

“I felt free and happy, far from palace life, its conventions and sometimes its constraints.”

The Vagabond

One can love the beauty of the world, like how one falls in love with a person.

I walked for an entire day, most of the time alone, sometimes with the company of some merchant or voyager who had left the capital of the kingdom. My heart was filled with hope. When night came, I found a modest shelter and I exchanged my first coin for a meal and a few provisions for the days to come. I slept at the foot of a large tree and looking into the starry sky. I felt free and happy, far from palace life, its conventions and sometimes its constraints.

The days following, as though I had no specific place to go, I wandered wherever I desired, from one chance encounter to another, always taking care to mingle with the most people in order to increase the chances of meeting my sweetheart, it was possible that she lived in a village or at the heart of a deep forest.

Every time I came across a village, I would linger in the markets, on the squares, at the fountain where the women would come to refill their jugs. In the country I would visit every house and every settlement, taking any excuse to catch the eyes of the young women: begging for a drink of water, or a bite of food, asking for directions or looking for a non-existent cousin. I was for the most part well received, but not always. Seeing that my clothes had turned into rags over the course of weeks, the children sometimes targeted me with their mockeries. Sometimes too, the adults would get involved, especially if the harvest season was bad or there was a sickness that spread across the region. I was occasionally expelled from a village with stones or rotten fruits. Some consider those who are different, vagabonds, strangers, are responsible for all the evils that befall them. Sometimes the opposite would happen, and very regularly in the poorest areas I was warmly welcomed and invited to share a meal or a place to sleep. I learned much about the contradictory nature of my fellow human beings. One day I was troubled by an entirely simple scene. The route crossed a mountainous region and overlooked a vast lake. I arrived at the edge of a

small village of only a few houses. A little way from his hovel, I saw an older man, alone, working in his garden. He was bent over and pulling out the weeds between his vegetables. The day was close to ending and the evening light was particularly soft. The man lifted himself and looked for a moment at the silent lake, as if laid at his feet, the rays of the setting sun shimmered. Suddenly, he spread his arms and began singing. His voice, strong and deep contrasted with his fragile appearance. I was at that moment I was seized with emotion and troubled by the beauty of the song. The attitude of the old peasant was to me incomprehensible. Why, all of a sudden would he stop his work and sing in the middle of nowhere, with no one to witness his song? I understood then that one can love the beauty of the world, like how one falls in love with a person. How I wanted to know his heart's passion!

The Confrontation

In every confrontation, it is by fear that we are vulnerable.

One night, while I had stopped to sleep in a clearing not far from a creek, I heard a terrible cry coming from the other side. I rushed across the water and discovered the appalling spectacle of a young woman bound to a tree and being brutally whipped by two men with leather straps. Without a hint of hesitation I intervened, wresting one of the straps out of the hands of a man and throwing it far away. After the initial moment of shock, the two brutes questioned me in their most menacing tones who I was to act in such a way.

“I am the prince, heir to the kingdom and I order you to stop beating this girl!”

The men exchanged a look of surprise, then burst out laughing.

“We didn’t know you were crazy! You have given us quite a laugh, vagrant. Now get

out of the way and get back to your path, or else you will also feel our whip.”

“It matters not if you believe me. Of what right do you have to torture this poor woman?” The men’s faces became threatening again.

“Doesn’t matter the reason, we don’t have to answer to a wretch like you.”

The larger of the men seized his club while the other took out his knife. With what little strength she had left, the woman cried:

“Flee vagabond! They will kill you!”

A discussion was impossible with these brutes and my life was in very real danger. I couldn’t leave the woman at the hands of these men, but did I have the courage, and the right to risk my life for this stranger? I remembered then, a quote from Master Zhou: “In every confrontation, it is by fear that we are vulnerable. A child who does not know fear will be stronger than the most formidable warriors should doubts be raised about the superiority of their strength.”

I understood that there was only one way to defeat the two adversaries who were stronger and better armed than I: raise doubts about their superiority over me by dominating all fear. I closed my eyes for an instant, anchoring my feet to the ground and setting my hands to fists. Then I opened my eyes, fixed my adversaries with a stare and let forth a ferocious battle cry. I felt no more fear. I was certain that I would defeat them. The two suddenly destabilized men froze in their surge towards me. In that moment everything shifted. A voice escaped me, almost unrecognizable, and I heard myself say to them:

“I have come a long way, and men like you? I have killed dozens along my path. I have not finished my long voyage, so flee immediately or I will pulverize you by the power of my magic.”

I opened my hands and presented them, palm up to both men. The strangest thing was that in that moment I really believed that I had the power to turn my adversaries into lizards or to stone. This was without a doubt what they read in my eyes, too, for suddenly the taller one

dropped his club and ran away. The other hesitated for just a moment before doing the same. I approached the young woman who was just as terrified and delirious, reassuring her in a low voice:

“Fear not, I have no magic powers! I wanted just to scare them, and it obviously worked. Let us escape because they are likely to return in greater number.” She was too weak to walk on her own, so I supported her by strengthening myself in the depths of that forest. I discovered a good hiding place in the hollow of a giant sycamore tree and huddled there with her. We remained silent while I dressed her wounds with medicinal herbs. Shortly before dark we heard voices and snapping branches in the distance. Then, when I was certain that the danger had passed, we took advantage of the full moon and continued walking as far away from that place as possible. Exhausted, we arrived at dawn to a thatched cottage.

“I know the people who live here, they are distant relatives,” the young woman whispered to me. “There is no more danger.” After sleeping and eating I found the young girl

bedridden in the only room. She had bathed and regained some of her strength. For the first time I lingered on the fine features of her face. I felt a strange sensation.

The Mark

There are two kinds of law: the particular law of the cities, necessary but often imperfect, and the universal law of the conscience, which encourages us to respect all sentient beings and to share our superfluity.

Did the Profound Power of the World put me in the path of that girl... because she would be the one who made me discover what love was? At that thought my heart began to beat harder. The young girl addressed me in a soft voice:

“I don’t know how to thank you, stranger. You risked your life for me. Your heart is full of kindness.”

“Kindness, I am not sure, but certainly committed to justice. I, like everyone else, find it painful to see a woman being mistreated in such a manner. What did they blame you for?”

The young girl bowed her head.

“I stole fruits from their garden.”

“Is that a reason to act so violently?”

“The law of the kingdom permits anyone who is a victim of theft to enact justice of that sort.”

I was embarrassed because what she said was true. Having never been truly away from the palace I hadn't considered the direct consequences of a law such as that.

“Why did you steal?”

“I was starving.”

“Don't you have anyone to help you?”

“I have my parents and my younger brothers and sisters, but they are starving too, it was also for them why I chose to steal the fruits from our rich neighbors' garden.”

“Your neighbors would leave you to starve to death?”

“They do not care about the misfortune that has befallen us since my father took a bad fall and can’t work anymore.”

I was deeply troubled by these statements, I had discovered that in my own kingdom there were families who were dying of hunger and others who, living in abundance, could in all legality take revenge for a robbery, however legitimate. I realized then that there are two kinds of law: the particular law of the cities, necessary but often imperfect, and the universal law of the conscience, which encourages us to respect all sentient beings and to share our superfluity. I swore then, one day when I would ascend the throne, to change the law of my city and make it more fair to the needy. I was very moved, but I couldn’t say if it was because of her words or the young woman herself.

“Were you telling the truth when you claimed you were the heir prince?”

“Goodness no! It was to daunt them, but obviously it did not work!”

She burst into a great laughter. I spent the afternoon in her company. Learning of the misfortune of their distant relatives, our hosts decided to bring them here, where they could eat while they waited for her father to return to work. I enjoyed the presence of the girl, but I realized that my heart was not conquered. It was necessary for me to resume my route. As I was saying my farewells, she asked me a strange question:

“When we were together in the forest, you were drowsy in the early morning and I noticed that you have a strange mark in the small of your back, like a sort of scar. Where did it come from?”

“I was born with it. My nanny told me that it has always been there. It is impossible for me to see it where its situated, and I often forget it even exists.”

“Do you know that it is in the shape of a heart?”

The old woman

Be thankful for Life: she is good to all.

It is our fears that hinder her flow.

The weeks passed and alas, I did not meet a single young woman who touched my heart. I decided then to leave the road to the East and go up the North wind. With the heat of the summer arriving, it was also an attempt to find a bit of freshness. I had spent my last coin long ago and now I had to manage to find something to eat. I often gathered along my path wild berries or mushrooms, but I also needed to beg for some food and once again, the reactions from others were very diverse and seemingly had to do with their wealth or poverty. I discovered just as the poor were often more generous than those who lacked nothing, probably because they knew what it meant to be hungry and were more willing to share their meager pittance with a stranger.

An old woman invited me to eat her soup in her humble hut. While I thanked her for her generosity, she responded:

“Be thankful for Life: she is good to all. It is our fears that hinder her flow. So, we fill our chests and our granaries, instead of sharing. And yet when we are generous with Life, when we give without measure, nor fear of missing, Life is generous toward us. Tonight, it is me who offers you a modest meal. Tomorrow, it will be you who aids someone who needs it. When our hearts are in love, there is no more fear and we never lack the essentials.”

It was her last words that left me perplexed. I, who had a heart of crystal, I was not, however, insensitive to the distress of others and the idea of sharing seemed to me just and necessary. I understood what the old woman named as “love” was what I called “justice”. What she did because her heart was ablaze with empathy, I did out of duty, because it seemed to me indispensable if we were to live together in a peaceable manner. The result was the same, but the source of the generous action came either from the heart or from reason. It

amazed me that the heart and reason could thus converge to dictate to us a just and good conduct of life. But I was also saddened to have no access to this feeling of love that gave to those it inhabited, this light, warmth and joy that was foreign to me.

“What is it that you search for, my young friend?” continued the woman as she threw a log into the hearth.

“I am simply in search of love.”

“Who isn’t!”

“To tell you the truth, I have never loved anyone. I was born this way because of an evil spell that was cast upon my birth.”

The woman regarded me in silence and took my hand.

“My poor child! If I can do anything for you...”

“A wise man told me that there exists a woman who has the power to open my heart to love. That encounter is the goal of my voyage.

But I don't know anything about her, just that my heart will know the first time I see her."

The woman erupted into laughter. "So, it's not me!"

I too laughed wholeheartedly.

"It could have been! He did not specify her age. But although failing to melt my heart, you could nevertheless give me something."

"Oh?"

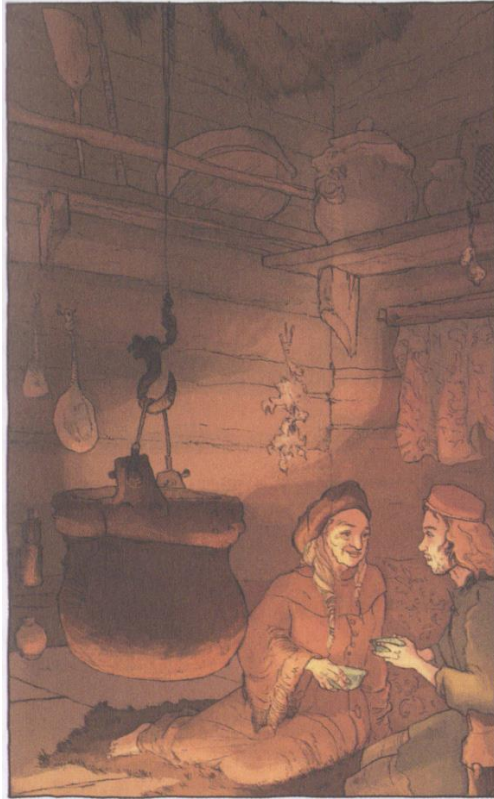
"Tell me of love."

The woman laughed anew. I continued:

"I sense that you have had a long and significant experience."

"Ah, yes. But you know, love takes many faces!"

"Ok, tell me about the faces of love..."



“When our hearts are in love, there is no more fear and we never lack the essentials.”

Translating Problematic Literature

Translating a literary text was both more difficult and less difficult than I thought it would be. Mostly it was challenging in ways that I did not think about beforehand. Overall, the challenge presented fit nicely into my “flow” zone: an area of work that is challenging enough to keep me interested but not so challenging that I wanted to give up. Working with a text that in my opinion was outdated in its views was one of the most challenging aspects of working this translation.

A note on technique before I get into just how this text was problematic. For the first round of translating, I stuck as close to translating literally as I could. This was not too difficult as the source language was not in itself especially complex. The first difficulty I ran into was that the language was dated. Translating literally meant that when I was translating, I chose English words that also sounded dated. However, I do not have any formal education with old-English texts, so I found this to be difficult. Researching the etymology of words that I was unsure of was very helpful, but I’m afraid over all the tone and language fluctuates. While working on revisions I first found myself using the technique of padding to adhere to the theme or tone of the passage, where the literal translation into English felt incomplete. I also used padding when translating conjugated verbs from French into English, specifically “nous” and “us” where the “nous” is implied in the conjugation of the verb, “us” may have needed to be specified in the translation. Two other techniques I found myself employing frequently were modulation and transposition, often together. Cross transposition happened often as well as I translated into the more passive-English language, sometimes changing subjects or tenses. As for theory, I would say that with the original translation I stuck as closely to Berman as I could, doing my

best to directly translate the literature while keeping the meaning. With the maximal post editing of padding and modulation I feel that I have strayed a little further from Berman's ideals. My translation represents the best of my abilities to translate my understanding of the literature I read.

While the act of translating was for the most part a fun challenge, I can't say that I enjoyed every moment of it. The book was not enjoyable to read as the main character is a spoiled prince who leaves his dying father in search of the one woman in all the land who can teach him to love. I had my assumptions about the book before I dove in and I'm sad to report that my expectations were too high. As he begins his search, he invites beautiful women from all over the world to please him. Objectifying all and in a couple instances he doubles down and add racism to his sexism. I was torn between choosing a passage where I didn't have to translate misogyny or choosing a passage which I felt showed the prince's "true colors." Unfortunately for me, I didn't have much of a choice, the chapters moved at such a pace that even when I found an act of selflessness on the part of the prince it was because I had to translate other men enacting violence onto a woman.

In chapter twelve "The Confrontation" the prince hears a woman cry out in pain and finds her being beaten by two brutish men. The prince does the heroic thing and save her, but the beginning of that chapter was the hardest part for me to translate. I would spend time on the sentences and passages I translated, doing my best to bring out their true and original meaning in English. When reading about an assault, it can be easily glossed over, I didn't spend much time reading it. It took me so long because I couldn't translate it at first without having an intense emotional reaction. Which led me to a question of the duties of translators. To what

extent do we need to continue translating a project where traumatic/triggering events take place? Is the duty of the translator to simply buckle down and get that part of their work over with? Or do they stop there? These questions led me to another idea. I am not sure if this is widely practiced in the business of translation, but I would love to see every translation project be a group project. For one, if there are aspects of the translation piece that could be emotionally harmful to one translator, it would then be advantageous to have others to be able to take over that part. Another advantage would be having the ability to work together and constantly have feedback in order to render the most accurate or concise translation. I get that this can sound like I'm being a "snow flake" and maybe it's not that big of a deal and maybe seasoned translators are well equipped to handle different translation challenges and the more people there are doesn't necessarily mean more ideas. This may be true. As a novice myself I would have loved if someone else was doing the same translation work as I was, so I could bounce ideas off of a person rather than a computer. I found that sometimes, even DeepL didn't have all the answers I wanted.

The past ten weeks I have learned and come to appreciate the art and the science of human translation. Having French teachers tell me not to rely on machine translation meant little more to me than "don't cheat", now I see their points more clearly and I am glad I was able to have the opportunity to stretch my brain and employ the use of machine translation as well with this project. Working with machine translation in moments of confusion or trying to see if I did break up a passage into too many translation units was helpful for me to find flaws in my own translation choices. I would love to try this again, with a different text, of course.