصفة، وهزت الريح العاتية أرجاء الغابة، وأفصح الرعد والبرق عن جلال السماء، فدع قلبك يردد

في خشية : 'إن روح الله تموج في العاطفة'.

ومادمت نفسا يتردد في ملك الله، وورقة تضطرب في غابته، فعليك أنت أيضا أن تسكن في العقل، وأن تموج

في العاطفة»

« Wa ’idā ḡalasta bayna at-tilāli, fī ḡilli al-aḡḡāri al-hūri al-bīḍi ḍalīl, wa šārakta mā tarāmā mina-l-ḡuqūli wa-l-murūḡi hud’atahā wa šafā’ahā, fada’ qalbaka yuraddidu fī sukūnin : " ’inna rūḡallāhi taskunu fī-l-’aqli " .

Wa ’idā habbati al-’āšifatu, wa hazzati ar-rīhu al-’ātiyatu ’arḡā’a al-ḡābati, wa ’afšaḡa ar-ra’du wa al-barqu ‘an ḡalāli as-samā’i, fada’ qalbaka yuraddidu fī ḡiṣyatin : " ’inna rūḡallāhi tamūḡu fī-l-’āṭifati " .

Wa mā dumta nafsan yataraddadu fi mulki Allāhi, wa waraqatan taḍṭaribu fi ḡābatihi, fa'alayka 'anta 'aydan 'an taskuna fi-l-'aqli, wa 'an tamūga fi-l-'āḥifati »  
(*Al Nabi*, translated by Sarwat Okasha, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Dar El Maarif, Egypt, 1966, pp. 113-114)

« وإذا جلستم في ظلال الحور الوارفة بين التلال الجميلة، تشاطرون الحقول والمروج البعيدة سلامها وسكينتها وصفاءها، فقولوا حينئذ في قلوبكم : 'الله يستريح في العقل'. وعندما تعصف العاصفة، وترزعزع الرياح أصول الأشجار في الأحراج، وتعلن الرعود والبرق عظمة السماوات، فقولوا حينئذ في أعماق قلوبكم متهيئين خاشعين، 'إن روح الله تتحرك في الأهواء' وما دتمت نسمة من روح الله، وورقة في حرجه، فأنتم أيضا يجب أن تستريحوا في العقل »

« Wa 'iḍā ḡalastum fi ḍilāli al-ḥūri al-wārifati bayna at-tilāli al-ḡamīlati, tuṣāṭirūna al-ḥuqūla wa al-murūga al-ba'īdata salāmahā wa sakīnatahā wa ṣafa'ahā, faqūlū ḥina'idīn fi qulūbikum : "Allāhu yastariḥu fi-l-'aqli". Wa 'indamā ta'sifu al-'āṣifatu, wa tuza'zi' ar-riyāḥu 'uṣūla al-'aṣḡāri fil-'aḥrāḡi, wa tu'linu ar-ru'ūdu wa-l-barqu 'aḍamata as-samāwāti, faqūlū ḥina'idīn fi 'a'māqi qulūbikum mutahayyibīna ḥāṣi'ina:" 'inna rūhallāhi tataḥarraku fi-l-'ahwā'i ". Wa mā dumtum nasmatan min rūḥi Allāhi, wa waraqatan fi ḥarḡihi, fa'antum 'aydan yaḡibu 'an tastariḥū fi-l-'aqli »  
(*An Nabi*, translated by Antonius Bashir, edited by Yusuf Al Bustani, Dar al Arab lil Bustani, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1985, pp. 66-67)

3-« Through the hands of such as these God speaks  
and from behind their eyes he smiles upon the earth »

(Khalil Gibran, *The prophet*, published by William Heinemann Ltd., 1980, p. 27)

« على فيض أمثال هؤلاء تتجلى كلمة الله، ومن خلال عيونهم تشرق نسماته على الأرض »

« 'Alā fayḍi 'amtāli ha'ulā'i tataḡallā kalimatu Allāhi, wa min ḥillāli 'uyūnihim tuṣriqu nasamātuḥu 'alā al-arḍi »

(*Al Nabi*, translated by Sarwat Okasha, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Dar Al Maarif, Egypt, 1966, p. 77)

« بمثل أيدي هؤلاء يتكلم الله، ومن خلال عيونهم بيتسم على الأرض »

« Bimiṭli 'aydi ha'ulā'i yatakallamu Allāhu, wa min ḥillāli 'uyūnihim yabtasimu 'alā al-arḍi »

(*Al Nabi*, translated by Antonius Bashir, edited by Yusuf al Bustani, Dar Al Arab lil Bustani, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1985, p. 30)

## Appendix 2

1- « Then said Almitra, 'speak to us of love' »

(Khalil Gibran, *The Prophet*, W. Heinemann Ltd., 1980, p. 10)

« وانبرت المطرا وقالت له 'حدثنا عن الحب' »

« Wa-nbarati al-miṭrā wa qālat lahu " ḥaddiṭnā 'ani -l-ḥubbi " »

(*Al Nabi*, translated by Sarwat Okasha, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Dar al Maarif, Egypt, 1966, p. 68)

2- «When love beckons to you, follow him »  
(Khalil Gibran, *The Prophet*, W. Heinemann Ltd., 1980, p. 10)

« وإذا أوماً الحب إليكم فاتبعوه »

« Wa 'iḏā 'awma'a al-ḥubbu 'ilaykum fatba'ūhu »  
(*Al Nabi*, translated by Sarwat Okasha, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Dar al Maarif, Egypt 1966, p. 68)

3- « For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you.  
Even as he is for your growth so is he for your pruning »  
(*Al Nabi*, translated by Sarwat Okasha, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Dar al Maarif, Egypt, 1966, p. 68)

« إن الحب إذ يكلم هامتكم له أن يعذبكم فيصليكم

فهو إذ يشد عودكم، ليشذب منكم الأغصان »

« 'Inna al-ḥubba 'iḏ yukallilu hāmatakum lahu 'an yu'aḏḏibakum fayaṣlubakum fahuwa  
'iḏ yaṣuddu 'ūdakum, layaṣḏibanna minkum al-'aḡṣāna »  
(*Al Nabi*, translated by Sarwat Okasha, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Dar al Maarif, Egypt, 1966, p. 68)

4- « All these things shall love do unto you that you  
may know the secrets of your heart, and in  
that knowledge become a fragment of life's heart »  
(Khalil Gibran, *The prophet*, W. Heinemann Ltd., 1980, p. 11)

« كل هذا يفعله الحب بكم، كي تعرفوا أسرار قلوبكم،

وبهذه المعرفة تصبحون فلة من قلب الوجود »

« kullu hādā yaf'aluhu al-ḥubbu bikum, kay ta'rifū 'asrāra qulūbikum, wa bihādīhi al-  
ma'rifati tuṣbiḥūna falḏatan min qalbi al-wuḡūdi »  
(Khalil Gibran, *The prophet*, W. Heinemann Ltd., 1980, p. 1)

5- « Love gives naught but itself and takes naught  
but from itself  
Love possesses not nor would it be possessed;  
For love is sufficient unto love »  
(Khalil Gibran, *The Prophet*, W. Heinemann Ltd., 1980, p. 12)

« فالحب لا يعطي إلا ذاته، ولا يأخذ إلا من ذاته،

والحب لا يملك ولا يملكه أحد،

فالحب حسبه أنه الحب »

« Falḥubbu lā yu'tī 'illā dātahu, wa lā ya'ḥuḏu 'illā min ḏātihi, wa-l-ḥubbu lā yamliku  
wa lā yamlikuhu 'aḥadun, fa-l-ḥubbu ḥasbuhu 'annahu al-ḥubbu »  
(*Al Nabi*, translated by Sarwat Okasha, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Dar Al Maarif, Egypt, 1966, p. 70)

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