

Translating Robert Browning's Pied Piper of Hamelin by D.V. Gundappa as Masida Batteya Melagara and its Reception

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Abstract

What are the methods of translations during the colonial period and sequencing the results. To answer these questions, it would be necessary first to transcribe examples and this process is explained in detail in this chapter. It is understood that the translator is multilingual and has a different style for translating the source text and culture but the methodology adopted for this translation is meant to target readers who can understand the source text and respond correctly becomes more politically charged. These are the suitable instruments of appropriation, which reinforce the differences between two cultures: native colonized people and British colonists. Most of these were adaptations and not faithful translations. These translations were totally removed from English world and made suitable to that of Kannada middle-class readers and only they were able to comprehend these adaptations. These translations were more apt for readers to implement novel political ideas into their minds of readers. DVG in the preface explains the purpose of translation of this poem of Robert Browning's Pied Piper of Hamelin by D.V. Gundappa as Masida Batteya Melagara published in a daily Karnataka Wednesday July 1st 1915 his main objectives, and the reason behind selecting this text for translation.

The difference between a poem and its translation starts right from the stage of conception. A poet writes about a particular thing or experience because his deep perception of it has strongly moved him to give it a verbal expression. Thus, it is his own emotional, imaginative, or intellectual apprehension of facts and experiences that a poet tries to express. In the case of a translation, the cause for its genesis is the existing poem. This original work stimulates the translator so much that he experiences a deep affinity for the work which in turn prompts him to create a version of that experience in his language. But he is not a person who merely collects the meaning contained in the original poem's linguistic and textual structure or who merely interprets the text's surface signs. Yet, the most frequent criticism against translation is that it lacks the spontaneity and power of the original work as the translator is trying to render the original poet's views faithfully. It is true, that no man can think another man's thoughts or feel another man's feelings exactly and in totality, but this is not what is expected of a translator either. The basic qualification that a good translator should meet is that he should be able to peruse a literary work in such a way that he can make a sensible reading of it.

There is no point in evaluating a translation as second best simply because it is a translation. If we think on that line, we will have to admit that every art whether it is painting, sculpture or literature, is somewhere only a translation—“a translation of the original that was composed in the immanent space in the heart”⁹ of its creator. Perfection cannot be there in the poetry that we read, it is there only in the poet’s vision. Actual poetry is that which is waiting to be born. Poetry loses much of its charm when the poet externalizes or translates into words the inner melody and the uniqueness of his vision. What is a fire in his imagination turns rather to ashes in words, though the spark may still be there. Thus, at one level even an original work of art is only a translation.

Modern literary criticism holds the view that during the process of translation, it is not the meaning that is translated. This is so because “the meaning of a poem does not reside in the poem alone, but in its relation to other poems, other forms of language and to the whole semiotic code in which the author lives. Its meaning is largely a matter of the way it confirms, nuances or subverts that code. If it merely repeats the code, it is an empty cliché; if it bears no recognizable relation to it, it is nonsense; if it does something in between, it becomes meaningful.”

But if a translator is not translating the meaning of a text, then what does he translate? He is translating only the meaningful elements of the text- the graphic, lexical, syntactic, rhetorical and formal features which constitute what the text is and what it suggests. Thus, the form also is important, especially in certain poems where the poets make conscious use of specific forms for definite purposes. As far as possible, the translator of a poem should try to retain the form. As matter and manner are inextricably bound in poetry, the meaning of a poem is not just content bound, but it is also sign-bound and hence individual words as well as their arrangement accumulate meaning. But if the translator feels that the retention of a particular form will not create the desired effect in the target-text reader then he can take liberties with the form as he thinks fit. When a poem is translated, the sound of the poem and the internal and external perceptions of its acoustic beauty and the emotions attached to them are changed. The sound effect a poem produces is very important and that is why poetry makes use of such techniques as rhythm, rhyme, metre, alliteration, assonance, repetition, refrain, etc. Though no known language is without poetry and though the conventions governing the language of poetry are likewise familiar to the speakers of all the languages, it is quite difficult to reproduce any of these peculiarities into another language.

Next, the relationship between words, the arrangement of words in sentences etc. are changed in translation. The words in a work along with their arrangement, determines its style. The translator before doing the work of translation must determine the original author’s style and then shape his style accordingly. Even though the translator correctly grasps the style or tone of a work, it may not be always possible for him to reproduce it precisely. English is a language which ordinarily places its subject at the beginning of sentences.

This is an instance to show how the translator can reduce considerably the effort the TL reader has to make by stretching and thereby diluting the message. During this process, an information is raised from the level of an implicit to an explicit one. According to Nida, any message has two dimensions, namely length and difficulty. When an author writes, he will design his message in such a way that it passes through the channel capacity of the receptors. But when a translator tries to render the same message literally from the source to the receptor language retaining the length as such, then the dimensions of difficulty may become very high in certain cases. Translators do make use of redundancy or lengthening at times, so that the translated message poses only the same amount of difficulty to the TL receptors as was posed by the original message to the SL receptors.

The Victorian poet Robert Browning wrote “The Pied Piper of Hamelin” to amuse his young friend Willy (the son of his friend William Macready) while he was recovering from an illness. In this retelling of an old legend, a mysterious musician dressed in red-and-yellow check offers

to rescue the medieval town of Hamelin from a plague of rats with his magical pipe-playing. He proves as good as his word—but the town's greedy Mayor still tries to cheat him of his agreed fee, and the Piper retaliates by luring the town's children away. The poem thus serves as a cautionary tale against dishonesty. Whatever we commit to, the speaker advises young Willy at the end of the poem, "let us keep our promise." Browning first published this poem in the 1842 collection *Dramatic Lyrics*; it later became popular as a stand-alone children's book illustrated by Kate Greenaway.

Political Ideologies behind the Translation of 'Masida Batteya Melagara' by DVG

'Masida Batteya Melagara' by DVG has certainly acquired a native status through trans-creation. The politics of translation is considered to be an intercultural exercise that paved the way for the decolonization of the bard. So when we talk in the event of the Kannada translator DVG translating a colonizer's text or white man's text it looks like there is a certain amount of satisfaction in having attempted a very difficult task of trans-creating the text into the Kannada language. It would have been commingled with a subtle, unarticulated consciousness of power, a feeling of gratification. It was thought of as having appropriated the colonizer's text and indigenized it because cultural transfer is an integral part of translation. In the process of translating alien culture into one's own native culture translator is very much conscious of the differences between two languages and to build a bridge between the source language and culture and target language and culture translator has adopted the method of trans-creating and nativization of Browning's text 'Masida Batteya Melagara'. It is understood in this way that one needs to create an awareness of one's native language. Its power and potentiality had to be developed to cope with western nuances. DVG pours Victorian plots and characters into a native mold to please native readers. In the process of translation not only is culture manifested in social customs and manners but also the overall ambiance. DVG by trans-creating text and deviating from the original has trespassed into canonical narrative's hegemonic territory.

The Purpose of Translation of Kanakaluka by DVG

Thus translated text becomes an exercise in mixing and matching source text with a set of the target text. When we look at methodology it is very uneven in many places. DVG has deliberately trans-created two scenes and for the rest of the text, DVG has not remained faithful to the source text. To analyze the translation process, it is very clear that the purpose of the translator was to bring home the Western text into a native scenario, DVG must have felt that if a Western text is translated and new ideas like the children literature is introduced then readers would easily understand rather than writing it in a separate book.

Even though both source text (ST) and target text (TT) have different historical time and cultural barriers, culture overlaps between source culture (SC) and target culture (TC). In this way, TT is made to speak of a different cultural equivalence and make subaltern voices heard. So the irony is that instead of obliterating borders translation very often reinforces them at least in regions of text where such changes take place. So borders are not impenetrable lines. In the process of translation, SC and TC are so far distanced in terms of historical, cultural, and space, initiating discourse inter-culturally. So translation is considered to be a way of impressing borders. From the reader's point of view, thanks to translation, the reader can read alien cultures and literature with just a little bit of native knowledge. But when comparing a translator's knowledge of source text and his mastery of the target text is crucial and he has a responsibility not to mislead his native readers, so his dominance and power over source text becomes very important in the process of translation. Because he is the only person who has read the source text and has internal knowledge of the source

text and culture and the translator is empowered. The idea behind translating this text was not to remain faithful it hence many aspects of stage directions are very conveniently omitted by DVG, so the play becomes more or less a verse, which is addressed to the sentiments of the Kannada-educated middle class.

The politics behind the selection Robert Browning's *Pied Piper of Hamelin* by D.V.Gundappa as *Masida batteya Melagara*; DVG must have believed that child literature to be within his power and important enough a challenge to hazard failure, for without such confidence in himself, and a conviction in the rightness for his poetic development. Another reason could be that their decision to write poetry could be that he had accepted the role of a writer, he was a journalist by nature, and writing poetry did not fetch to dominate his career, he was sensitive to his role as a literary spokesman for his age. He considered himself to be the voice of his age. This development was a natural result of the realization that drama is the most public form of literature, that poetry is part of Kannada's heritage, and that Kannada history is part of Mysore's glory. DVG was trying to fill gaps left by other writers, thus offering to the early 20th C Kannada literature an instructive and inspirational view of events and personalities which had made Mysore what it was. Such a goal was entirely consonant with his assumed responsibilities as a writer. To prepare for the translation he studied many histories, his intense concern for historical accuracy and fairness was primarily the length of the poem. DVG finds the change in his writing that he cannot believe the poet in him had made most of it, the experience of having to prove his aims and approach prompted him to get the book published. He deliberately simplified some of the less important issues associated with the poetry and sharpened his plot line to produce more conventional prose both in structure and length.

When the translation is compared with the original we find that there are certain changes that the translator has incorporated. At the same time, the translator says that he has not disturbed the basic story structure. It is a fact that DVG does not show as much awareness of problems of form and style as of social function of literature. V.Seetaramaih opines that "from about the end of the decade of this century DVG has distinguished himself as a writer interested in public affairs, in the education of people in social, political, and cultural matters. He has been a lone voice. He worked as an Editor, a member of the local Municipal council, (in Bangalore city) a member of the old Mysore State Assembly and Legislative Council, The University Senate and Council, member of Commissions sitting to inquire into public affairs and to supply weighty memoranda and expert advice in many fields."

Linguistic inappropriateness in DVG's Translation: One of the main factors responsible for the failure of plays is the choice of language and metrical form. Easy comprehensibility was DVG's declared aim and he addressed himself to the average reader, but the choice of old Kannada forms is not exactly suited for this purpose.

Task of the Translator

Benjamin thinks that translation should not try to transfer meaning. It is rather an effort to translate as close to the original as possible by transferring its syntax, and mode of expressing concepts to the target language. Translation also reveals inherent relationships in a text, which would otherwise remain hidden. Translation does this, not by seeking to be the same as the original, but by harmonizing or bringing together two different languages. In this way, translation offers growth of its language as well as pursues the goal of a "pure" and higher language. Benjamin explains a real translation is transparent, it does not cover the original, doesn't block its light, but allows pure language, as though reinforced by its medium, to shine upon the original all the more fully. This may be achieved, above all, by a literal rendering of the syntax which proves words rather than sentences to be the primary element of the translator. (Zohn, 1969:81)

Translation should be carried out in such a way as to recognize originality, and translation is regarded as fragments of a greater language. But this capacity to release pure language is singular to translation. In this regard, Benjamin remarks: It is the task of a translator to release in his language that pure language which is under the spell of another, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in his re-creation of that work. (Zohn,1969:82) Translation is a process of recreation that liberates language from the original. Translation is conceived as a multi-dimensional process in which the translator has to deal with his materials, means, resources, and objectives at several levels simultaneously. The translator has to pursue simultaneous norms of literary excellence in translations and fidelity to various ideals: at the same time, he has to accept many practical compromises in the face of conflicting demands and allegiances. He is always defined by this particular set of freedoms and constraints. He is expected to render textual meanings and qualities “literally” to successfully transpose the syntax, design, and structures of the original form from one language to another. A translator is expected to achieve a communicative intersection between two sets of languages and discourses. At the same time, a translation has to strike a balance between the interests of the original author and those of the translator. This is to fulfill multiple expectations of its imagined readers and to construct parallels between two cultures and two histories of traditions that the translator brings together. A translator is obliged to carry over a text from its original language into another as “literally” and as “accurately” as possible.

Conclusion: The main purpose of this article was to make aware of the fact that it is not unusual to enjoy the literary creativity of authors writing in distant socio-cultural environments in one’s own language, but that one must be aware of the inherent difficulties with such literatures.

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