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A STUDY OF THE TRANSLATIONS OF W.H. AUDEN WITH REFERENCE TO HIS ENGLISH IMAGE IN THE THIRTIES

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
FACULTY OF ARTS IN QENA, ASSIUT UNIVERSITY
IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY

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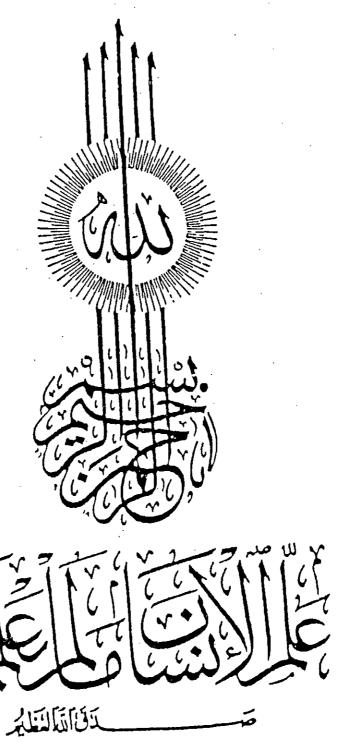
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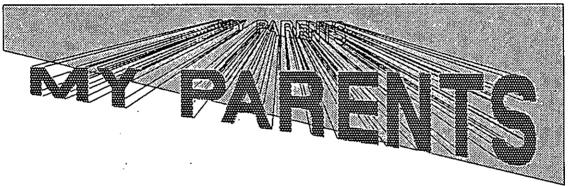
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(آية رقم ٥ من سورة العلق)





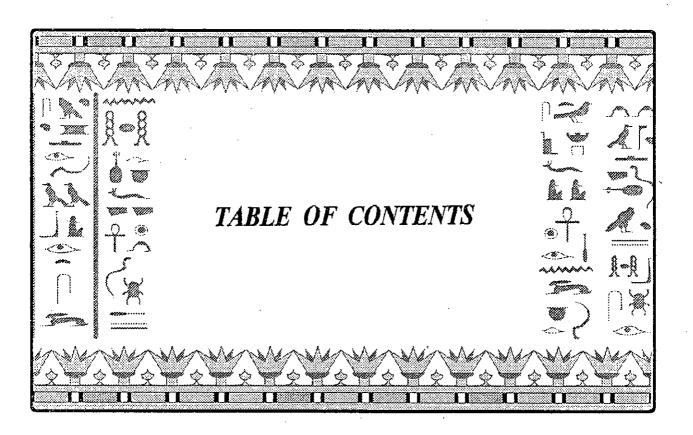


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The present thesis is an attempt to trace W.H. Auden's English image' in the thirties, as reflected in various versions of Arabic translations of his poetry. What I mean by his 'English image' is how 'the thirties Auden' has been viewed by English critics and how they sketched up their impressions on him. This 'English image' cannot appear clearly without a general examination of his poetry of the thirties in relation to the economic, social, and political circumstances prevalent at that period. Besides, this work includes an attempt to study the translations of that poetry of the thirties Auden. It is natural that Auden's poems selected for translation, and the way in which these poems were translated shape an 'image' of him in the mind of the Arab reader. Comparing this 'Arabic image' of Auden to the 'image' that had been established in England will lead, in my view, to a conclusion about whether or not the translations succeeded in conveying his original 'image' to the Arab reader or not.

The complex circumstances of the thirties led to a state of angst and chaos in the individual's life. Being affected by this state, Auden's mind was occupied by many anxieties. This led him to be always unstable. This unstability made him busy in finding a solution for the present problems of human beings. Auden's insistence on achieving this goal led many critics to point out his great position in the modern English poetry. John Fuller, for example, says that he was "the greatest living poet writing in English"(1). Also, C.H. Sisson states that he was "a genuine literary phenomenon"(2). First, at the beginning of the decade, Auden found the solutions in Sigmund Freud's theories. Second, at the middle of the decade, he found better ones in Karl Marx's notions. At the end of the decade, he began converting to Christianity as a refuge where he hoped to find solutions for all problems. James Vision thinks that Auden's looking for a solution to the problem of his time caused him to change his "belief and attitude in the thirties, from a psychological to a quasi-Marxist orientation,... thence to Christianity at the end of the decade"(3).

In the thirties, Auden did all his best to look for a suitable voice to refer to the dilemma of modern man. This is well presented in his thirties poetry. David Daiches stresses this point that "The dilemma of the English poet in the 1930s is more clearly indicated in Auden's work than in that of any of his contemporaries" (4). Auden's points of view expressed in his thirties poetry concerning this dilemma constituted his English image' in the mind of his English critics and readers. At the same time, these views can be conveyed to the Arab reader through translation. Thus, translation may shed a revelatory light on issues of cultural identity and difference. This is because the Arab reader has his own impression of the translations of Auden's poetry. This impression leads him to imagine an 'image' of the original poet behind these translations. The result is an 'Arabic image' of Auden.

I have faced many difficulties in making this thesis come into existence. Firstly, it took me a great effort to collect the translations of Auden's poems that were scattered in different books, periodicals and magazines. Sccondly, I found myself facing two alternatives that I should choose only one from. Should I choose the date of translating the poem to be a guideline in my thesis or should I choose the date of writing the poem? I found that if I choose the first, the problem that will arise is that there will be a repetition in my thesis. This is because there are some poems that were translated more than once. So, I have to come back from one time to another to the same poems. I finally decided to work on the second direction because this leads to the discussion of a poem and its translation or translations once. Thirdly, the most important difficulty that faced me during dealing with Auden and his thirties poetry, especially those poems that were translated into Arabic and which I give more concentration, was his obscurity. This obscurity is attributed to his poetic style which is embodied in the careful demonstration of his command of tone and idiom and the massive articulation of language which is apparent everywhere in his poetry. Beside his private use of