



## **Translator's Position in Light of Walter Benjamin**

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Over the last half-century there has been dramatic interest in Walter Benjamin's work and its influence, making him one of the most important twentieth century thinkers of literature and modern aesthetic experience. As a cultural critic, Benjamin combined ideas drawn from historical materialism, German idealism, and Jewish mysticism in a body of work which was a novel contribution to aesthetic theory. Benjamin's most famous essay "The Task of the Translator" has sparked heated discussion and given insight to translation researchers. One embarrassment over the history is that translators have occupied a marginal place and have been expected to produce a faithful translation.

Based on the translations and reflections of "The Task of the Translator" by Paul de Man and Jacques Derrida, this paper first presents the freedom translators acquire from their pursuit of Benjamin's "pure language," and then illustrates the different accounts of Benjamin by de Man and Derrida. De Man expounded Benjamin by regarding the translation as a rebirth of a text given by the translator, expanding upon the original's meaning and helping the translator to console himself with the thought that the failure of translation is a failure of the function of language. Derrida revealed the way in which the translator can assume the role of a curator of the original.

Thus, a conclusion can be reached that since the failure of translations doesn't result from translators themselves and since translation involves translators' transfer of meaning in space and time, translators can not be completely faithful to the original, and shouldn't be regarded as simply a tool to passively transmit what the original writer has said. Benjamin goes where few will follow him. Although we might not identify with his perspective, it is the questions he raises that are worthy of our deliberation.