

Lippman Bodoff

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124 Woodvale Road, Glen Rock, N.J. 07452

December 5, 1988

201-445-5418

Professor David Roskies  
Jewish Theological Seminary  
3080 Broadway  
New York, N. Y. 10027

Dear Professor Roskies:

Enclosed is a copy of C. Ozick's recent article in  
Commentary on Edo and Enam, in case you missed it.

While I find her interpretation plausible and  
interesting, I do not understand what it has to do with the  
suggestion she makes on pp. 43-44 that translation of great works  
from Hebrew into a non-Hebrew language may not be as culturally  
safe or aesthetically valid as the other way, as to which Agnon  
said (about Bellow) "He is safe."

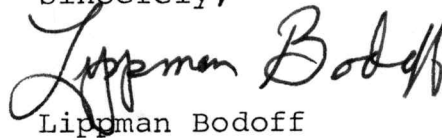
Indeed, it seems to me she proves the opposite:  
admittedly she has read Edo and Enam in an English translation, and  
that has not prevented her from an understanding of it with which  
she seems quite comfortable: as a story about the evil, death and  
exile associated even with the most beautiful pagan art (emphasizing  
passion, nature, i.e. Hellenism) when it is implanted as a "foreign"  
element in the holy, monotheistic environment of Eretz Yisroel.  
Moreover, when the material is foreign in substance, as pagan ideas

and rites are, it is not saved even when translated into Hebrew, as occurs in Edo.

Thus, the bottom line seems to be that when literary material has an authentic Jewish message, translation even from Hebrew to English (etc.) is worthwhile, and when the material is "foreign" to Jewish ideas and values even translation into Hebrew will not help it.

The opening two pages about translation in one direction or another are thus, it seems to me, a "red herring".

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lippman Bodoff". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Lippman Bodoff

LB:amg

Enclosure