

Beyond Literalism: Arberry's Translating (in) Visibility of Imru al Qays' Mu'allaqa through the Lens of Critical Discourse Analysis

Fatima Zohra Benneghrouzi

Department of English, Faculty of Foreign Languages

Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University

Mostaganem, Algeria

Abstract

The translation of Pre-Islamic Arabic poetry into English is assumed by translators themselves to be their Gordian knot given the ensuing lexical, phonological, semantic and cultural variances existing between the two languages. The present paper aims at accentuating the way(s) diverse socio-cultural configurations can impinge on translators' strategy of literalism. With this objective in mind, the paper probes Arberry's translation venture in approaching Imru al Qays' Mu'allaqa by investigating the pivotal roles culture and ideology fulfill in maneuvering the translator's word choice. The approach adopted while investigating such postulation is a critical discourse analysis perspective steeped in Van Dijk's (2004) model of probing ideologies to six of al-Mu'allaqa's most culturally challenging lines of verse. Within the confines of this work, ideology unfolds to be highly salient in shaping the course of Arberry's rendition of the text through destabilizing his literalism.

Key words: al-Mu'allaqa, ideology, Imru al Qays, literalism, translation

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