



Poetry Is What Gets Lost In Translation

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"As a tool of cognition, poetry beats any existing form of analysis (a) because it pares down our reality to its linguistic essentials, whose interplay, be it clash or fusion, yields epiphany or revelation, and (b) because it exploits the rhythmic and euphonic properties of the language that in themselves are revelatory".

- Joseph Brodsky

As I, in any situation where emotions are called upon, invariably turn to vocabulary to facilitate and comprehend, I also understand the arts through words. Every visual question, statement and sensation needs to pass through this internal transformer...in order for me to place it in the correct category in the winding tunnels of my comprehension to store for further interpretation. In many ways this process resemble that of the mathematician who translates physical powers into mathematical formulas. Gravity, in all its vast complexity is simply a short numerical rule. That, to me, is astonishing but truly relieving.

When Robert Frost states "poetry is what gets lost in translation" I choose to understand him in the means of "poetry strengthens what is not expressed in the visual experience"

Some people, like the poet George Oppen would possibly argue that embracing art in this manner is a way of refusing something unknown to take place. In his opinion I would perhaps be considered to be somebody who is not very concerned with art or even the poetry itself since this transformative process means taking an unknown experience and turning it into something known (my own words) just like some people would like a painting of a place or a person that she knows and loves. I would argue the opposite, -instead of keeping my mind at a constant; it's expanding my comprehension of the unknown by creating silence around it.

In my own work this topic is always present and reflected upon. If works of art can be dismantled into linguistic formulas, can they also be constructed in the opposite direction? What are the basic differences between writing a text and working with physical installations? Is it possible to build a spatial text in the form of an installation through distinguishing the principles and processes that apply when writing a text with words, and use these same methods in material adaptation? Words do not stand in one-to-one relationships to objects, but belong to a community of relationships, and therefore this "translation process" (if you will) from words into tangible materials, cannot ever be considered as an actual translation, but a representation of the force that the words themselves indicate. In other words, I am not interested in translations but understanding the properties of the words by assigning them roles in the play that the installation results in.

I can see a couple of distinctive differences between the two separate processes. Instead of starting out with an actual idea, or visual concept, when I write I would start with a rhythm or tone, and the formation therefore becomes more depending on pace and variation than on outright intentions. (Yes, this is where the formalism discussion would come in. I will leave that one out). From there I would, instead of concentrating on a whole, concentrate on building fragments or sentences that during the course of the process constantly will interchange. The purpose would be to be able to distinguish distinct levels just like it would be in writing poetry. To create a narrative flow where the story slowly unfolds. And there is a story, -there is always a story.

In this process there is no restrained beginning or end and even if the fragments within the installation are positioned against each other in what for me would be a logical sequence, linguistically mapped, there would still be an endless amount of ways to interpret them. Just like the palindrome that can be read in any direction. Within the writing field, when you talk about poetry needing a supporting structure this usually



refers to whether you should write free verse or meter. In my case I am trying to find out if I can use the physical material in the installation as such support. Why does poetry need a support structure, and what would it be without that structure? Just aimlessly moving without destination? An added disorder to the confusion itself? Since meter is not diametrically opposed to the free verse for example, it's the play between the two that makes this attempt engaging.

I write with no intentions but to penetrate the sources of confusion, which, on a good day, possibly reveals the next layer of confusion..and the questions that come along with it. Those are what I am looking for. I do not expect to write myself straight into an answer. This also goes for my installations, and the social transactions they are referring to.

"If art teaches anything (to the artist, in the first place), it is the privateness of the human condition. Being the most ancient as well as the most literal form of private enterprise, it fosters in a man, knowingly or unwittingly, a sense of his uniqueness, of individuality, of separateness - thus turning him from a social animal into an autonomous "I". Lots of things can be shared: a bed, a piece of bread, convictions, a mistress, but not a poem by, say, Rainer Maria Rilke".

-Joseph Brodsky

Poetry can never be an abbreviation, no matter how much it might look like one. This might be the most intriguing characteristic of poetry to me, and the reason why I look to poetry for understanding when it comes to other ways of expression. The idea of giving the full story, leaving nothing out.

And I'm always on the lookout for the PI of poetry.