

## On the translation of “a farewell to arms” into Albanian

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### Abstract

The present paper aims at analyzing some aspects of translating Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms from English in Albanian language. We will examine how the translator had succeeded in conveying exhaustively, loyally, truthfully and fluently the multiple layers of voices, images, symbols, connotations and denotations of such a masterpiece to his own audience, from Source Language (English) into the Target Language (Albanian). We will see how the translator has overcome the obstacles finding the Source Language adequate equivalents standing for objects, actions, ideas and thoughts expressed in the Source Text.

**Keywords:** *Message, source language, target language, translatability, untranslatability.*

### Introduction

As critics have often agreed, “A Farewell to Arms “ represents Hemingway's most accomplished novel and through this novel the author has tried to myth himself as a master of writing. The theme of this paper, i.e., translation of the poem into Albanian is inspirational and challenging at the same time. Therefore, profound attention and consideration should be given to Hemingway's works in order to try to shed some light regarding the fact how they are received in Albanian language, literature and culture.

It is usually agreed that the process of translation involves the transfer of a message from one language to another, and as Komissarov states “Translation from language to language is ipso facto translation from culture to culture” (1991, 12). For many scholars translation of literary work is challenging and the main concern of the translator is whether to prefer the content over the form or vice - versa. Newmark (1981,7) asserts that “translation is a craft in which the translator tries to substitute a written message in the source language for another written message in the target language”.

Understanding and exercising translation as creative writing conditioned by the Source Text, which, in the final analysis, is nothing but the embodiment of personal experiences in poetry, prose or dramaturgy, the translator Vedat Kokona, through the translation of the novel “A Farewell to Arms” from the Source Language (English) into the Target Language (Albanian), has succeeded in conveying exhaustively, loyally, truthfully and fluently the multiple layers of voices, images, symbols, connotations and denotations of such a masterpiece to his own audience.

Most of the translation problems in A Farewell to Arms are related to the style used by Hemingway. This paper shows that his style is simple, straight and actual rather than attempting to make his prose look more gracious than it has to be. Compare:

*“All thinking men are atheists.” = “Të gjithë mendimtarët janë ateistë.” (Page 8 versus*

page 10)

*"I had gone to no such place but to the smoke of cafes and nights when the room whirled and you needed to look at the wall to make it stop, nights in bed, drunk, when you knew that that was all there was, and the strange excitement of waking and not knowing who it was with you, and the world all unreal in the dark and so exciting that you must resume again unknowing and not caring in the night, sure that this was all and all and all and not caring ..."* = **"Në vend që të veja në këto vise kisha qenë në mes të tymit të kafeneve, kisha kaluar net të atilla kur dhoma të duket sikur vjen rrotull, dhe kur duhet të shikosh me ngulm një pikë në mur që të mos të duket se ajo vjen vërdallë; kisha kaluar net në shtrat ashtu xurxull, me vetëdijen se nuk kishte asgjë tjetër dhe me përshtypjen e çuditshme se zgjoheshe pa ditur se kush ishte me ty dhe në errësirë, bota nuk të duket aspak si diçka e vërtetë rreth e rrotull; të gjitha këto t'i nxisin ndjenjat kaq shumë sa ti fillon prapë nga e para pa ditur asgjë, sikur s'përfill asgjë në mes të natës, duke qenë i sigurt se nuk ka asgjë tjetër, asgjë, asgjë, dhe se nuk do t'ia dish për asgjë..."** (Page 13 versus page 15)

*"I tried to tell about the night and the difference between the night and the day and how the night was better unless the day was very clean and cold and I could not tell it; as I cannot tell it now. But if you have had it you know. He had not had it but he understand that I had really wanted to go to the Abruzzi but had not gone and we were still friends, with many tastes alike, but with the difference between us. He had always known what I did not know and what, when I learned it, I was always able to forget. But I did not know that then, although I learned it later."* = **"U përpoqa t'i tregoja se ç'ndryshim mishte midis natës dhe ditës dhe si është më e mirë nata në rast se ditën moti nuk është shumë i bukur dhe shumë i ftohtë; por nuk munda t'ia shpjegoja këtë gjë, ashtu siç nuk do të isha i zoti ta shpjegoja as tani. Të gjithë ata që kanë pasur këtë përshtypje do më kuptojnë. Ai nuk e kishte pasur kurrë këtë përshtypje, megjithatë kuptoi se kisha pasur me të vërtetë në mendje që të veja në Abrucet, por nuk kisha shkuar; megjithatë ende ishim miq të ngushtë dhe për shumë gjëra kishim po një shije, ndonëse kishte edhe gjëra ku nuk pajtoheshin ndjenjat tona. Ai dinte prej shumë kohësh ato që s'dija unë dhe atë që, pasi i mësoja, mund t'i harroja gjithmonë. Por këtë nuk e dija atëherë! E mësova më vonë!"** (Page 13 versus page 15)

*"Evidently it did not matter whether I was there or not."* = **"Dukej sheshit se prania ime nuk kishte ndonjë rëndësi të madhe."** (Page 16 versus page 18)

*"I didn't know about anything then. I thought it would be worse for him. I thought perhaps he couldn't stand it and then of course he was killed and that was the end of it."* = **"Nuk dija asgjë atëherë. Mendoja se do të ishte më keq për të. Mendoja se ndofta ai nuk do ta duronte dot një jetë të tillë. Dhe pasta ja ... u vra ... dhe çdo gjë mori fund."** (Page 19 versus page 21)

### Solutions to overcome translation obstacles

Literary translation is one of the most complex types of translation, especially translation of novels and many translators find difficulties during the translation of novels, because of linguistic and cultural novels. As Hariyanto (n.d) has stated, literary translation is the most difficult task a translator can face. According to

Riffaterre (1992:204-2015) Literary translations must reflect all the literary features of the source text such as selection of words, figures of speech, etc... In this article there are examined the strategies that the Albanian translator has used to deliver the forms in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* and potency regarding linguistic features. Regardless of being in environments – be them related to time, space, culture, knowledge or experience, completely different from those imposed on Ernest Hemingway, the translator, taking advantage of the creative use of the respective languages, has managed to avoid wrong reading, interpreting and translating of the Source Text. Consequently, he has overcome the obstacles finding the Source Language adequate equivalents standing for objects, actions, ideas and thoughts expressed in the Source Text.

### Comparison

*"I did not care what I was getting into. ... I did not love Catherine Barkley nor had any idea of loving her. This was a game, like bridge, in which you said things instead of playing cards. Like bridge you had to pretend you were playing for money or playing for some stakes. Nobody had mentioned what the stakes were."* = **"As që e vrisja mendjen se ku do të më shpinte kjo aventurë ku isha hedhur. ... E dija që nuk e doja Ketri Barklin dhe nuk kisha aspak ndërmend që ta dashuroja. Kjo ishte një lojë si ajo loja e brixhit, ku rrinë e thonë fjalë në vend që të lozin me letra. Ashtu si në brixh, duhej të bëje sikur lozje me të holla ose për diçka. Askush nuk e kishte zënë në gojë ende se ç'qe ajo për të cilin loznim."** (Page 31 versus page 33)

*"It doesn't finish. There is no finish to war. ... War is not won by victory. .... One side must stop fighting. Why don't we stop fighting?"* = **"Kjo s'mbaron kurrë. Lufta nuk përfundon me fitore. ... Duhet që njëri nga luftëtarët të mos luftojë. Pse nuk ndalemi dhe të mos luftojmë?"** (Pages 50-51 versus page 52)

Thus, though the scope of the translator's action is too narrow because of its dependence on "four languages" (Source Language, Target Language, Author's Language and Translator's Language), Vedat Kokona has avoided such an obstacle through thorough exhaustive language knowledge; through profound penetration into the semantic content of the words, as well as into their syntactic behaviour, abiding by the principles of loyalty and creativity. Compare:

*"What you tell me about in the nights. That is not love. That is only passion and lust. When you love you wish to do things for. You wish to sacrifice for. You wish to serve."* = **"Ajo që më tregonit për netët tuaja nganjëherë nuk është dashuri. Ai nuk është veçse pasion dhe zjarri i epsheve. Njeriu kur dashuron kërkon të bëjë diçka për atë që dashuron. Kërkon të sakrifikojë, të shërbejë."** (Page 72 versus page 73)

*"I want what you want. There isn't any me anymore. Just what you want."* = **"Unë një që jam një që s'jam. Unë jam ti. Mos më nda kështu nga vetja jote."** (Page 109 versus page 110)

### Translatability of "A Farewell to Arms"

Being too poetic, it is often said that Hemingway's prose, and particularly his

dialogues, cannot be translated. The experience demonstrated in this translation, however, proves the contrary, because the translator Vedat Kokona has profoundly grasped the author's way of thinking, of perceiving and of experiencing life. Compare: *"There's no way to be married except by church or state. We are married privately. You see, darling, it would mean everything to me if I had any religion. But I haven't any religion. ... You're my religion. You're all I've got."* = **"Nuk ka mënyrë tjetër për t'u martuar përveç martesës fetare ose civile. Ne jemi martuar privatisht. Ti e kupton, i dashur, se do të kishte rëndësi të madhe për mua sikur të kisha fe, po ja që s'kam. ... Feja ime je ti. Vetëm ty të kam në këtë botë."** (Pages 115-116 versus page 111)

*"I can keep you safe. I know I can. But nobody can help themselves."* = **"Mund të të ruaj nga rreziku. E di se mund ta bëjë këtë gjë. Por për veten tënde është gjithmonë më vështirë që ta bësh."** (Page 126 versus page 122)

*"We could feel alone when we were together, alone against the others."* = **"Kur ishim bashkë na qëllonte që e ndjenim vetminë por këtë vetmi e ndjenim në marrëdhëniet me të tjerët."** (Page 249 versus page 236)

*"It is in defeat that we become Christian."* = **"Të krishterë bëhemi vetëm në disfatë."** (Page 178 versus page 170)

*"I never think. No, by God, I don't think; I operate."* = **"Nuk mendoj kurrë. Pasha Zotin, jo, nuk mendoj kurrë. Operoj."** (Page 167 versus page 159)

*"You always feel trapped biologically."* = **"Njeriu kapet gjithmonë në lak, në kuptimin biologjik."** (Page 139 versus page 134)

*"Life isn't hard to manage when you've nothing to lose."* = **"Por jetën mund ta rregullosh shumë lehtë kur s'ke asgjë për të humbur."** (Page 137 versus page 132)

### Poetic techniques and skills of the translator

According to (Neubert 1997: 23) Translation is a unique mode of language use. Except of competence in communication, professional translators are distinguished by the transfer and strategic competences they possess (Neubert 1997, Neubert 2000, Massey 2001, PACTE 2000). And in this regard, Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms is famous for its style. According to Adams (1939), no American writer of his generation has been more talked about than Ernest Hemingway. The objective of this paper is to examine the stylistic features used by the translator in translation this masterpiece in Albanian language.

Apart from the abovementioned achievements, the translator has proved himself to be an exceptional "ideal" reader. This and his being a writer equipped with poetic techniques and skills have helped him to follow the author's imagination, but without becoming its "prisoner". On the contrary, the translator has employed them to switch on his "creative lights". Compare:

*"He said we were all cooked but we were all right as long as we did not know it. We were all cooked. The thing was not to recognize it. The last country to realize they were cooked would win the war."* = **"Ai tha se ne kish marrë lumi të gjithë por se kjo nuk kishte rëndësi gjersa nuk e dinim. Ne të gjithë na kishte marrë lumi. Puna ishte që të mos e pranonim këtë. Fitoren do ta korrte ai vend që do ta kuptonte i fundit që e kishte marrë lumi."** (Pages 133-134 versus pages 128-129)

*"The brave dies perhaps two thousand deaths if he's intelligent. He simply doesn't mention them."* = **"Trimat vdesin ndofta dy mijë herë në qoftë se janë të mençur. Vetëm se nuk flasin për këto vdekje."** (Page 140 versus page 135)

The translator has also discovered and decoded the linguistic goal of the novel in the Target Language (Albanian) by coordinating, adjusting and expressing both linguistically and figuratively the living experiences of the characters as they themselves had gone through them. Thus, he has followed the "track" as defined by the author, interpreting the novel in the Target Language (Albanian) in accordance with his own free feelings. The translator's success is also a result of his absorbing and enriching a unique glossary of words and expressions. Compare:

*"You can't do it. You can't do it. I say you can't do it. You're dry and you're empty and there's nothing else. There's nothing else I tell you. Not a damned thing. I know, when I stop working."* = **"Nuk është e mundur, nuk është e mundur. Jeni të thatë e jeni të zbrazët dhe s'ka gjë tjetër. Po ju them se s'ka gjë tjetër. Asgjë. Këtë e kuptoj sa pushoj së punuari."** (Page 174 versus page 166)

*"They were beaten to start with. They were beaten when they took them from their farms and put them in the army. That is why the peasant has wisdom, because he is defeated from the start. Put him in power and see how wise he is."* = **"Ata ishin mundur që në fillim. Ata ishin mundur ditën që i hoqën nga fermat e tyre dhe i muarën ushtarë. Për këtë arsye fshatarët kanë më tepër mend, sepse ata janë mundur që në fillim. Jepi pushtetin në dorë, pa e sheh sa i mençëm do të jetë."** (Page 179 versus page 170)

*"Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names or rivers, the numbers of regiments and dates."* = **"Fjalët abstrakte, si lavdi, nder, guxim ose shenjtëri ishin të turpshme në krahasim me emrat konkretë të fshatrave, të numrave të udhëve, të emrave të lumenjve, të numrave të regjimenteve dhe të datave."** (Page 185 versus page 176)

*"You did not love the floor of a flat-car nor guns with canvas jackets and the smell of vaselined metal or a canvas that rain leaked through . . . but you loved someone else whom now you knew was not even to be pretended there..."* = **"Nuk mund ta duash dyshemenë e një vagoni, as edhe topat në këllëfët e tyre prej mushamaje, as erën e metalit të grasatuar, as edhe mushamanë që fut shiun ... Nuk mund ta doje sepse dashuroje një njeri që e dije se nuk ishte aty..."** (Page 232 versus page 221)

Although the translation remains loyal to the Source Text (English), it bears the translation's mark, which can be seen in the linguistic and literary means of his own language within the Target Language, because differences always stem from sameness, provided that you succeed in identifying them. Compare:

*"The killing came suddenly and unreasonably."* = **"Vdekja kishte ardhur pa pritur e papandehur, pa asnjë arsye."** (Page 218 versus page 209)

*"You had lost your cars and your men as a floorwalker loses the stock of his department in a fire. There was, however, no insurance. You were out of it now. You had no more obligations. ... Anger was washed away in the river along with any obligation."* = **"E dije se kishe humbur automobilat dhe shokët, siç humbet çiraku mallin e dyqanit të rajonit të tij në një zjarr. Unë s'isha i siguruar. Tani që isha jashtë valles, s'kisha më asnjë detyrim. ... Zemërimin tim bashkë me të gjitha detyrimet që mund të kisha i kishte marrë me vete lumi ku isha zhytur."** (Page 232 versus page 222)

*"The world breaks every one and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry."*  
= **"Bota i thyen njerëzit dhe pastaj shumë njerëz vendin e thyer e kanë më të fortë, por ata që nuk duan të thyhen bota i vret. Ajo i vret ata që janë shumë të mirë, shumë të urtë dhe shumë trima. Në mos qofsh një ndër ta ajo do të të vrasë edhe ty, por kjo do të ndodhë pak më vonë."** (Page 249 versus page 237)

*"I had always expected to become devout. All my family died very devout. But somehow it does not come."* = **"Gjithmonë kam shpresuar të bëhem fetar. Gjithë familja ime ka vdekur shumë fetare. Po ja që për një arsye ose për një tjetër nuk jam bërë."** (Page 263 versus page 249)

*"My own comes only at night."* = **"Ndjenjat e mia fetare vijnë vetëm natën."** (Page 263 versus page 250)

### Rewriting of the literary work

Translation of literary works has been labeled using various terms. Thus, some call it "variant"; some call it "imitation"; and some call it "recreation", "adaptation" or "transformation". Meanwhile, based on the comparison of this translation with the original text, we have come up with the term "rewriting", through which we mean the adequate "reproduction" of the Source Text in the Target Language. Compare:

*"Then too you are in love. Do not forget that it is a religious feeling."* = **"Domethënë se keni rënë në dashuri. Mos harroni se edhe kjo është një ndjenjë fetare."** (Page 263 versus page 250)

*"So now they got her in the end. You never got away with anything."* = **"Por ja që tani në fund kishin filluar avazet. E pamundur të shpëtoje nga këto"** (Page 320 versus page 301)

*"That was what you did. You died. You did not know what it was about. You never had any time to learn. They threw you in and told you the rules and the first time they caught you off base they killed you. Or they killed you gratuitously like Aymo. Or gave you the syphilis like Rinaldi. But they killed you in the end. You could count on that. Stay around and they would kill you."* = **"Kështu ndodh gjithmonë. Njeriu vdes. Nuk kupton asgjë. Nuk ka kohë të mësojë. Të shtyjnë në lojë, të mësojnë rregullat dhe në gabimin e parë që bën të vrasin. Ose vritesh kot së koti si Aimo. Ose merr sifilizin si Rinaldi. Por, më në fund, të vrasin që të vrasin. Për këtë të jesh i sigurt. Ki durim se do të të vijë radha."** (Page 327 versus page 308)

### Conclusions

The translator should have sensibility regarding the language, linguistic competence in both languages and competence in communication in both cultures in order to make a neat, plain and nice translation. As Newmark stated (1991, p.49) "the translator should possess "the ability to research often temporarily the topic of the texts being translated, and to master one specialism".

In this translation as a whole we don't encounter lack of loyalty because, while interpreting the novel, the translator has paid special attestation to all the factors contributing to its conception, including the author's personal circumstances during the writing process.

It is a great challenge dealing with a language that has a different feel and nuance embedded more in culture than in literal meaning, but I hope that this reconstruction of the translation process sheds some light on some of the linguistic and cultural issues that might be encountered in literary translation in general, and from English into Albanian in particular. This paper aimed at showing that Hemingway's work was very well received in Albania, in terms of Albanian language, culture and literature. A number of his masterpieces were published in Albanian and have proven very successfully and Hemingway has been one of the most favorite authors and most popular at the same time for Albanian readers. And it has been very interesting the fact that that nowadays readers have increased their interest to read his works.

As a translator, Vedat Kokona not only possesses a bilingual ability but he also had bicultural vision. In translating this masterpiece of Hemingway the translator has tried to overcome the repugnancies that stand in the way of transferring the meaning from one language to the other. Vedat Kokona, a very well-known creative translator had identified and settled the disparity that exists between the two cultures.

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