Representation of Feelings in Translation of Anti-racism Novels: A Case Study of *Beloved* by Toni Morrison

Leila Alinouri

Department of English Translation Studies, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran
lalinoori9@gmail.comr

Abstract

Anti-racism novels, portraying racism in all areas of wealth and income, education, health care, civil rights, life in North America and apartheid in South Africa, can create awareness toward different kinds of oppression that people suffered during different periods. The purpose of this study is to present a thematic analysis of Persian translations of Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) from English between 1978 and 2005/ 1357 and 1384 by Gulrukh Sa'īdnīyā, Sānāz Sihatī, and Shīrīndukht Daghīghīān applying the theory of the structure of feeling by Williams (1983). In order to do this study, sentimental scenes of *Beloved*, examining the destructive legacy of slavery, which were translated during the period under study were examined. Persian translations of these scenes were identified, and the representations of the feelings in the identified scenes were analyzed based on the theory of the structure of feeling by Williams (1983). Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the three translators seemed to be able to transfer the representations of the identified sentimental scenes, such as fury and resentment into Persian. Furthermore, the findings suggest that translation of anti-racism novels plays a significant role in transferring representation of feelings of oppressed people into other nations.

Keywords: Anti-racism Novels; Representation of Feeling; Structure of Feeling; Toni Morrison

1. Introduction

In the middle of 1990s, an Affective Turn in social sciences was introduced by Patricia Clough. Based on this approach, contents and forms of affections and feelings like other kinds of discourses in a society can be analyzed in line with the dominant discourse of that society. They can also be manipulated by the super powers ruling the society. Affection studies deals with concepts, such as power, suppression, resistance, subjectivity, and agency. Therefore, the authorities of governments use the strategy of the representation of feelings and affections to manipulate the production, distribution and consumption of affections (Williams, 1983). According to Williams (1983, p. 17), Structure of Feeling consists of the lived experience of a nation who has grown in the same cultural situation which may include a kind of dialectic relationship between the culture of the elite and the mass of people. Karimzadeh (as cited in Zukaee, 2019) maintained that happiness, sadness, fear, fury, and love can be represented by means of different literary texts; e.g., fury and resentment are among the most frequent feelings provoked via reading or watching resistance genres.

In this vein, the purpose of this study is to present a thematic analysis of Morrison's *Beloved* three translations from English into Persian between 1978 and 2005/ 1357 and 1384 applying the theory of the structure of feeling by Williams (1983).

1.1 Research Question

What strategies the three translators used in order to transfer the representation of feelings in *Beloved* from English into Persian?

2. Review of the related literature

As pointed out by Bassnett (1999), postcolonial translation scholars unanimously view translation as a site of exercising power relationships within textual practice. Power relations of the sociocultural environment as macro-level are reflected in translation as a micro-level textual practice. Therefore, translation is never an innocent act, for it is always embedded in a context and a history from which it emerges (Bassnett, 1999). In fact, translation is a primary tool for producing the desired meanings while concealing the power relations which lie behind those meanings (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1998). Likewise, Gentzler and Tymoczko (2002) state that the sociopolitical changes all over the world from 1960s led to changes in translation studies and the field`s interest in power structures. Since 1975, a variety of important movements took place in translation studies which had their roots in these sociopolitical changes and focused on translation in relation to power.

According to Gentzler & Tymoczko (2002) just as at the linguistic level translation is never homologous to the source text and inevitably contains shifts and deviations from the source text, it imports some aspects of the other to the receiving culture at the extralinguistic level. This function demonstrates that translation is an effective factor in cultural change, cultural dominance, and cultural resistance. They believe that cultural turn in translation studies now has turned into "power turn" and translation scholars have confirmed the relationship of power with both translation history and translation strategies (Gentzler & Tymoczko, 2002). In a similar vein, Bassnett & Lefevere (1998) believes that translation is always circumscribed in a set of power relations in both source and target languages. The problem of translation does not lie just in linguistic level, although the basis of every textual practice lies in language. Therefore, translation studies is being increasingly concerned with the relationships between the texts and the cultural milieu in which they are produced and read. This fact has led cultural studies and postcolonial studies to use translation both as a textual practice and a metaphor (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1998). She states that translation studies and cultural studies both are primarily concerned with issues of power relations and textual analysis (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1998). The idea that textual world is remote from the political world has increasingly been rejected, "as we learn more about the shaping forces that control the world in which we live and about those forces that controlled the world in which our predecessors lived" (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1998, p. 135). As noted by Gentzler and Tymoczko (2002), postcolonial scholars who work within other fields outside the realm of translation studies have acknowledged the important role of translation in "establishing, maintaining, and resisting imperialist power structures" (p. xv). Translation studies even has provided these scholars with the new terminology to express their ideas (Gentzler & Tymoczko, 2002). Emphasizing the connection between translation and power, Gentzler and Tymoczko (2002) point out that colonialism and imperialism did not work just through military or economic forces, but through knowledge and representation which are regarded as central aspects of power. Translation has always been a key tool in producing the knowledge and representations desired by power. Gentzler and Tymoczko believe that translation is not just a faithful reproduction of an original; rather it is "a deliberate and conscious act of selection, assemblage, structuration, and fabrication—and even in some cases, of falsification, refusal of information, counterfeiting, and the creation of secret codes", and in this way, it participates in knowledge production and culture creation (2002, p. xxi). Similarly, Bhabha (1994) believes that translation has turned to the site for cultural production and the space "where newness enters the world" (as cited in Gentzler & Tymoczko, 2002, p. xv). Niranjana (1992, as cited in Bassnett, 1999, p. 21) views translation as a means at the hands of the colonizers and asserts that "translation as a practice shapes, and takes shape within, the asymmetrical relations of power that operate under colonialism". Translation serves the colonizer by representing the colonized culture as static,

fixed, and unchanging. In fact, it hides the historical roots of the colonized culture (Niranjana, 1992, as cited in Bassnett, 1999, p. 21). Niranjana (1992, as cited in Bassnett, 1999, p. 129) also states that translation employs "strategies of containment" to reinforce "hegemonic versions of the colonized, helping them acquire what Edward Said calls representations or objects without history". Gentzler and Tymoczko (2002) believe that translation is a space where discourses meet and compete and as a result, it is an illustration of power relations in society. Since power does not work only in a simply top-down manner, translation can also be used as a tool for subversion or mediation (Gentzler & Tymoczko, 2002). The role of translation in Civil Rights movements, in resisting the Soviet occupation in Europe, and in feminism movement all over the world reveals the fact that translation is in interaction with the structures of power, whether they are implicit or explicit. The end of the Cold War, the rise of postcolonialism and the emergence of globalization of the cultures and economics of the world led to an increasing interest for studying translation in its relationship to power (Gentzler & Tymoczko, 2002).

Bassnett considers translation as a "radical form of social protest" and as an example of this function, she refers to the role translation played in the struggles for national identity in central and southern Europe in the early nineteenth century (1999, p. 13).

Another example of the power of translation in society is the Canadian feminist translators' works. These translators are aware of the subverting power of translation and use it to subvert the "patriarchal language and culture that dominates the cultural space of Quebec" (Gentzler, 2002, p. 214). They use translation for deconstructing the male space. Translation also has played important role in the political success of the Bloc Québécois—a large political party in Canada—and this is a proof of the power of translation (Gentzler, 2002, p. 214). Given these facts, Gentzler views translation as a liberating act which breaks the silences and can lead to social change.

Tymoczko (1999) investigates translations as forms of representation, of the other to the self, of the self to the other, and the importance of such representations within the political realm, where such representations can be a source of power and its confirmation, or its contestation and reversal. Tymoczko (1999) writes:

In the decisions of the translator — the large decisions such as when to translate, what to translate, what to omit from the translation record, how to render tone, what standards of accuracy to adopt, and how to render a literary form, as well as the small decisions of how to translate specific cultural concepts or how to spell names — can be traced the translator's response to the text and the framework of the source culture on the one hand, and to the political, social,

esthetic, and ideological context of the receptor culture on the other hand. (pp. 293-294)

3. Methodology

3.1 Corpus

Toni Morrison, American writer noted for her examination of black experience (particularly black female experience) within the black community. The first African-American woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, in 1993, Ms. Morrison was the author of 11 novels. Among them was *Beloved*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1988.

Beloved (1987), examines the destructive legacy of slavery as it chronicles the life of a black woman named Sethe, from her pre-Civil War days as a slave in Kentucky to her time in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1873. Although Sethe lives there as a free woman, she is held prisoner by memories of the trauma of her life as a slave. In order to collect data for the study, all novels translated from English into Persian between 1978 and 2005 were searched on the website of the Khaneh-ye Ketab at http://www.ketab.ir/ and the Persian translations of *Beloved* were identified. Since three translators translated *Beloved* during the specified period of the study, the corpus of the current analytical study was chosen as follows:

Beloved (1987)	محبوب	Toni Morrison	Sānāz Ṣiḥatī (1374)	1987	1374
	دخترم بیلاود		Gulrukh Saīdnīyā (1374)		1374
	دلبند		Shīrīndukht Daghīghīān(1377)		1377

It is worth noticing that *Beloved* , like majority of novels by Toni Morrison, was translated by women translators, such as Gulrukh Sa'īdnīyā, Sānāz Sihatī, and Shīrīndukht Daghīghīān. Moreover, the titles of the Persian translations of *Beloved* were not chosen the same.

4. Data Analysis

In order to present a thematic analysis of the Persian translations of Morrison's *Beloved* translated from English into Persian between 1978 and 2005/ 1357 and 1384 applying the theory of the structure of feeling by Williams (1983),

sentimental scenes of *Beloved* (1987) which were translated by the three translators during the period under study were examined. Persian translations of these scenes were identified, the translational choices in the Persian translations of *Beloved* were analyzed, and the representations of the feelings in the identified scenes were scrutinized based on the theory of the structure of feeling by Williams (1983).

The dehumanization of African-Americans is definitely a major theme in the book. Morrison uses animalistic language to describe different scenes in which Sethe and other slaves are being beaten, coerced into sexual acts, and controlled by someone of privilege.

One of the first moments in which Morrison uses language related to animals to describe a scene of abuse and powerlessness occurs when Sethe partakes in a sexual act with the engraver in order to have the name "Beloved" written on her daughter's head stone. The narrator describes the scene once saying, "She thought it would be enough, rutting among the headstones with the engraver, his young son looking on, the anger in his face so old; the appetite in it quite new," (p. 5).

I found that "rutting" has another meaning and often refers to the sexual acts of farm animals, mainly deer. This term is repeated later in this section as the narrator says, "Rutting among the stones under the eyes of the engraver's son was not enough," (pg. 5). The repetition of this word refers to the way in which the engraver and his son treat Sethe as non-human. (p. 5).

Another instance in which animalistic language is used to describe a scene of abuse when Sethe recalls slaves being forced into wearing bits generally used on farm animals. The narrator says, "She already knew about it, had seen it time after time in the place before Sweet Home. Men, boys, girls, women. The wildness that shot up into the eye the moment the lips were yanked back. Days after it was taken out, goose fat was rubbed on the corners of the mouth but nothing to soothe the tongue or take the wildness out of the eye," (p. 84).

Sethe thinks to herself, "…After they handled me like I was the cow, no, the goat, back behind the stable because it was too nasty to stay in with the horses" (p. 237).

The theme of the dehumanization of African-Americans and using animalistic language to describe them is not just subtly imbued in the text, but overtly manifested in the character of the Schoolteacher, who represents and perpetuated the absolute worst of the racism and abuse that Sethe experienced. One of her most haunting experiences with Schoolteacher does not even involve corporeal pain, of which he inflicted much, but extreme emotional abuse. She

describes overhearing a lesson that he was teaching to his three white pupils, in which he instructed them to make a division (physical and symbolic) on paper, and list her human characteristics on one side, and her "animal characteristics" on the other. On top of this insidious atrocity, Sethe had to grapple with the fact that she did not fully understand what he was saying at the time, and went so far as to ask Mrs. Garner what the word "characteristics" means. Later, Sethe revisits this experience, when she says "And no one, nobody on this earth, would list her daughter's characteristics on the animal side of the paper" (p. 298).

All four of these characters experiences Beloved either as a fractured aspect of Sethe's psyche or as a kind of doppleganger for his or her own feelings of loss, grief, confusion, and rage, and, in the case of Bodwin, feelings of accountability, culpability, and guilt. The story not told in traditional slave narratives, is that of psychosis, dissociation, of climbing out of one's body to forget 'that anybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill, or maim you, but dirty you. Dirty you so bad you couldn't like yourself anymore.

In this part of the study, following on from Williams (1983), sentimental scenes of *Beloved* (1987) were identified. Persian translations of the sentimental scenes were examined, and the representations of the feelings in the identified scenes were analyzed in the translational choices by the three translators, i.e., Gulrukh Sa'īdnīyā, Sānāz Sihatī, and Shīrīndukht Daghīghīān, who translated the novel with three different titles.

Persian translations of the identified sentimental scenes of *Beloved* in the three Persian translations are as follows:

«هنگام گذشتن از نور قرمزموجی از اندوه، چنان ته دلش را چنگ زد که دلش خواست گریه کند» (دخترم بیلاود، صفحه ۷۳)

«رنگ قرمز در نگاه پلِدی محو می‌شود و به جای آن یک‌جور صدای هق‌هق گریه را می‌شنود.» (دخترم بیلاود، صفحه ۷۳)

«برای یک برده زن سابق تا این حد دوست داشتن خطرناک بود؛ مخصوصاً اگر خیال دوست داشتن فرزندانش را در سر داشت. پل دی می‌دانست که کمی کمتر دوست داشتن بهتر بود؛ هر چیزی را کمی دوست داشتن. در این صورت روزی که آن چیز را می‌شکستند یا توی یک گونی می‌چپاندند شاید کمی عشق برای چیز بعدی توی وجود آدم باقی می‌ماند.» (محبوب، صفحه ۹۸)

سفیدپوستان «سینه های شیرده او را می دوشیدند» (دلبند، صفحه ۱۰۹)

«که مادر ست هم در هنگام پس انداختن کودکانش هنگام زایمان بدون انتخاب نام مرتکب کودک کشی شده است.» (دخترم بیلاود، صفحه ۷۸)

می‌گوید: «تمام شخصیت ظاهری ام را به گونه ای نشان دادم تا مادرم مرا نکشد... ».(دخترم بیلاود، صفحه ۷۸)

«من جان کودکانم را گرفتم و در جائی قرار دادم که احساس آرامش کنند.»(محبوب، صفحه ۹۹)

موریسون چنین نقل می کند: «پل دی فکر کرد، خطرناکه، خیلی خطرناکه. برای زنی که به بردگی عادت کرده عشق به هر چیز خطرناک است مخصوصا اگر این دلبستگی متعلق به فرزندانش باشد. او با دلبستگی تسویه حساب کرده بود.»(دلبند، صفحه ۷۳)

«من درباره زمان حرف می‌زدم. باور کردنش برام خیلی سخته. بعضی چیزا می‌رن، می‌گذرن. بعضی چیزا می‌مونن. سابق اغلب فکر می‌کردم که این کار حافظه خودمه. می‌دونی، بعضی چیزا رو آدم فراموش می‌کنه و چیزایی هس که هرگز فراموش نمی‌شن. ولی درباره جاها اینطور نیست. جاها همیشه هستن. اگه خونه‌ای بسوزه، از بین می‌ره ولی جای اون – تصویر اون – باقی می‌مونه و نه فقط تو ذهن من، بلکه بیرون از ذهن من، توی دنیا. چیزی که به یاد من میاد، تصویریه که از اونجا، از بیرون، خارج از مغزم بیرون می‌پره. یعنی حتی اگه بهش فکر نکنم، حتی اگه بمیرم، تصویر هرچه که کرده‌ام، دونسته‌ام یا دیده‌ام همیشه همونجا وجود داره. درست تو همون جایی که اتفاق افتاده.» (دلبند –صفحه ۵۹)

«چرا؟ چرا خودتو مجبور به ماسمالی کارای اون می‌کنی و به جاش عذر می‌خواهی؟ اون دختر بزرگیه -بزرگی و کوچکی اون واسه من فرق نداره. «دختر بزرگ» واسه یه مادر معنایی نداره .فرزند، همیشه فرزنده. اونا رشد می‌کنن. پیر می‌شن ولی بزرگ بودن یعنی چی؟ واسه قلب من بی‌معنیه.» (دلبند – صفحه ۷۳)

«نمی‌تونم زمانو به عقب برگردونم ولی می‌تونم گذشته رو به حال خودش ول کنم.» (محبوب – صفحه ۱۱۱)

«فقط یه چیزو بهم بگو. یه مرد سیاه چقدر باید بِکِشه. بهم بگو آخه چقدر؟» (دخترم بیلاود– صفحه ۳۴۸)

«اگر آنها حلقه آهنی دور گردنت ببندند، با دندانهایم آن را می‌کنم.» (دلبند – صفحه۳۲۰)

5. Results and Discussion

Analyzing the translational choices in the three Persian translations of *Beloved* by the three translators during the period under study, it was found that the major theme of the novel. i.e., dehumanization of African-Americans by using animalistic language was transferred by the three translators in their Persian equivalences to describe different scenes in which Sethe and other slaves are being beaten, coerced into sexual acts, and controlled by someone of privilege. It seemed that in order to create an equivalent effect, the translators applied Nida's dynamic equivalence in which "the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message" (Nida, 19964. As cited in Munday, 2012, p.67).

So as to make sense and to have a natural and easy form of expression, the three translations of the novel used domestication and naturalization. Most strategies of domestication, such as using a figurative expression for a non-figurative one, explanation, and syntactical adjustment were commonly used by the three mentioned translators of *Beloved*.

The effects of the translations of the resistance novels on Iranian readers are different from the effects of the novels on the readers in the original context as a consequence of the cultural, social and religious differences between the two societies except the periods during which both societies experience the same socio-historical conditions caused by wars, political movements or revolutions (Monsefi et al., 2021). According to Monsefi et al. (2021), novels covering race discrimination issues have different effects on readers in Iran from those in the target culture which have experienced such suffering, however, Iranian readers may identify themselves with them.

During President Khatami's administration, there were more freedom in the area of book publishing. Mohajerani believed in a kind of "open-door policy in the area of publishing and books". He reduced the strict measures against book publishing to the minimum. Mohajerani announced that books which had once been given a publishing permit did not need to apply for the permit for the second edition of the book, and that the publishing permit was permanent. About 100 publishing houses were allowed to take responsibility for what they published, without sending books to the Book Bureau for prepublication examinations. Consequently, a huge number of literary works, both translated and domestically produced, were published in this period. The Ministry allocated a budget for buying books from publishing houses to be distributed in the libraries countrywide (as cited in Boloori, 2015, p. 105). Therefore, Morrison's novels were mostly translated during khatami presidency.

6. Conclusion

The anti-racism novels, which evoke emotions that are prevalent in the Persian Muslim discourse in Iran, such as originality, justice, resistance, grief, trauma, love, compassion, sympathy with other people, altruism, fury, resentment and hope to succeed, were translated, retranslated and reprinted several times. English novels of resistance, mostly bestsellers, have satisfied different tastes and have been translated for the mass of people in Iran as a source of inspiration and voicing a silent resistance.

Analyzing the translational choices in the three Persian translations of *Beloved* by Gulrukh Sa'īdnīyā, Sānāz Sihatī, and Shīrīndukht Daghīghīān, who translated the novel with three different titles, it was found that in order to create an equivalent effect, the translators applied Nida's dynamic equivalence to lead

Iranian readers to identify themselves with the oppressed characters in the novel and to experience the above mentioned affections. In order to produce a similar response and to convey the spirit and manner of the original, the three translators of the novel used domestication and naturalization.

In a nutshell, based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the three translators seemed to be able to transfer the representations of the identified sentimental scenes, such as fury and resentment into Persian.

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