

Statement of Purpose:

I have a master of French language translation studies and I would like to apply for the Doctoral degree in French Literature Research and Area Studies at University of Oslo in order to broaden my knowledge of French language.

As a child, I remember I was always fascinated with languages. When I was six, every time I helped my brother, he returned the favor by teaching me a word in English. At the age of eight, I officially started learning English and although my word-choices were somewhat immature at that time, my teachers got immediately blown away by my lexical resources. When I was sixteen, I finished my institute's English language curriculum and started studying French. At that time, there was only one foreign language institute in Tehran which had non-English classes and it was located 150 kilometers away. Despite difficulties I had to undergo, I continued my French studies and four years later, I got the admission from Allameh Tabatabaie university, one of the top 5 best educational centers of the capital after successfully passing a State university entrance exam the same year.

During my bachelor studies, I had the opportunity to read *les profils littéraires de la France* and get acquainted about *les courants littéraires françaises*. This granted me the knowledge of French authors, their ideology and their most influential literary circles. I also translated pieces of texts, extracted from famous French books, such as *Père Goriot* of *Balzac* or *La Voie Royale* of *André Malraux* as university projects. Those tasks let me figure out how difficult it was to transfer inter-cultural aspects and how exotic the historical environment of the original text would be in the target language for unfamiliar readers. Moreover, during my bachelor, I got an impression about the dual concepts of religion and propaganda and how one could be considered a righteous belief in a civilization while dogma in the other.

When I was twenty-five, I started my master at Tarbiat Modares University of Tehran after successfully passing a national test with more than 500 contestants. During my master, I worked with internationally renowned figures such as *Dr. Shairi*, who later became my directing professor in my thesis. I also studied many translation theories, including *les théories de la traduction de Antoine Berman* and *les 7 théories de la traduction de Vinay et Darbelnet*. I was taught how literal translation is useful for respecting the original form of poems and holy books, such as Coran or Bible (despite the fact that I believe they will be sluggish to some extent in the end) and that meaning transfer is usually more crucial when it comes to the translation of *les nouveaux romans* or other types of literature where the form is more liberal.

Regarding my master project, I studied two translated versions of *Madame Bovary*, the masterpiece of *Gustave Flaubert* and provided an analytical assessment of their cultural-semantic features in the

framework of Componential Analysis of the French linguist *François Rastier*. I also published an article in this subject at Ferdowsi University of Mashad.

Regarding university of Oslo, the Humanities Department appears to be quite a destination for candidates primarily because of its interdisciplinary approach towards language studies. In other words, it has a multitude of specialized research centers and faculties. Therefore, in my quest towards a sociological study of literature, I will hopefully have the opportunity to discuss the issue at the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages and have some fruitful results. Moreover, focusing on the impact of religion and propaganda in literary circles in my dissertation project, I would probably benefit immensely from Research Center for Islamic and Middle East Studies of the university.

Besides, I was bowled over when I learned that *Professor Stephan Guths*, the author of *literary visions of the Middle-East*, works at the university of Oslo. I remember *Dr Shairi*. recommended reading of this book to have a better understanding of the translation process of Persian prose and their reflection in English literature. The book stands out since not only does it provide an authentic translation of the well-known Eastern countries modern literature, but also because it has invaluable introductions and comments, which allow the readers to imagine themselves in the geographical boundaries of the author and to link with the book's atmosphere. I believe the interdisciplinary nature of the university coupled with the expertise of exemplary figures such as *Professor Guths* could make my studies at the University more pleasant.

Regarding my future plans, I intend to run a website which functions as a forum for both scholars and professors in order to support each other, give directions and suggest proper corpus of study for language-related research programs. To do so, I have partaken a general web designing course at Tehran Technical Complex of Iran and Although the idea is not yet fully mature, I dream about running a *stackoverflow*, in the field of linguistics, translation studies and literature, based and operated in Iran.

Babak Ashtari.