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STYLISTICS AND STUDY OF TRANSLATED LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Stylistics as a method of investigation proves extremely helpful to analyze and evaluate the state and status of translated literature, especially the genre of poetry. Due to its inherent nature the genre of poetry allows comparative investigation of the source language and the target language versions. The paper attempts a close analysis of Arun Kolatkar's poem "Buildings" or "Buildinga" in Marathi with the view to prove translation as a co-creative process rather than a ground for losses.

Key Words: Style, Stylistics, Translation, Target language, Source language, culture-specific.

How to evaluate translated literature? What should be critical/aesthetic principles to be brought into use for such a study? Which should be value system i.e. the one of the source language or of the target language to be used for such a study? What should be the overall nature of the study of translated literature? These are the questions that keep impinging in the mind of the student. One often thinks of Translation as a ground for losses. Those who stick to a general or specific theory of linguistic relativity in Sapir-Whorfian hypothesis, assume that due to culture specificity of meaning, the act of translation in its true sense is near to impossible. Since poetry is the most culture bound genre of literature, its translation bounds to generate losses. Naturally, the study of translated poem limits to the semantic and syntactic losses in a translated version.

On the multilingual-multicultural canvas of the country like India, bilingualism and production of bilingual literature is a natural phenomenon. In fact bilingualism is the true nature of most Indian literatures. As Vilas Sarang (Indian English Poetry Since 1950: An Anthology, Disha, Mumbai, 2004.) rightly observes: "...there are number of Indian English poets who also write in an Indian language, and may even be prominent writers in English. A.K. Ramanujan published two collections of verse in Kannada, and translated substantially from Kannada and ancient Tamil. Arun Kolatkar is the major poet in Marathi, and so is Dilip Chitre." ¹

Such a situation keeps some interesting questions open for exploration: Why does a poet writes in two languages? Does a poet use one language at a certain age, or in a certain period, or in a certain life situation and another language at other times? In case of all bilingual writers, the poet's other language must surely in some way, to a greater or lesser extent, affect his or her writing in English and vice versa. One must bear in mind that the work of a bilingual Indian English poet cannot fully and definitively evaluated unless his work in other language is taken into account. Secondly, the translated version is not always subordinate and full with losses, semantic or otherwise. Writing in bilingual mode may be the creative need of some writers like Samuel Beckett and Arun Kolatkar. What Arun Kolatkar remarks in an undated sheet which is now a part of 'Boat ride and other poems' supports this view. He writes: "...I have a pen in my possession which writes in two

languages and draws in one. I have a pencil sharpened at both ends. I use one end to write in Marathi, the other in English. What I write with one end comes out as English, what I write with the other comes out as Marathi.”²

Stylistics as a method of investigation proves extremely helpful to analyze and evaluate the state and status of translated literature’ especially the genre of poetry. Due to its inherent nature the genre of poetry allows comparative investigation of the source language and the target language versions of the text. The paper attempts a close analysis of Arun Kolatkar’s poem “Buildings” or “*buildinga*” in Marathi. The study is a result of a bilingual student’s quest for the appropriate critical paradigm to study translated literature.

The poem is first composed in Marathi during 1975-76. It had been included in his first collection of poems in Marathi, “*Arun Kolatkarchya Kavita*” published by Prass publications, Mumbai. The English version of the poems is found in Kolatkar’s papers and is now included in ‘Boat ride and other poems’ edited by Arvind Krishna Maharotra.

Marathi Version:

Bildinga (Buildings)

Ek building pratham jagchya jagi zulay lagte

*Mag jara laun gulmorachya bundhyala gandasthal ghaste
Ta mulakhali sule ghalun sagla zadach gadgada halawatey
Akra numbercha udaharan baghun chawadapan bitharli
Terachahi lakshan kahi thik disat nahi
Te bagh tiche dole firle tondala fes yetoy*

*Khidkya aside detayat bhinti ekmekant misaltayat
Kilachandchya bedroomchi bhint sarakli bagh dawikada
Patelchya drawingroomchya bhintina haluch yewun tichi jaga patkawali
Mukesh millchi chimani jara halalyasrkhi watli
Mukesh millchi chimni ekdam musalasarkhi wer geli
Mukesh millchi chimni ata girni kudayala khali ali*

*Darmyan akra numbrelapan gachke basay lagle bagh
Ata dachmaltey prachand rangadyasarkhi
Gachiwerla gharkul chakkarla garagartaya ulatsulat teretsarkha
Bartakkyanchya bedroomchyabkhidkitna baher aleli
Dhaddhdit panchawanna futi toph chaufer kshitij hungatey³*

English Version

Buildings.

A bulding starts to sway from side to side like an elephant.
It kneels before a gulmohur to rub its head against the bole.
It gets its tusks under the roots and begins to shake the tree.
The next one on the block to freak out is building number fourteen.
And it’s catching. Number thirteen now is about to throw a fit.
Look. It has started rolling its eyes and foaming at the mouth.

All the windows are jumping. The walls are shifting. Did you notice how Kilachand’s bedroom wall just slipped away? That was smoothly done. Patel’s drawing room wall comes gliding over and slides into its place.

I think I see the chimney of Mukesh spinning and Weaving Mill move.

The chimney of Mukesh Mill rises, it lifts clear off the ground.

Up like a giant epileptic battle tank in its last throes.

The penthouse on top whirls about like a gun turret.

A mighty fifty five foot cannon is sticking out

Of Bartakke’s bedroom window and it’s sniffing at the horizon⁴.

Title: Building is an English word frequently used by Marathi speakers as a borrowing. In Marathi, all the non human, non animate objects are attributed the masculine or feminine gender like the animate and human beings. When attributed specific gender these nouns take pronouns he (*to*) for masculine singular and she (*ti*) for feminine singular. The pronominal system of Marathi does not use 'it' which in English is used for non animate and non human nouns. If the noun is feminine singular and if it needs to be changed in plural, a suffix \a:\ is added in. Following this rule, building which is a feminine singular adding the suffix \a:\ we get the title word '*Bidinga*.' By adding a prefix from Marathi grammar system to an originally English word the writer codifies it to suit to the syntactic structure of Marathi. On the other hand it is a lexical deviation, applying the rule of the foreign lexical system to an English word. The title in English is an exact semantic substitute of the original Marathi.

Structure: Both the versions carry five stanzas of a triplet, followed by a stanza with a couplet. The lines are end- stopped and unrhymed. Marathi version is completely un-punctuated while the English version makes use of regular punctuation pattern.

Theme: Both the versions handle the surrealistic situation, i.e. non living\ non human things and objects grow active rather pro-active as if they are living and human. In this modern time the world of things and objects try to overpower human existence and challenge the very being of people and society. The main focus of this poem is the violence procured by these objects. The poet portrays the living paradox of human life that the things and objects which should merely be the tools of human use still human beings spend most of their time and energy in collecting them. But at a point these objects try overpower and prove hazard to human existence. The depiction throughout is in a surrealistic mode.

Stanza 1 In both the versions the first line of the first stanza is semantically anomalous because the syntactic items provided in the line do not indicate the world which really exists. The first line in Marathi, '*Ek building pratham jagchya jagi zulay lagte*' is an instance of semantic deviation because building is a non animate non human noun. The verb phrase like '*zulay lagte*' expects plus human plus animate nouns only. The English verb 'sway' is used to describe both plus and minus animate as well as plus and minus human actions. Hence, the use proves to be a regular one and not a deviation. The line in Marathi ends with '*zulay lagte*' but the English has an additional clause: 'like an elephant' which in traditional sense is a simile. When we read the second line in Marathi, '*mag jara laun gulmorachya zadala gandasthal ghaste*' and the last one, '*Ata mulakhali sule ghalun sagle zadach gadgada halawate*' the deviation continues. The verb '*laun*' expects plus animate plus human subject while as building is non human non- animate. Similarly tusks (*sule*) is one of the bodily organ of animate and human beings. The building is undauntedly inanimate object. The English phrases, 'rub the head against the bole' and 'get its tusks under the roots' are deviant to certain extent. The words like '*gandasthal*', '*sule*' in Marathi version show the implicit metaphor, without tenor.

Stanza 2 All the buildings go mad. They freak out one after on other. Marathi version starts with building number eleven whom building number fourteen and thirteen follow consequently. The verb '*bitherli*' in Marathi and 'freak out' in English stand for reckless wild and excited behavior which is characteristic of plus animate plus human subject. But at both the places it describes the behavior of non human, inanimate building. The English version does not make the reference of building number eleven and its consequent relationship with building number fourteen and thirteen. The stanza opens with the clause, 'next one....to freak out' which deletes the reference of building number eleven. Besides, 'the next one 'to whom?' the English version keeps the question unanswered. The last line in both the versions is about the extreme state of madness. The verb phrases '*dole firle*', '*tondala face yetoy*' in Marathi and 'rolling its eyes', 'foaming at the mouth' in English are the human attributes applied to non human object like buildings which makes the clear case for personification.

Stanza 3 The surreal element in the poem gets immensely powerful in this stanza. Windows start jumping, the walls shift, they get mixed with each other. In Marathi '*khidkya aasade detayat*' is substituted as 'windows are jumping'. Actually, '*aasade dene*' an idiomatic expression in Marathi means 'attempt to get free from the clutches of something,' which differs much from mere jumping. '*Bhinti ekmekant misaltat*' becomes 'walls are shifting'. '*misaltat*' means to get mixed to with each other which is result of shifting. The English version emphasizes the process while the Marathi version focuses on the result. The saturation of activities is marked

in English by immense use of punctuations and small, simple sentences ending with full stop. With zero punctuation, Marathi version doesn't allow the reader to grasp visually where an action ends and where the next one begins. The second and the third line in both the versions provide a concrete references of 'Kilachand's bedroom' and 'Patel's drawing room' which remind the cosmopolitan face of the city like Mumbai. "*Kilachandchya bedroomchi bhint sarakli bagh dawikada*" is just a statement substituted by a question, 'Did you notice how Kilachand's bedroom wall just slipped away' which has the same effect of catching one's attention achieved by '*sarakli bagh dawikada*'. Patel's drawing room wall takes the place vacated by the movement of the Kilachand's bedroom wall.

Stanza 4 Not only the residential buildings but also the industrial ones behave wildly. The chimney of Mukesh Spinning and Weaving Mill moves slightly. Marathi version uses a phrase 'Mukesh Mill' and takes it for granted that it is a spinning and weaving mill while the English has clear mention of its function. The chimney of Mukesh Mill lifts the ground for which Marathi version arranges a simile with the word '*musalasarkhi wer geli*'. '*Musal*' in Marathi is a wooden pole used to beat corn in order to separate husk from it. The phrase suggests a sudden dangerous uplift. Since the reader of English is not familiar with this typical Marathi object, the reference is deleted from English version. The last line of both the versions describes how rapidly the uplifted chimney comes down with the dangerous intention of changing the whole mill into powder. "*Chimney ata girni kudayala khali ali*" is highly colloquial expression while 'down it comes to pulverize the mill' is one of regular English uses.

Stanza 5 The stanza once again draws its attention towards building number eleven. Marathi version has this second reference while the English version refers building number eleven for the first time. The building moves to and fro. It's rocking backward and forward, with convulsions. Her movement is compared with a huge battle tank. In Marathi the battle tank is just huge (*prachand*) while English version uses two epithets, giant and epileptic. Again it is post modified by a phrase 'in its last throes, which adds to the graphic quality and enables us to visualize the movement more concretely and accurately. '*Duchmaltay*', '*gachake basay lagle*' are colloquial phrases in Marathi, their substitutes in English lack such a colloquial touch. The last line in both the versions is about the penthouse at the top of the building. It whirls about like a gun turret. Even though turret is an English word, the poet uses it in Marathi as an instance of code switching, where it is mere turret instead of the 'gun turret' as in English.

Stanza 6 In both the versions it is a couplet instead of regular triplet as the earlier stanzas. Cannon has come out of one Mr. Bartakke's bedroom and it's 'sniffing the horizon'. The Marathi stanza foregrounds Bartakke's bedroom, its window and huge fifty five feet size of the cannon, keeping its act of 'sniffing the horizon' at the background. The English stanza does completely opposite i. e. keeps the fifty five feet huge sized cannon at the front and everything else at the back which concentrates more on the vicious intentions of the cannon and the possibility of destruction than mere size.

Thus, stylistic tools help one to understand the worth of the poem in both the languages in a comparative perspective. Instead of the traditional approach of studying the losses in the process of translation, it provides ground to find out the co-creative possibilities and the gains from the source as well as the target languages.

*Quotations in italics show transcription of Marathi version.

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