



THE RECREATION OF THE FORM AND MEANING IN A TRADITIONAL TURKIC GHAZAL (WITH THE EXAMPLE OF A GHASAL BY ALISHER NAVOI AND ITS THREE TRANSLATIONS INTO ENGLISH)

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ABSTRACT

The translation science scholars have defined a great number of theories in order to perform the rendering of a text from the source into the target language. Poetry translation is a kind of specific one. Poem consists of special characteristics such as rhythm, rhyme, prosody and form. Speaking about fidelity to the text of original, we have to admit that completely adequate translation of poetry is hardly possible. Still, it is the task of a translator to attempt to preserve as much as possible in this process; both in form and meaning. This article is focused on the translation of a ghazal by Alisher Navoi from Uzbek into English by three different translators made in different time, manner and styles. The analysis will show that the attempt to keep the form is mostly achieved on the cost of the meaning. Form and meaning that are integrated in original comes across various transformations in the TT in the process of poetic translation of classical Turkic ghazal into the English language.

Keywords: Poetry Translation, Ghazal, Comparative Stylistics, Navoi, Classical Literature.

INTRODUCTION

Poetry is an art of recreation that fascinates and amazes people's minds together with their souls. It is said that poetry does not have limits and language, as a well composed poem, will reach the true destination of a poem – heart. From that point it is fair enough to state that translation is an art of promotion for nothing makes the literature as well-known to the world as its translations.

The Uzbek and English languages together with Turkic that was used to write the ghazal that is taken as an object in this article have different poetical meters. Traditional Turkic ghazal, derived from Persian and Arabic traditions, is composed in Aruz and a monorhyme is a must-have. Whereas the English are used to iambic meter or as it is seen in the modern poetry to the free verse, that hardly has any rhyming pattern and mostly relies on the stressed syllables rather than rhyme of any kind. What a pure iambic pentameter can mean to English perception may not correspond to how and what it means to an Uzbek or Russian reader, and vice versa. Translating between the languages which are much closer to each other on the



basis of structure and poetical traditions is much easier than the ones, which are even not related to each other. So, in translation of poetry between Uzbek and English languages for example, one can evidently see the characteristics which actually create the obstacles for carrying out the translation.

The issue of poetry translatability has a long history of discussions held by many scholars. Linguists and translators have been concerned with this problem and each of them has given logical assumptions to prove their points of view. For instance, Roman Jakobson states that “Poetry by definition is untranslatable and it requires creative transposition” (1966:238). Dryden on the other hand maintains poetry can be translated on condition that the translator is a poet himself (Frost, 1969: 72). Nevertheless, the hardships of the lyric translation can be summed up in the quote by prominent poet Percy Bysshe Shelley: “It were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its color and odor, as to seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet. The plant must spring again from its seed, or it will bear no flower”.

GHASAL TRNASLATION ANALYSIS

Uzbek classical literature with its immense masterpieces of a poetic thought and style is still not widely known to the world. This is the issue that has to be dealt with as soon as possible. So far, most translations from the Uzbek language were done through a meta-language, Russian. Any translation is a transformation of the form and meaning of the original. That’s why the world had to read not the translation from Uzbek classical literature but its translation to Russian. The issue made a great progress in the years of independence, when the direct translations from Uzbek into English came into the trend. There were two poetry translation books published, namely “Ummondan durlar. Ghazallar, hikmatlar va ruboiylardan namunalar” (“Pearls from the ocean. Samples from ghazals, wise sayings and rubaiyat”) by several authors in English and German and “Selected gazels of Navoiy (in the Uzbek and English languages)” by D.Sultanova in 2000 and 2015 respectively. A year after, an American poet and translator Dennis Daly translated and published in Cervena Barva Press his first translation book from the Uzbek classical literature, from great Navoiy to be more precise, and called it “Twenty-One-Ghazals”. According to the book, all the translations were done from Uzbek. In the acknowledgement part of his book, Dennis Daly thanks his own daughter, Jen, who prepares the rough prose translations for him, for her assistance. As the whole book has been rendered directly from the source language, we consider it to be very useful in both promoting the Uzbek classical poetry around the world, and exploring the styles and methods of the translation that has been done by a native speaker poet.

The original ghazal is included both in “Badoi ul bidoya” (1987:67) and “Gharoyib us-sighar” (1988:52) collections. The seven stanzas of the ghazal are written in “Ramali musammani mahzuf: “ – ʊ – / – ʊ – / – ʊ – / – ʊ – ” (foilotun/ foilotun/ foilotun/ foilun). “Gulistondin, shakkaristondin, afghondin, jondin, jonondin, shabistondin, sultondin” are rhyming words, while “judo” is a radif. The rhyming scheme is – “a-a; b-a; c-a; d-a; e-a; f-a; g-a”; Ghazal is devoted to love with some philosophical metaphors of the poet.



1– stanza:

Ne navo soz aylagay bulbul gulistondin judo,
Aylamas tooti takallum shakkaristondin judo.

The general meaning of the couplet is the following: “A nightingale would never sing if it is far from its flower garden. A parrot would never talk if it is not given the sweet treating.” The nightingale and parrot are traditional images in Turkic classical poetry. Nightingales, who live in the wild, are famous for their sweet singing. However, they do not sing in captivity, far from the flowers and gardens. The parrots, on the other hand, are used to live in the houses of people, especially in the household of rich ones, where they are fed with sweets and fruits. So, once they are cut off the sweets, they stop talking. The idea was also given in a well-known work of Navoi “Lison ut-tayr” (“Language of the birds”) of Navoi where the parrot refuses to go with the other birds in search of Semurgh, and claims that parrots cannot bear living without the sweets they are given by beautiful mistresses.

Translation of D.Sultanova (2015:19):

Would a nightingale sing in tune if from its dale blooming it parts?
Would a parrot chirp merry notes if from its sweetly treating parts?

First of all, analyzing the equivalence on the linguistic level, it should be noted that the idea of talking parrot of the original is shifted to chirping merry notes in the translation. Secondly, on the grammatical point, the sequence of tenses in the conditional sentence construction is not used properly. One could argue, of course, that grammar is not an ultimate in the poetic translation, as long as the mood and idea is transformed correctly. Nevertheless, a good grammar is there for a reason. The reader, who sees a proper grammar in the text, will understand it much easier.

Translation from “P.O.” (2000:123):

*Of what can the nightingale sing if he is deprived of his flower garden?
The parrot too ceases to talk if he is deprived of his sweet tongued mate.*

The original says that the parrot stops talking without sweets, whereas the translator adds a new image of sweet tongued mate. Thus, the translator introduces the idea that is not given in the original. “Shakkariston” is literally translated as the place where the sugar is kept. So, it is a place not a living being. Under the term, Navoi means the place where the parrot is fed with sweets. Moreover, the word “shakkariston” is used as the rhyme for the word “guliston”.

Translation of D.Daly (2016:27):

*Does a nightingale sing when deprived, when apart
From wildflowers? Or parrots go mute if apart?*

This translation is the shortest of all three and moreover, this short style is continued throughout the whole translation. Obviously, this is a very good example of a poetry translation when you read the text and enjoy the musical qualities. However, the same misunderstanding that occurred in the previous translation can be seen here, that is the imagery of parrots being apart from each other rather than the “shakkariston”.

2– stanza:

*Ul quyosh hajrinda qoorqarmen falakni oortagay
Har sharorekim, boolur bu ootlugh afghondin judo.*

The poet is in love, the love is too strong for him to control and eventually, it burns him from the inside; of this he moans in agony, every time he does, the sparkles of that fiery moan get out of his mouth to the sky. They are so strong that the poet is worried about the heavens that could catch fire from those sparkles. In the translation, the heaven wails of parting from its sun; not a word of the imagery created in the original. Usage in the stanza of the words “sun, set on fire, sparkling, fiery moan” provides the reader with a real feeling of very hot atmosphere described in it.

Translation of D.Sultanova (2015:19):

*My woeful sign for my sunlit faced lover makes the heaven moan,
Every part of sphere would wail if from its light blazing it parts.*

It is fair to point out that during the publication of texts there may occur some spelling mistakes, that are not meant to decrease the poetic talent of a translator at all. One of those can be traced in the spelling of the word “sigh” in the first line of the second stanza.

Here, it is necessary to discuss the word choice of the translator for the translation of the images of the original. First of all, “that sun” of the ST turns into– “sunlit faced”; the word “lover” is added, we consider that it was done because of the requirement of the meter. Nevertheless, “beloved” is much more suitable here. The second line of the stanza does not correspond to the idea of the original. The poet does not describe the wailing of the skies once it is apart from its sun.

Translation from “P.O.” (2000:123):

*The rays of my Sun emit the torment of separation
For they will not carry back to her radiance my heavy sighs.*

The original imagery is hardly created here. The whole concept of the original has been transformed into completely different image. A strong imagery that was created in the original was scarcely recreated in these lines.

Translation of D.Daly (2016:27):

*Your fiery rays rouse me, radiate this chilled life.
My answers misdirected, your questions apart.*

We consider that “fiery rays” appeared from “ul quyosh” in the original. However, once again, there is no image of the suns shining at all. The Sun in the original is a metaphor for the beloved. Moreover, taking into consideration all the temperature described in the original where the poet is literally burning from the inside with love, the image of a chilled life is hardly acceptable. The part with questions and answers does not exist in ST.

3– stanza:

*Dema, hijronimda chekmaysen fighonu nola koop,
Jism aylarmu fighon boolghan nafas jondin judo?*



The beloved is capricious, she is angry with the poet and says that he is not wailing and suffering enough because of parting with her. All the agony of the latter is nothing to the beloved. It is useless to try to prove the opposite. So, the poet gives another beautiful and smart answer to this reproach. According to him, he is not able to wail or suffer as much as she would like him to do, because his soul is parted from his body, i.e. he is not alive without the beloved, and could a lifeless corps make a sound at all.

Translation of D.Sultanova (2015:19):

*I suffered a lot parted from my fairy, but she said not much.
And can lifeless body groan, if the heart from its breathing parts.*

The translator uses some explanation to the original lines.

Translation from «P.O.»:

*Do not say that my parting from you will make me weep and sob,
Can a body weep if it is deprived of its soul?*

The poet is already parted from his beloved. Usage of the future simple changes the meaning of the original. Nevertheless, the second line is translated well enough.

Translation of D.Daly (2016:27):

*Overcome with sorrow, you expect flowing tears,
But receive none. My soul elsewhere, cut off, apart.*

Traditionally, the one in love feels all sort of negative emotions, not the beloved. She never cares about the poet. This is a rule. She never has to expect flowing tears, as usually there they are. The tone of the stanza speaks too strict to the beloved, which is never possible in the traditional ghazal. However, the general idea is converted correctly: there is no suffering as the body is soulless.

4– stanza:

*Hajr oolumdin talkh emish, mundin soong, ey gardun, meni
Aylagil jondin judo, qilghuncha jonondin judo.*

The moments spent without the beloved are even bitter than death itself. The poet implies that he would feel more fortunate being breathless to being parted with his beloved. He approaches to the destiny begging to take away his life rather than his beloved from him. The beloved is his soul, and he chooses being lifeless than soulless.

Translation of D.Sultanova (2015:19):

*They say that parting is much more harmful than dreadful death itself,
You'd better make me die, only not force my love from me to part.*

In the ST the poet experiences all the bitterness of the separation while the TT uses the impersonal passive construction, which in its turn, makes the poet the observer of somebody's suffering as if this entire situation does not concern him personally. Continuing on the grammatical level, the transposition of "my love from me" to "me from my love" would sound more coherent.



Translation from “P.O.” (2000:123):

*O parting! Rob me of a hundred of my souls
But do not take my loved one away from me, or me from her.*

Translation of D.Daly (2016:27):

Isolation robs me of all true happiness,
The dues of tortured longing, of being apart.

In these translations the fourth and fifth stanzas are misplaced. So, here we shall speak about the next coming stanza first. There the combination of “hundred thousand lives” is replaced with just “hundreds” ones in the translation from “Pearls from the ocean”. The wordplay in the second line has been recreated well enough, though.

“Put me to death” (“jonimni ol”) of the original is translated with “rob” in both translation. He omits the numerals used in the ST replacing them with “all”. His stanza is a short summary of the poet’s original thought devoid of the imagery and wordplay of the original text.

5– stanza:

*Boolsa yuz ming jonim ol, ey hajr, lekin qilmaghil
Yorni mendin judo yokhud meni andin judo.*

Here the poet addresses to the separation that has caused so much trouble and pain to him so far. The life is the sweetest possession of a man. Nevertheless, the poet says that had he even not one but hundred thousand lives, he would be more than happy to give them all away rather than parting with his only beloved. That’s why in the second line of the stanza, he begs the separation not to separate the loving hearts from each other.

Translation of D.Sultanova (2015:19):

*If I had thousand lives to live, I would give all of them to thee,
O Separation, not make me part with her, or her with me part.*

The only change made by the translator here considers the number of lives that is a hundred thousand in the original against thousands in the translation. The rest of the translated stanza reads well.

Translation from “P.O.” (2000:123):

*It is said a parting is more bitter than death,
So, if you will, o Heaven, take my life but do not part me from my beauty.*

Translation of D.Daly (2016:27):

*Some say the expectation of death brings less pain
Then the divide of two lovers forced far apart.*

We would like to remind once more that in the original these are the fourth line not fifth. Grammatically “more bitter” is an incorrect form of a comparative degree forming, so it



should be either “bitter” or “much more bitter” in the first example. Both of these stanzas use the impersonal passive construction so the abovementioned comment on this issue is actual here as well.

6– stanza:

*Vasl aro parvona oortandi hamono bildikim,
Qilghudekdur subh ani sham'i shabistondin judo.*

People use candles during the night hours, so in the daylight there is no use for the artificial light. With dawn the candle would be put off and the tryst would end. As it has been said throughout the poem parting is bitter than death moth chooses to be burnt in the embraces of his beloved – the candle light.

Translation of D.Sultanova (2015:19):

*The moth knows, the parting hour would come as soon as dawn breaks,
And it has to pass away as its fond candle from its burning parts.*

Moth does not have to pass away; it is an act of a good will. It is not because candle from its burning parts but because once its flame off, the moth will be separated with the candle's flame.

Translation from “P.O.” (2000:123):

*The moth suffered so he could see his love though well he knew
The dawn would deprive him of both the candle and his night's shelter.*

The moth does not suffer in the original. To die for love is not a suffer, but a blessing. The image of the night's shelter is misinterpreted by the translator: “sham-i shabiston” is attributive word combination from Persian, which should be translated as “candle of the night”, i.e. it is not a place, but a metaphor for the beloved.

Translation of D.Daly (2016:27):

*Even the moth following his compulsive need
Loses its candle at daylight, night drifts apart.*

The idea of this stanza is not so clear. First of all, the logical reasoning of the original is cut short. As a result, the stanza does not seem to have much in common with the rest of the ghazal. Secondly, the word “even” is not necessary; moreover, the word combination “compulsive need” has got rather a negative coloring. In the original, moth is not described as a negative character.

7– stanza:

*Bir eyasiz it boolub erdi Navoiy yorsiz,
Boolmasun, yo rabki, hargiz banda sultondin judo.*

This is the last line of the ghazal called maq'ta. Traditionally, it presents the name of the author. There are different spellings of the transcription of the poet's name used in Uzbek-English such as “Novoiy”, “Navoiy”, “Navo'i”, “Navai” or “Navoi”. The first two of them are used in all three translations.

The poet is using a metaphor of a dog without a master towards himself describing his state without his beloved. A dog is a symbol of devotion in the classic poetry and it always described next to the beloved. Now, without the one, he feels abandoned, lonely and useless in the whole world. Without having any aims or stimuli in life, he is miserable. That's why in the next line he begs God not let anybody be cut off from their master that is God. "Sulton" is a word with national coloring – in common sense, it means a governor of the country; in contextual sense it mean – God the Almighty. There is a double meaning in the line, the first – formal is that not any society will survive a leader; the second – metaphorical one is of that – not any person will survive sans God.

Translation of D.Sultanova (2015:19):

*If Navoiy were not beloved he would live a life of not petted dog,
O High Heavens, bid your man, in no way from his Sultan part.*

Translation from "P.O." (2000:123):

*Without his beloved, Navoiy would have been akin to a stray dog,
God Almighty, don't ever let anyone be deprived of her prince or his princess.*

Translation of D.Daly (2016:27):

*Like a dog, Navoiy cowers without his lover
As she paces in her place, a lifetime apart.*

The metaphor "dog" of the original has been changed to "live a life of not petted dog" in the fist and replaced with similes in the rest cases: "akin" and "like".

The translation of "sultan" in the "P.O." as "her prince or his princess" firstly, is not semantically correct as they do not mean the same concepts at all. Secondly, these words can never imply the meaning of God, which was given in the original.

CONCLUSION

According to the above discussed, we came to the following conclusions:

1. All the three translations maintain the original formal constitution, i.e. 14 lines in 7 stanzas;
2. The rhyming words "Gulistondin, shakkaristondin, afghondin, jondin, jonondin, shabistondin, sultondin" were not recreated in the translations;
3. The radif word "judo" has been transmitted only in the translations of D.Sultanova and D.Daly, whereas, no sign of it can be traced in the translation from the book "Pearls from the ocean" ("P.O");
4. The easiest and rhythmical translation to read to an English ear is one made by D.Daly. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that it does not correspond with the rhythm of the original. Still, none of the three of the translation does.
5. All of the translations contain the changes of the ideas and images of the original;



6. The translations from book “Pearls from the ocean” and D.Daly are very close to each other from the point of view of the images and expression. Even the confusions made in the reading the sequence of the stanzas are the same;
7. Almost every text that has been analyzed contains the interpretation-translation of the authors of the translation.

Translation of a traditionally structured poem contains a lot of difficulties indeed. The translator must take into consideration not only the vast variety of meters, types of rhyme and forms of stanza, not to mention the individuality of their combination in a particular source poem, but also the highly probable difference in the way they function in the language of original and the language of the translation. We believe that no translator may use their creative freedom just for the sake of formal constitution of the TT and transform the ideas and the atmosphere of the original according to their interpretation. Translating poetry does not have ideal formulas, as it is a creative work. Nevertheless, the creativity should never overwhelm the original text.

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