



Investigating intertextual relations in translated version of Hafez

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ABSTRACT

This article was an attempt to analyze Hafez Poetry and its translated version regarding some aspects which may have gone unnoticed and may still be subject to much misinterpretation. Each couplet is full of terms which are of many probable references according to scholars.

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Introduction

Intertextuality refers to the idea that the meaning of an artistic work does not reside in that work, but in the viewers. In other words, a given text is a response to what has already been written, be it explicit or implicit.

It goes without saying that producers of a text, be it spoken or written, do not start from scratch but rather borrow transform a prior text, and draw the reader's attention to another text (Federici, 2007). The term "intertextuality" has, itself, been borrowed and transformed many times since it was coined by a poststructuralist named Julia Kristeva (1973). As critic William Irwin says, the term "has come to have almost as many meanings as its users".

The concept of intertextuality was first introduced by Julia Kristeva, in her essay "word, dialog and novel" to describe the way all language and all literature are constructed from previous quotations (Kristeva, 1986, p.37). In fact, she believed that whatever we say and write has already been said and written before and we just reflect these utterances in what we say and write now.

Barthes (1977) also shares the idea of intertextuality with Kristeva. He regarded the text as a linguistic phenomenon whose origins can be traced back not in the intention of the author but in the multiple contexts of the immediate culture of that text.

Every text is an intertext; as Roland Barthes famously put it: "a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures" ("The Death of the Author", 1968). While this notion has been discussed and engaged in all sorts of theoretical and interpretative contexts, its implications are still subject to many questions and misinterpretations.

Linda Hutcheon (2001) argues that excessive interest in intertextuality obscures the role of the author, because intertextuality can be found "in the eye of the beholder" and does not necessarily entail a communicator's intentions. By contrast, parody, Hutcheon's preferred term, always features an author who actively encodes a text as an imitation with critical difference. However, there have also been attempts at more

closely defining different types of intertextuality (Hutcheon, 2009).

In this paper, we have tried to investigate the idea of whether intertextuality has been maintained in the translations of Hafez Poetry.

Types of intertextuality

According to Hatim and Mason (1997, p.18), intertextuality can operate at any level of text organization involving phonology, morphology, syntax or semantics.

Different types of intertextuality classified by several authors are summarized below.

Horizontal vs. Vertical reference:

Hatim (1997) identifies these two types of intertextuality. In horizontal intertextuality the relation between two texts is explicit while in vertical intertextuality the relation is more of an implicit one and may relate, for example, to writing conversations.

Manifest or constitutive reference:

Manifest reference is expressed explicitly through surface textual references such as quotations and citations, while constitutive intertextual references require the reader to activate the reference by finding its sources.

Active and passive intertextuality:

According to Hatim and Mason (1990, p.124), the intertextual link "is strong when it activates knowledge and belief system well beyond the text itself". On the other hand, there are passive forms of intertextuality which "amount to little more than the basic requirements that the text be internally coherent.

In this article the cross-cultural intertextuality with regard to the translated versions of the work of a great Iranian poet, Hafez, is examined. In literary works, as there are lots of metaphors and other figures of speech drawn from sources other than text itself. The translator is, therefore, confronted with a bulk of problems trying to transfer the meaning into another language. And that's what makes translated versions of literary works difficult to make sense of and subject to many investigations and criticisms.

The translator is, thus, a traveler. He can be seen as a curious wanderer into a new and unknown world, who follows many hints and finds new routes in an unexplored textual map. Sometimes he retraces lost tracks, occasionally he discovers a new path; in any case, he travels with a consistent literary and cultural baggage (Federici, 2007).

Thus, the translator is supposed to “cross boundaries and enter into a new territory” in Susan Bassnett’s term in order to be able to nicely transfer the message to another language. That is why translation is sometimes referred to as an exciting journey.

Another metaphor which can be used for translators seems to be that of a “mediator” according to Federici, (2007). This metaphor is drawn from the activity of a translator as he/she is engaged with rewriting and mediation between languages and cultures. Filling the gap and handling the discrepancy between languages and cultures is a piece of work which needs to be meticulously done by a skilled translator. The translator thus occupies a central role in connecting two literary worlds, in trying to build a dialogue between texts, to create an equal interchange between cultures.

A literary work can affect later literary works done in the future just as it is affected by many previous works or events so that every work is a combination of other works or events. (The latter is referred to as hypertextuality as a subcategory of intertextuality which will be briefly discussed later).

It is the job of the translator to identify the subtle intertextual networks laid in a literary work by the author and then decode the idea and try to reproduce these multiple layers of implied meanings and connotations in the target language.

In some cases, the problem in the translated version is not with the translator but with an untranslatable text since not all the intertextual references embedded in the source text can be translated in the target language. There are many levels of interpretation that interact in the source text, and eventually only some of them can be kept in the target language such as culture bound terms, idiomatic expressions which may be translated in a text from which the target reader receives a text full of multiple codes which are not always the same as in the source text, or if they are, they nevertheless undergo a different interpretation. In these cases the translator can decide to add a glossary or to insert footnotes in order to highlight those intertextual references which are not so clear for the target reader.

The most challenging factor in a discussion of intertextual references is that these elements let cultures know each other when they arouse the reader’s interest in the author’s cultural world. Therefore, it is through an interpretation of intertextual references that a reader can discover a writer’s culture, even if in the passage some elements are lost. Intertextual references are traces to be followed to visit an author’s literary and cultural world and if they are not properly recognized and transferred, the translated version is better to be regarded as a new work inspired by the source text rather than a translation of it.

Investigating intertextuality in translated version of Hafez

Hafez is known as the most celebrated Persian lyric poet. He brought the ode form of poetry to perfection. His life and poetry has been the subject of much analysis, commentary, and interpretation. It is said that, through listening to his father's recitations, Hafez learnt the holy Quran by off heart at an early age, and it is generally believed that his pen name, Hafez (meaning “learnt by heart”) is has a lot to do with the fact that he had learnt the holy Quran off by heart.

Despite his profound effect on Persian culture and his immense popularity and influence, details of his life, particularly his early life, are not well known and are subject to a great deal of anecdote.

The same condition also holds true for the interpretation of his poetry since intertextual relations of so many kinds exist in Hafez poetry and it is affected by so many other literary works as well as cultural and sociological fluctuations dominating at the time.

Unfortunately, translated versions of this great work have barely taken into consideration these several aspects and have simply tried to transfer the idea through word for word translation of the work which is only roughly possible.

Some terms and concepts in the work of this great poet are still subject to reinterpretation and investigation even in Persian, let alone other languages which are completely crippled to transfer these cultural and religious concepts. There are complexities in understanding, interpreting, and recreating his lyrics (*ghazals*). As Khurramshahi (1988) states, one should take into consideration the fact that the poetic form of *ghazal (ode)*, on its own, is full of divine knowledge, insight, and wisdom, all of which are perceptions that require an extensive study of Persian literature.

Thus, this study is aimed at investigating some translated versions of Hafez poetry considering intertextual relations. We have tried to clarify shortcomings of translated versions by explaining the meaning of the terms and concepts in the original version regarding historical, cultural and intertextual roots.

Intertextual processes involve, minimally, an earlier and a later text and an element from the former that is discernible in the latter. Intertextual relations have been categorized by Genette (1982, 1997a) who proposed highly successful terms for relationships between texts in Palimpsests. These categories answer questions like: What does the later text do with the earlier text? Which elements from the earlier text are discernible in the later text? Which function(s) do these elements assume in the later text? , thereby making distinctions between different types of intertextual relations. From among them, hypertextuality which describes literary adaptations, intertextuality which replicate an earlier work’s plot, and metatextuality which is Genette’s term (1997a) for texts about other texts seem to happen more than other kinds in Hafez poetry.

Many poets before Hafez, including Rudaki, Sanai, Khaghani, Attar, Rumi, and Saadi, had written lyric poems (ode) and improved this form of poetry which employs metaphors and sophisticated symbolic representations, often to mask the real meaning. Hafez is recognized as the master in this form of poetry. His poetry is heavily laced with coded phrases (wine, wind, hand), objects and instruments (cups, reeds, harps), places and occupants (tavern, wine-keeper, cup-bearer), and a variety of flowers and birds (rose, narcissus, nightingale).

Apparently the occurrence of culture bound elements in a text hinders communication of the meaning to readers in another language and culture. Intertextual references are one of such elements; they are references to the specific aspects of the culture and language. . This would perhaps suggest that culture-specific translation problems might play a significant role when a literary work which is full of intertextual references is translated. To have a closer look at this issue this study seeks to investigate the way intertextual references have been dealt with in translated versions of Hafiz.

Hafez spent most of his life in Shiraz. During his life, there were several local kings who successively ruled Fars (of which Shiraz is the capital). Early on, when Hafez was in his thirties, he became a friend of Abu Ishaq's court. However, after a relatively short reign, Abu Ishaq was ousted in 1353 AD by Amir Mobarez-ed-din Mozaffari. Amir Mobarez was very religious, and when he captured Shiraz he declared prohibition. Lamenting the passage of good old times, Hāfez wrote (referring to Amir Mobarez as Mohtaseb, i.e., police):

اگرچه باده فرح بخش و باد گلپیز است به بانگ چنگ مخور می که محتسب نیز است

Though wine gives delight, and the wind distills the perfume of the rose,
Drink not the wine to the strains of the harp, for the constable is alert.

(Translation by Edward Browne)

According to Longman dictionary a constable is a police officer or someone who has some of the powers of a police officer and can send legal documents that order someone to do something. As it can be inferred from the translation there is nothing mentioned about the reference of the word "constable" neither any explanation nor implication of the story behind it. It seems that the translator, though he has done a good translation, has been ignorant of the intertextuality in the line.

گفتم این جام جهان بین به تو کی داد حکیم؟ گفت: آن روز که این گنبد مینا می کرد

I said: "when gave the all-wise this cup world-viewing to thee?"

He said: "on that day, when the azure dome he maid"

(Translated by: Henry Wilberforce Clarke)

Through the insertion of words which refer to Persian religious historical background and culture together with allusions deeply embedded in the Persian context, the author creates a multiple linguistic and cultural translation and offers an example of a challenging text to convey in another language.

"Jam'e jahan bin" which is also referred to as "jam'e jam" stands for two words respectively. The first "jam" is cup and the second is the contracted form of Persian male name "Jamshid" who is a mythological figure of Greater Iranian culture and tradition. Jamshid was said to have had a magical seven-ringed cup, the Jām-e Jam which was filled with the elixir of immortality and allowed him to observe the universe.

Or it may be referring to the Alexander mirror that is believed to be one of the world's seven wonders. It is a tower built between 280 and 247 BC on the island of Pharos at Alexandria, Egypt according to Wikipedia. Whatever reference is meant by Hafez this word is translated to "cup world-viewing". Here again, the translator has tried to convey the meaning through word for word translation, making no any reference to the historical reference of the word.

Here's part of another lyric by Hafez:

دلی که غیب نماست و جام جم دارد
ز خاتمی که دمی گم شود چه غم دارد؟

That heart that is the hidden displayer; and that the cup of Jamshid hath

For a seal ring, that awhile became lost, what grief it hath?

(Translated by: Henry Wilberforce Clarke)

The inclusion of the word "Jamshid" at least provides a little reference to the fact that a historical story is laid behind the notion so that the reader has a clue of what to search for in order to come to a better understanding of this couplet.

The same thing happens in

سالها دل طلب جام جم از ما میگرد
آنچه خود داشت ز بیگانه تمنا میگرد

Search for the cup of Jamshid from me, years my heart made And for what it possessed, from a stranger, entreaty made
(Translated by: Henry Wilberforce Clarke).

"Gonbad'e mina" translated as azure dome is a metaphorical expression the reference of which in Persian literature is believed to be denotatively the sky or the galaxy and connotatively the world. So the time mentioned in the second hemistich seems to have been meant the time of creating world. Here's another example:

آنکه پر نقش زد این دایره ی مینایی

کس ندانست که در پرده ی اسرار چه کرد

The one who expressed this azure vault on the picture
In the screen of mysteries, evident it is not what he did

(Translated by: Henry Wilberforce Clarke)

"Dayereye minai" which seems to have the same reference with 'gonbade mina' in Hafez poetry is translated to "azure vault". Azure is a bright blue color like the sky according to Longman dictionary. The same meaning refers to 'mina' or 'minai' in Persian denotatively. But connotatively, taking into consideration the massive number of figurative terms in Hafez poetry, another meaning is implied which is the sky in the first place and even more indirectly the world.

Some of the lyrics in Hafez poetry have no equivalent in the target language. In cases like this, it's upon translator's decision whether to cover the idea by the closest term in target language or to leave the original word untranslated providing extra information and explanation in footnotes or appendixes in order not to damage the rhythm by a long expression that is trying to paraphrase the original word. As we have in the following couplets:

پیر ما گفت خطا در قلم صنع نرفت

آفرین بر نظر پاک خطا پوشش باد

Said our Pir: "on the creator's pen, passed no error"

On his pure sight, error covering, Afarin be!

(Translated by: Henry Wilberforce Clarke)

In the translation two words have been left untranslated: "Pir" meaning an "old man" and "Afarin" meaning "bravo" are not translated.

If the character of the translator intriguingly emphasizes the complex implications of translating from one culture to another, the text is also full of culture-bound terms which surface in between the lines together with intertextual references to a foreign culture, thus offering an example of a complex intertextual web to be translated.

Although the word "Pir" can be translated to "old man", the reference of the word seems to have been meant specifically by Hafez. Maybe a specific old man who has talked about the creation of the universe is what Hafez means. But according to Elahi Ghomshei it can be inferred from the history of Persian literary work that "Pir" is sometimes used as a metaphor for "love" or any mentor that teaches us along the way. According to the following couplet

پیر عشق توست نی ریش سفید

دستگیر صد هزاران نا امید

"Pir" is your love, not your white beard

It is the relief for hundreds of disappointed

(unknown translator)

A good point is that the uncertainty about the exact reference of this word made the translator avoid using a simple word for word translation, or else the translated version would

end up being some new poetry in a new culture which has nothing to do with Hafez.

The same thing happens to the word "Afarin" which is more or less the equivalent of the interjection "bravo" in English and is used to show approval in Persian language.

به حاجب در خلوتسرای خویش بگو
فلان ز گوشه نشینان خاک درگه ماست

To the chamberlain of the door of the private chamber, say:
Of those corner sittings, a certain one, the dust of the court of ours is

(Translated by: Henry Wilberforce Clarke)

"Hajeb" in Persian literature is a person who acts as a guard in order to stop unauthorized people from entering an important place. "Chamberlain" is an important official who managed the house of a king or queen in the past according to Longman dictionary. In case the denotative meaning is what is meant, this equivalent seems to be conveying the message appropriately. But like any other word in Hafez poetry there may be other interpretation of this word with some reference other than the general reference of a chamberlain.

According to Elahi Ghomshei, since Hafez is addressing God in this couplet, the chamber is God's chamber and his chamberlain must be someone who is responsible for it which he interprets to be "Satan". The English version by no means conveys such an idea.

Intertextual references are a reflection of social, historical and cultural practices and meanings which are a core element of the text. If left untranslated or partly translated, they must be explained and decoded for the target reader. The translatability or untranslatability of intertextual references emphasizes the mediator role of the translator.

Conclusion

This article was an attempt to analyze Hafez Poetry and its translated version regarding some aspects which may have gone unnoticed and may still be subject to much misinterpretation. Each couplet is full of terms which are of many probable references according to scholars. (Khurramshahi, 1988)

There are so many untouched areas with regard to the translations of this great work. Different translators have tried different strategies in an attempt to put the meaning of intertextual references across. Some translators have neatly got rid of the burden of this truly burdensome task of translating intertextual references through the retention of the original term:

پیر ما گفت خطا در قلم صنع نرفت
آفرین بر نظر پاک خطا پوشش باد

Said our Pir: "on the creator's pen, passed no error"

On his pure sight, error covering, Afarin be!

(Translated by: Henry Wilberforce Clarke)

The word "Pir" meaning "old man" is left untranslated through retention strategy. This straightforward strategy leads to the vagueness of translated version and at the same time leaves the doors of research and investigation open to the reader so that he can delve into the issue through lines of inquiry and analysis. The same happens to the translation of the word "Afarin" meaning "Bravo" in the same couplet.

Other translators have sought to translate the words simply through word for word translation without any slight explanation of the intended reference of the term:

آنکه بر نقش زد این دایره ی مینایی
کس ندانست که در پرده ی اسرار چه کرد

The one who expressed this azure vault on the picture

In the screen of mysteries, evident it is not what he did

"azure vault" as a translation for "dayere'ye minaii" and "screen of mysteries" as a translation for "Pardeye Asrar" which has undergone the same strategy are literal translations and have nothing to do with metaphorical relations which they have with the intended reference of the author.

The same case exists in the following translations:

"Chamberlain of the door of the private chamber" for "hajebe dare khalvatsaraye khish" which as was explained is a metaphor for Satan.

"Jam'e Jam" and "gonbade mina" translated respectively as "the cup of Jamshid" and "azure dome" has also gone through the same strategy.

The translator of a literary work must be aware of such multiple references and this is not possible unless he/she is not just a translator but a historian, a researcher as well as a literary man. Since translation is the act of transferring the idea laid in the literary work not simply finding an equivalent for a word which probably doesn't have the slightest connection with its reference in real world.

It is the idea not just the language which is the value of a literary work and if not transferred, the translated version will be suffering from serious problems. It may also happen that the translation is regarded as a totally new work which is to some extent affected by the original work.

In fact the complexity of Hafez poetry and the other poets may take more than sentences for some hemistiches. That's why it requires a deep knowledge of the topic and a deep research on the issues to make the translator well-armed to be able to translate.

Hence, a competent responsible translator is encouraged to be sensitive to intertextual references, notice them, trace their sources and consider how best to render each one in context. This is still an unabated problem and is far from aesthetic considerations.

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