Tarbiat Moallem University of Tehran

Department of Foreign Languages

Hafiz in the Mirror of the West:

A Critical Discourse Analysis of the English Translations of the Divan of Hafiz based on the Orietalist Approach

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Translation Studies

Advisor: Dr. F. Asadi

Reader: Dr. K. Ahmadgoli

Researcher: Gilnaz Yousefian Langeroudi

September, 2011

To Hafiz

For the precious Heritage he bestowed upon us,...

شعر حافظ همه بیت‌الغزل معرفت است

آفرین بر نفس دلکش و لطف سخنش

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all those who did not withhold their supports from me; first of all, my advisor Dr. Asadi for his invaluable guidance, patience, enthusiasm and helpful suggestions from the very first steps of my study to this point. I also acknowledge the kind supports of Dr. Ahmadgoli for providing me with many useful books and resources and also for his informative comments and recommendations.

My special acknowledgments go to Dr. Farzaneh Farahzad, whose astonishing breadth of knowledge in the area of Postclonial theories and Orientalism was indispensable to my work. I am also very grateful to her for providing me with her papers and for her very helpful guidance regarding her CDA model and framework.

I should also thank Dr. Bagheri for introducing me his book about the Persian commentaries on Hafiz and other useful resources about Hafiz and also Professor Leonard Lewisohn for his gainful remarks about his own translation and introducing me several English resources about Hafiz.

To my dearest parents, I want to express my endless gratitude, whose generous kindness, patience and love accompanied me far and wide and in every single breath, even in the thorniest paces I have paved so far.

I am also indebted to my beloved husband, Babak, for his unwavering love, support and understanding in every step of my work.

Eventually, I would like to thank all my dear classmates for their sympathy and kind helps.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter Two: Review of the Related Literature

Chapter Three: Methodology

Chapter Four: Data Analysis, Research Findings and Discussion

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research

Appendix

List of Tables and Figures

Abstract

Following the critical discourse analysis framework, the present study attempts to investigate the perspectives of twenty translators of Hafiz and the aspects of his poetry discussed by them, according to three macro-level elements (titles, illustrations and prefaces). It also examines if any significant similarity exists between the selections of the ghazals of Hafiz among his translators. With regards to the obtained results, it then discusses if any dominant discourse or as Said puts it, a consistent (fossilized) discourse can be identified among translators, which conforms to the elements of the Orientalist discourse.The corpus of the study includes twenty available books of the English translations of the Divan of Hafiz (ghazals), from 1771 to 2008. Accordingly, all the titles and illustrations are studied and their implications are discussed. The prefaces and introductions are also reviewed and the translators' major comments about the poetry of Hafiz and Persian literature, the major aspects of Hafiz they represented and their main objectives of translation are extracted and described. The translated poems are also compared with Hafiz's Persian Ghazals and back-tracked in order to see which lines and ghazals they correspond to. At last, a comparison is made between the English translators' perspectives and the dominant perspectives of Persian scholars about the poetry of Hafiz to identify its similarities and differences. With regards to the similarities and differences of the obtained results, two main periods are identified: from 1771 to 1800 and from 1875 onward. The results show that the major characteristics of the first interval highly differ from the second one. The dominant discourse of the first period, which is attached to the colonial objectives and selectiveness, is completely evident and conforms to Said's elements of Orientalist discourse to a great extent. However, in the second period, despite the existence of many common elements (the most important of all, the element of comparison), a fluctuation and diversity in the perspectives and even selections of translators is observed. In fact, a number of relatively diverse motifs and perspectives flow in the works of the translators. The multidimentionality is mostly observed in their prefaces, which is also the common feature of Persian scholars. Even the categorization of their perspective about mysticism is similar to those obtained by studying Persian perspectives by Bagheri (2008). However, the binary thinking of the East and the West, which is another qualification of Saidian

Orientalism, is apparently witnessed in the findings and its main evidence can be the constant comparisons made between the East and the West, which foment this dichotomy.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Overview

Since its publication in 1978, Edward Said's *Orientalism* has been at the forefront of the study of East-West cultural encounter. Said –who mostly focused on novels, itineraries, anthropological and philological documents and such writings– attempted to investigate the West's dominant imagination of the Orient. He discussed how Western literary and cultural representations, academic disciplines and public perceptions cultivate biases against non-Western peoples and construct the image of the East as its 'Oriental Other' – "a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, and remarkable experiences" (Said, 1978, p. 1), or as Schwab (1984) states, an 'Oriental renaissance,' in which Europe found its rebirth in the civilization of the other.

However, *Said's Orientalism* marks all Orientalists with the same black paint. This has made several scholars stand up and defend the West. Their main criticism of Said is that his "ideological framework includes and gives equal weight to the writings of ignorant travelers, amateur journalists, learned scholars and political and colonial authorities" (Zarnett, 2008) and propounds the view that Western attitudes towards the Orient form a unified discourse with absolute and unchangeable principles and assumptions. They also aim to show that Said's approach toward Oriental writings is highly selective and tendentious.

This sort of man-made binary-thinking of East and West, Oriental and Occidental, that many critics believe that "Said himself rhetorically opposes but somehow intellectually promotes" (Zarnett, 2008), is highly intertwined with the concepts of representation and misrepresentation and has turned to a controversial subject in many disciplines, as well as translation studies.

In these intercultural encounters, translation is also regarded as one of the key channels through which the West has got its knowledge about the Orient. Western translators have employed language as a means of communication to transfer senses, discourses and cultural concepts of a faraway and different world. In other words, many recent scholars believe that translation has played a decisive role in the formation or deformation of cultural realities through systems and the dominant discourses, representing the foreign (other) for the local (self). In the

process of translation, a master discourse, the product of a specific cultural context where translation takes place, is used as the medium for the exchange of cultural goods, most importantly literary ones (Faiq, 2008).

In view of that, the recent translation theories attempt to discuss and analyze the impact of translators' ideology and their socio-historical milieu on their translation process and product, the impact which is believed to be reciprocal. These subjects are mainly discussed under the title of post-colonial translation theory, which also embraces the concepts and standpoints of Orientalism. In this theory, scholars such as Spivak, Niranjana, Cronin etc. have focused on the distortion of translation from native and colonized culture into colonizer culture. They also believe that the central intersection of translation studies and post-colonial theory is that of power relation. This theory claims that, besides studying translation based on linguistic elements, following the cultural interchanges between nations is of great importance.

Accordingly, probing different features of the translations of the oriental texts and analyzing their main discourse can also reveal more aspects and evidences, or even sometimes counter-evidences of this perspective. Among the oriental texts, Persian literature and Persian poetry is of great importance, since, throughout history, many attempts have been made to translate the works of Persian poets and writers and introduce them to the Western World. Some scholars, such as John Yohannan (1977), believe that this literature not only "left their impress upon the social political, philological, and even religious attitudes of their [western] readers" (p.23), but they also has conveyed new senses to the works of many western authors and poets. However, many researchers pose this discussion that Persian literature and poetry was misrepresented as nothing more or less than a mystical religious devotion and an absence of rationality.

In addition, among Persian poets, Hafiz is considered as the most intricate, most mysterious and, yet, most appealing and popular poetic heritage of Persians. Therefore, taking all the above discussions into consideration, the present research aims to study the perspectives of the English translators of Hafiz about his poetry and also the dynamism of the trend of their selection of the poems to see whether any dominant fossilized discourse as regards the poetry of this great lyrical poet can be investigated.

1.2. Background of the Problem

For many years, translation was simply defined an operation involving textual transfer across a binary divide from source text to the target text and the most discussed problems in this area were of originality, authenticity and equivalence. However during the last two decades, this approach has changed and many translation scholars do not believed in the purity of signified and signifying instruments anymore. This new standpoint has linked translation studies to other disciplines such as sociology, history and cultural studies and it mostly discusses the impacts of many ideological, social, cultural and political factors which affect translation process and product, as well as the impact of translation on the culture, policy and society. Hence, as Bassnett and Trivedi (1999) affirm

> […] translation studies research has followed a similar path to other radical movements within literary and cultural studies, calling into question the politics of canonization and moving resolutely away from ideas of universal literary greatness. This is not to deny that some texts are valued more highly than others, but simply to affirm that systems of evaluation vary from time to time and from culture to culture and are not consistent. (p. 2)

Accordingly, new subjects have emerged in the area of translation studies such as translation and ideology, translation and gender, as well as postclonial translation theory, including the challenging topic of "the politics of translation". In these trends, scholars such as Spivak, Niranjana, Tymoczko and many others have attempted to shed light on new concepts and views in the area of translation studies and reveal the impacts of biases on the process and objective of translation. The major focus of their studies is power relations, which distort the process of the translation in favor of the colonizer culture and language. Said's critical book, *Orientalism,* and its set of beliefs also formed an important background for postcolonial studies and inclined many –especially Oriental– researchers to work on this new area and attempt to approve Said's claim; however, many critics argue that these studies, while trying to reveal the biases, impose some kind of prejudice as well.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The role of translator and the factors affecting this role are regarded as two major elements in the post-colonial and Orientalist discourses. Regarding the role of translation in the Orientalist discourse, Said (1978) declares:

> The relationship between Orientalist and Orient was essentially hermeneutical: Standing before a distant, barely intelligible civilization or cultural monument, the orient scholar reduced the obscurity by *translation*, sympathetically portraying, inwardly grasping the hard-to-reach object. Yet the Orientalist remained outside the Orient, which, however much it made to appear intelligible, remained beyond the Occident." (p. 223)

Therefore, Said regards for the role of translation a sense beyond the conventional sense it signifies (reducing the ambiguities and shadowiness of the foreign text); in Said's point of view one of the major functions of the translations of Oriental texts is to convey a sense of aloofness and superiority over the Orient.

On the other hand, the strategy of 'selection' is one of the major factors affecting this role and is highly emphasized by many translation theorists. It is also regarded as one of the politics of translation in postclonial theories. For instance, Toury, in his suggested model for translation norms, describes translation policies as a subset of preliminary norms and defines it as "factors determining the selection of text for translation in a specific language, culture or time" (cited in Munday, 2001, p. 114).

While describing his examples, Said (1987) emphasizes on the selectiveness of the material provided for representation to the West as well. He states:

> All of this describes Orientalism as an academic discipline. The "ism" in Orientalism serves to insist on the distinction of this discipline from every other kind. The rule in its historical development as an academic discipline has been its increasing scope, not its greater selectiveness. (p. 51)

He also defines the growth of knowledge, particularly specialized knowledge "a process of selective accumulation, displacement, deletion, rearrangement, and insistence within what has been called a research consensus" (p. 177). He explains that the main objective of "Europe's effort was to maintain itself as…absorbing what it could from outside Europe, converting everything to its use, intellectually and materially, keeping the Orient selectively organized (or disorganized)" (p. 252).

Identifying such functions and intentions can be only obtained through criticizing the translations conducted by Western translators. As Farahzad (2009a) defines, such criticism's emphasis should be on representations, power relations and ideologies by examining textual features, translator's lexical, syntactic and other choices, their implication and impacts on the readers and within the socio-historical context in which translation is produces and received" (p. 2).

To reveal more features of this nascent perspective, the researcher believes that studying different facets of the translations of Oriental texts can be really informative. Therefore, following the critical discourse analysis framework, the present study conducts a macrolevel analysis on the English titles, illustrations and prefaces and introductions of the English volumes of Hafiz in order to extract the dominant perspectives of the translators about his poetry and to see if there appears any dominant discourse, which conforms to the elements Said assigns to the Orientalist discourse. It also examines the translated poems of different translators of Hafiz to find out which original *ghazals* they correspond to and to investigate the numbers and similarities of this selection to see whether it can be regarded as a discursive element. .At last, a comparison is made between the English translators' perspectives and the dominant perspectives of Persian scholars about the poetry of Hafiz to identify its similarities and differences.

1.4. Significance of the study

To strengthen the growing scopes of translation studies interlinked with cultural studies, many interdisciplinary studies should be conducted on different areas of study, as well as literary translation. On the other hand, although many studies were conducted on the postcolonial

translation, it seems that few researchers have worked specifically on the concept of Orientalism and its impacts on translation.

The importance of this particular research may be considered from two aspects. On the one hand, it highlights the importance of the impact of ideology and Orientalist discourse on the process of literary translation. It also attempts to unveil the importance of the macrolevel factors, including pictures, titles and introductory parts on laying the first bricks of the reader's position regarding the main sense and signification of the text, before reading it.

On the other hand, it demonstrates the image of the poetry of Hafiz in the West. Over the centuries, there have been many attempts to translate the subtleties of Hafiz's Persian verse into English verse or prose. Indeed, it can be said that he has been the most translated of the Persian poets (Loloi, 2004). However, his poetry is so complicated and there have always been many controversies among scholars about the meaning and sense of his ghazals, which have fomented many different interpretations. This research aims to study Hafiz through the mirror of his English translations and to investigate the West's image of Him to see how his identity is represented and what the latent objectives of constructing such representation are.

1.5. Research Questions

This study addresses the following questions:

1. According to the macrolevel factors (titles, illustrations and prefaces), which aspects of Hafiz's poetry are mostly presented by his English translators?

2. Is there any significant similarity between the selections of the poems of Hafiz among his translators?

3. Is there a dominant and fossilized discourse or as Said puts it, a consistent discourse and perspective, among the translators?

4. If so, what are the implications?

1.6. Theoretical Framework

According to Frahzad (2009a), translation evaluation, which is the basis of many translation studies, aims to compare the source and target texts (prototext and metatext) to make value judgments. However, translation criticism goes beyond this definition and puts its main focus on "representations, power relations and ideologies by examining textual features, translator's lexical, syntactic and other choices, their implication and impacts on the readers and within the socio-historical context in which translation is produces and received" (p. 2).

On account of the above definition and since the main purpose of this research is to analyze the discourse of the translators of Hafiz, in one part of the analysis, the researcher employs the CDA model proposed by Farahzad (2009a), as its main theoretical framework. In her framework, Farahzad mentions that the analysis of the metatext in comparison with its prototext takes place at two levels:

1. Microlevel: which concerns everything in the text and
2. Macrolevel: which concerns everything about the text; at this level everything is analyzed in the light of the socio-historical conditions of production and reception of the text.

The focus of this research is on the analysis of macro-level factors. "At this level, the texts are examined for the following:

a. Translator's/editor's/publisher's,… judgments, note and comments
b. Illustrations
c. The graphic design of the book cover" (Farahzad, 2009a, p. 9)

In this framework, "the purpose is to see what ideological positions are conveyed and how identities are represented" (ibid).

The second part of the analysis is based on the appropriation strategies Farahzad (2009b) has introduced in her paper, "(Mis) Representation of Sufism". After discussing the concept and origin of Sufism and the translation of Sufi works from Persian and Arabic, she introduces six strategies applied in translating Persian Sufi literature into English:

1. selection:
   - of certain themes, such as divine love, and exclusion of certain other themes, such as Sufi practice and social behaviour.
   - of certain Sufi writers and poets
   - of certain passages;
2. abridgement and reduction
3. adaptation
4. alteration of symbols
5. misinterpretation and mistranslation
6. reordering of themes and concepts (Farahzad, 2009b)

The first strategy is also emphasized by Said (1978) and many postclonial scholars, as a main policy in imposing ideology on translation process and product. So, to get a brighter insight of the discourse of the translators of Hafiz, their selections of Hafiz's ghazal are analyzed alongside the macrolevel factors.

The final part of the analysis attempts to compare the different perspectives and disourses among the translator's of Hafiz's poetry with the different interpretations and perspectives of Persian Hafiz scholars. Bagheri (2008) has put these interpretations into two main groups: One-dimentional and multidimentional commenteries. In the first group, the poems of Hafiz are interpreted based on one perspective; however in the second group ,they are interpreted from different aspects. Bagheri devides the first group into six sets: *mystical, materialist, astronomical, Zoroastrian, historical* and *Freudian* perspectives. Among the commentaries of this group, Sufistic perspective has the most pecentage and, after that, historical and materialist perspevtives are placed respectively; however most commnetraries are multidimentional.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

Discourse: Foucault defined discourse "an entity of sequences of signs in that they are enouncements (enoncés)" (Foucault 1969, p. 141). An enouncement (often translated as "statement") is not a unity of signs, but an abstract matter that enables signs to assign specific

repeatable relations to objects, subjects and other enouncements. Thus, a discourse constitutes sequences of such relations to objects, subjects and other enouncements. A discursive formation is defined as the regularities that produce such discourses. Foucault used the concept of discursive formation in relation to his analysis of large bodies of knowledge, such as political economy and natural history (McHoul & Grace, 1993).

Critical discourse analysis: Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a rapidly developing area of language study. It regards discourse as 'a form as social practice' (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p.258), and takes consideration of the context of language use to be crucial to discourse. It takes particular interest in the relation between language and power. According to van Dijk (2001), Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a

> type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality. (p. 352)

Orientalism (first used in 1769): Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary provides two definitions for Orientalism: 1) something (as a style or manner) associated with or characteristic of Asia or Asians; 2) scholarship or learning in Asian subjects or languages. It is the study of near and Far Eastern societies and cultures, languages, and peoples by Western scholars. It can also refer to the imitation or depiction of aspects of Eastern cultures in the West by writers, designers and artists.

   In the former meaning, the term 'Orientalism' has come to acquire negative connotation and is interpreted to refer to the study of the East by Westerners shaped by the attitudes of the era of European imperialism in the 18th and 19th centuries. This viewpoint was most famously articulated and propagated by Edward Said in his controversial 1978 book, *Orientalism*, which was critical of this scholarly tradition and also of a few modern scholars. Orientalism is closely related to the concept of Self and the Other because, as Said points out in his second definition