

*Research Paper—English*



March, 2010

## AN HISTORIC - CULTURAL TURN IN TRANSLATION STUDIES : GENDER AND IDEOLOGY



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“We are no longer stuck to the word or even to the text because we have realized the importance of context in matters of translation. One context is of course that of history, the other context is that of culture. The questions that now dominate the field are able to dominate it because people in the field began to realize, some time ago, that translations are never produced in a vacuum and they are never received in a vacuum.”

**(Lefevere & Bassnett: 1990 : Intro. P-3)**

With the radical rethinking in the field of translation, translation studies are on its way to take a new turn. From Catford's idea of pair-bound objective linguistic equivalence known as Interlinear Model, Popovic's concept of 'shift of expression' offering a cultural and aesthetic shape to linguistic equivalence, the theory has now taken an historic cultural turn. Translation is no longer defined as an activity that takes place between two languages but viewed as an interaction between two cultures and culture is understood as referring to all socially conditioned aspects of human life. The translation scholars Mary Snell Hornbey, Lambart, Sherry Simon view translation more as an intercultural activity and less as an interlinguistic activity. Lambert pointed out that important literary phenomenon are often not recognized as literature in certain cultures and therefore suggests the necessity for more research in this field. Lefevere and Bassnett, frustrated by the complicated analysis of shifts that goes sometimes beyond understanding,

suggest a new way to exercise of power in term of the production of culture. Translation studies have to deal not only with the text but need to look at those institutions which are a part of culture and which influence their production. Troubled by the scientificity of translation analysis and abstract notions of translation theory, Lefevere argues - We quickly arrive at the important role rewriters play for writers are in charge of discourse, their function is to reproduce discourse. It is thus coming to a certain ideology and cultural relativism position. For Susan Bassnett, studying translation today means - 'Being aware of the processes that shape a culture at a given point of time.' (Bassnett: 1993:191)

Thus recently translation studies seem to focus not solely on the source text, nor even the Target text but look at how different discourses and semiotic practices are mediated through translation by going beyond interpretation and looking at factors by which a culture shapes words of literature. In other words the questions of right / wrong, good / bad in terms of equivalents in translation and the related ideas of additions, omission, mismatches are the questions that seem to be preposterous. Today the specific translators decide on the specific degree of equivalence, they can realistically aim for a specific degree of equivalence on the basic considerations: 'What has changed is that one type of faithfulness, the one commonly connected with equivalence is no longer

imposed on translation. Rather they are free to opt for the kind of faithfulness that will ensure in their opinion that a given text is received by the Target audience in optional conditions... Translations are not faithful or free as such, not good / bad forever. Rather it is perfectly possible that they have to be faithful in some situations are free in others in order to work to the satisfaction of their initiators. (Lefevere and Bassett: 1990: Introduction :3)

This radical rethinking also concentrates upon gender studies and feminist interpretation in the field of Translation. In the essays that are collected by Lefevere and Bassett, 9 out of 13 contributors are women which itself is an historic cultural turn for the field. One difference between the recent translation studies and Bassett & Lefevere positions is precisely that the latter has opened a space for the discussions of gender studies and feminist challenges that the former has largely ignored.

Barbara Godard, a Canadian stalwart in the field, shows the correlation between translation theory based upon the notions of difference, theories of gender principles and feminist discourse. In Theorizing Feminist Discourse / Translation (1990) and her Translation Diary (1995), She brings forth the metonymic / contingent nature of translation. Her Canadian periodical Tessera formulates the concept of feminist translation. For Godard – ‘Translation is not a carrying across, but a reworking of meaning.’ (Godard in Gender in Translation P-23) Thus translation theory with Godard is in its innovative mode. The French lesbian writer Michele Cause feminizes words which are not normally feminized in French. By being gender-specific about the character’s impersonal relations in a way English Grammar does not allow these feminization strategies make it possible for the Target language readers. Elian Showalter suggests the necessity of ‘feminist poetics’ which is also the need of the translation studies. The study of gender principle, a psychologically, socially and culturally constructed principle, is one of the essential

elements in the historic cultural turn in the study of translation. It can be said to be a crucial determinant and one of the parameters to judge the quality of translation. The study of gender principle in the translations of Macbeth into Marathi, focusing especially the women characters in Macbeth is certainly a new interpretation of the play and hence is a part of historic cultural turn in translation. The paper discusses what happens to the women characters in Macbeth in the process of its Marathi translations. How do the translators deal with the gender principle in Macbeth ? thus the second part of the paper discusses how the Marathi translations of Macbeth can be seen in the light of the historic cultural turn in translations studies. Especially the character of Lady Macbeth can be taken as a representative example.

While dealing with the gender principle in Macbeth Marilyn French in Shakespeare’s Division of Experience writes – “In the historic world of Macbeth women must become as men and the loss of such a situation entails the culture at large is the subject of the tragedy. (French : 1981 : 242)

According to French, in Macbeth, Macbeth has violated the moral law and Lady Macbeth has violated the natural law. She is seen as supernaturally evil. Her crime is heinous because it violates her social role which has been formulated into principle of experience. She fails to uphold the feminine principle. The world of Scotland is a world in which the feminine principle is being wiped out. That this is a natural calamity is suggested by the unnatural events that follow. Confusion in human gender role leads the play to confusion in hierarchies of nature as well as to the destructions of one gender principle. This is the Elizabethan gender construct and Shakespearean treatment to the women characters in the play.

Macbeth is translated into Marathi by  
 S. M. Paranjape - Manajirao (1898)  
 V. V. Shirwadkar – Rajmukut (1954)  
 Arun Naik – Macbeth – (Unpublished)  
 L. N. Joshi – Dakinivilas – (Not available)

Shirwadkar's translation was performed by Marathi Natya Sangh and there were 9 performances of Arun Naik's Macbeth. Lady Macbeth's role in the play can be thought of in relation to the central action of the play as before the murder of Duncan and after. In her famous soliloquy;

Act – I, Scene – V, age – 29

Lady Macbeth - The raven  
Himself is hoarse,

That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan Under my, battlements. Come, you spirits That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here, And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full, Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood, Stop up the access and passage to remorse; That no compunctious visitings of Nature, Shake my feel purpose, nor keep peace between The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts, And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers, Wherever in your sightless substances You wait on Nature's mischief! Come, thick Night, And pall thee in the dunkest smoke of Hell, That my keen knife see not the wound it makes, Nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark, To cry, 'Hold, Hold!'

परंजपे : (पान - १५ - १६)

दर्याबाई ..... आज दमाजी महाराज आमच्या किल्ल्यात येणार. अशा वेळी हे घुबड ओरडत आहे -- अगदी कर्कश ओरडत आहे. खास, हा काही त्यांना शुभ शकुन नाही. इअहो, तुम्ही दुष्ट विचारांवर अंमल ठेवणाऱ्या देवतांनो, मी स्त्री आहे, पण मला या प्रसंगी तुम्ही पुरुषाचे धैर्य द्या : आणि माझ्या पायाच्या नखांपासून तो डोकीच्या केंद्रांपर्यंत सर्व अंगात भयंकर क्रूरपणाचा ओतप्रोत संचार होउ द्या. आणि माझ्या मनातील पश्चातापाचे सर्व दरवाजे बंद होण्यासाठी शरीरातील माझे सगळे रक्त गोठवून टाका आणि हे बरे आहे की वाईट आहे, करू की नको करू असल्या विचारांनी माझ्या मनातील हेतू मिळमात्रही डळमळू देऊ नका. अरे तुम्ही खुनाला उत्तेजन देणाऱ्या पिशाचांनो, तुम्ही उपद्रव देण्याच्या कामात कुठेही गुंतला असला तरी तेथून अदृश्य रूपाने झटकन या आणि माझ्या हृदयात जी काही दयामाया असेल ती चट सारी जाळून खाक करा. हे निबिड तमोमय रात्रि, ये, तूही ये आणि अंधकूप नरकातील घनथट काळोख बरोबर आणून आपला अंधकार काळाकभिन्न कर, आणि माझा खंजीर त्याच्या शरीरात जी जखम करील ती त्या खजिरालादेखील दिसू देऊ नको. तसेच हे आकाशातील तारे माझे हे कृत्य पाहून मध्येच नको, नको, म्हणून ओरडतील, म्हणून तुझ्या ढगाच्या आवरणातून त्यांना डोकावू देखील देऊ नको !

शिरवाडकर :- (पान - २७ - २८)

अवंती ..... दुर्गाच्या दरवाजातून सम्राट प्रवेश करित असतांना त्यांच्या स्वागतासाठी घसा फोडून ओरडणारे हे घुबड, इरहा, असाच ओरडत रहा-हा काही सम्राटांना शुभशकुन नव्हे हे नक्की ! सम्राटांच्या जीवनाचं भरतवाक्य आणि आमच्या वैभवाची नांदी आहे ही ! या, माणसाच्या मनावर अधिराज्य गाजविणाऱ्या साऱ्या देवतांनो या, माझे सगळं स्त्रीत्व फेडून टाका. आणि केशाग्रापासून पायाच्या नखांपर्यंत या शरीरात केवळ भयानक क्रूरतेच्या अमानुष निर्दयतेच्या लाटा सळसळू द्या. माझ्या अंतः करणाची शिळा करा आणि दया, औदार्य, माणुसकी यांसारख्या नाजूक भावनांकडे जाण्यायेण्याचे सारे दरवाजे बंद करून टाका, म्हणजे माझ्या असुरी महत्वाकांक्षेचा मार्ग मोकळा, निर्वेध होईल ! दुष्ट कृत्यांचा पाठलाग करणाऱ्या हे भूतपिशाचांनो, अदृश्य रूपाने तुम्ही कुठेही भ्रमत असलात, अदृश्य रूपाने कुठल्याही क्रूर कर्माला साथ देण्यात मग्न असलात तरी या घटकेला माझ्याकडे या आणि माझ्या स्तनातील सारं दूध घेऊन, त्याच्या बथल्यात मला जहराळां दान करा ! अंधारनरकातील सारा काळोख घेऊन आजची रात्र पृथ्वीवर येबो म्हणजे सम्राटांच्या चतीत शिरणाऱ्या कट्यारीलादेखील त्या चातीवरची जखम दिसायची नाही आणि अंधारात गारद झालेल्या स्वर्गाचे राखणथर आभाळामध्ये डोकावून थांब, थांब असा आक्रोश करणार नाहीत!

नाईक :- (पान - ११ - १२)

काळ्याकभिन्न कावळ्याचीही कावकाव झाली आहे घोगरी,/करता घातकी प्रवेश/डंकन माझ्या किल्ल्यावर,/मरणाचा विचार करणाऱ्या पिशाचांनो ! /या, हिरावून घ्या स्त्रीत्व माझे,/आणि भारून टाका मला,/संपूर्णपणे,/मस्तकापासून अंगठ्यापर्यंत,/भयानक क्रूरतेने./करून टाका घट्ट माझे रक्त./थांबवा मार्ग पश्चातापाचा,/म्हणजे नाही होणार विचलित मी,/माझ्या निर्धारापासून./या माझ या स्तनांकडे/घ्या शोषून माझे दूध,/आणि द्या जलाल पित्त मला./अदृश्यपणे निसर्गाची क्रूर चेष्टा करणाऱ्या/खूनी भुतांनो,/ये, काळोख्या रात्री,/करून टाक अंधःकार,/नरकातील काळ्या धुराने,/मग नाही दिसणार,/माझ्या धारदार सुन्याला,/केलेली जखम./आणि स्वर्गसुद्धा नाही पाहू शकणार./या आवरणातून काळोखाच्या,/ओरडण्याकरिता दांब दांब.

Lady Macbeth is able to persuade her husband to kill the king to be the king only after she has invoked the power of evil spirits to take possession of her heart where she turns herself from creation to destruction. It is a kind of distorted prayer where she turns herself from creation to destruction. It is a kind of distorted prayer where she wants to turn herself as a woman vampire. It is a willed submission to the demonic powers. By unsexing herself she symbolically rejects her womanhood, her womanliness. In the structural design of the drama it was essential to portray her as a 'fourth witch, a fiend – like queen, second Eve.' On the background of the intensity of Macbeth's weakness, to portray such a Lady Macbeth was the need of

the stage. However, the Shakespearean technique and the very purpose do not seem to be retained in translation, neither in terms of discourse nor in terms of the cultural context. The confident, courageous Lady Macbeth gets lost in translation and she remains merely an evil creature, a fiend-like queen, planning to kill the king and the guards and enraging Macbeth. This shift in emphasis on the part of the translators leads to the change in discourse as well. What remains is the convenient omission, addition and distortion. The gender construct of the period is not thus reflected in translation. The character of Lady Macbeth in her utterances such as :

I have given suck .....page 42  
I shame to wear a heart so white .....  
page 57 Such I account thy love.....  
page 41 Had he not resembled my father  
..... page 52 and her role in the banquet  
scene and her two feminine mistakes. - all these  
seem to be taken literally by the translators. In all  
these Lady Macbeth has actually sacrificed herself  
as a woman, as a wife. She has to nerve herself  
with wine to give her boldness enough, she has to  
pray to unsex her, to take out her feminine self.  
The appalling invocation to the evil spirits to unsex  
her and fill her from crown to the topfull of direst  
cruelty is in fact her feminine quality which the  
translators seem to be unaware of. It is a part of  
Elizabethan culture which gets lost in translation  
and when it comes to crux, the translation remains  
nearly a literal script and doesn't reach the level of  
any culture. In fact, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth  
are ideal husband and wife. There is a mutual  
understanding between them. Lady Macbeth never  
betrays her husband. Enraging his manhood, calling  
him 'coward' 'cat' is a part of her strategy to kindle  
him to fulfill his ambition. The ideal of being a  
wife is so deeply rooted in her that she loses her  
womanhood, loses herself as a woman. In the  
Banquet scene, only she can understand Macbeth  
better than anybody else. She has a deep  
psychological insight in the nature of her husband.  
She perfectly knows how to deal with him which

once again is feminine on her part, is like an ideal  
wife and this is not realized by the translators. In  
doing so, she is loyal to her husband. This loyalty  
is not reflected in translation. She doesn't like her  
chicken – hearted husband who has courage but no  
willpower. Therefore she deliberately enforces  
herself to be cruel. This is not a willing submission  
to the evil spirits, not even for herself. This ideal  
construct of gender she has actually observed even  
before the murder whereas the translators are  
engaged in portraying her evil character, as a  
schemer, planning for murder. In translation they  
create another kind of Lady Macbeth. It is neither  
Indian approach to gender, that they thought of. It  
in a way is a deviation from the Shakespearean  
approach. In fact Lady Macbeth sacrifices herself  
as a wife, as a woman and this ideal is created by  
the male – dominated society. Unknowingly  
enough, for the sake of her husband Lady Macbeth  
challenges even the Gender construct of her own  
period and this too is a feminine sacrifice on her  
part as a wife. In her attempts to prompt her chicken  
hearted husband to be hard, she is ready to lose her  
womanhood. This loyalty, this alert love, sublime  
love, the courage, the faithfulness, the submission  
and the sacrifice are the ideals for her as a wife in  
the male-dominated society. These feminine  
concerns of her nature which is a cultural construct  
is beyond the understanding of the translators.  
These tacit parts of her character which fit in the  
cultural pattern of the feudal context of the  
Elizabethan period, of Scotland's subculture, the  
translators seem to be unaware of.

In the later part Lady Macbeth is seen suffering  
from somnambulism in sleep – walking scene. In  
case of Duncan's murder Macbeth needs her advice.  
Once he became a king he no longer needs her help  
and she becomes absolutely all alone. It is in her  
suffering that we can see real Lady Macbeth with  
all her feminine qualities from the masculine point  
of view. This once again is the ideal construction  
of womanhood by the male – dominated society.  
This human aspect is the very Shakespearean. Her

former loyalty to her husband to support him to fulfill his ambition even at the cost of her womanhood in the first part and her utmost suffering in the second part are both feminine and culture specific which is not reflected in translation. The translators are engaged in portraying the evil side of her character, calling her even Anandibai, the historical figure. Shakespeare's portrayal of Lady Macbeth raises the questions – what did she herself gain? Absolutely nothing not even the satisfaction for which she has determined and lost her womanhood, since Macbeth turns to be too ruthless. She has thrown everything for nothing. This implied meaning is not reflected in translation. In reading Macbeth we don't hate Lady Macbeth but feel pity. This does not happen in case of translations where the readers develop only the feeling of hatred for the wicked Lady Macbeth. Thus for the translators, her character remains just a literal script where neither the culture, semiotics nor the language is retained. It remains only the handling of her character on the linguistic level. The tacit part in her thinking of the owl and falcon before and after the murder, her fragile beauty and tender feelings in –

'All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand', page 141 Her womanly concerns in –'Thane of fife had a wife, Where is she now?' page 139 Her becoming mad when her husband doesn't require support, Duncan calling her 'kind hostess'—all these feminine aspects, the traces of her feminine weaknesses and her human feeling, are absent in translation. It is in this sense that the

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translators could not retain the gender construct of the period. If Lady Macbeth is the exceptional ideal gender construct of the period, Lady Macduff is the ideal gender construct of her own period in the general sense of the term and her feminine concerns in the dialogues with her son are reflected in translation. The creation of the witches as a feminine gender is a masculine concern which is a part of the value system though the translators do not seem to treat them in such a manner. In nutshell, Dr. Khan's argument regarding translation is a case in point. Why do we translate? In order to fill up the lacuna in the Target language. And if this purpose is not solved translation would be a barren exercise. Shakespeare's dramas are not translated by any Indian woman writer. But for Indumati Gagtap's translation of Othello – which also is unpublished and so not available – no woman writer has yet translated Shakespeare in Marathi.

The paper concludes that the objective descriptions of the linguistic possibilities and even the analysis in terms of shifts do not seem to account for all the extra linguistic factors, semiotic aspects, ethnohistorical factors in the historic cultural turn in translation studies. With utmost attempts on the part of the translators to give it a local color, locale cannot be changed and culture cannot be translated but it can surely be communicated hence there should be cultural translation. The culturally constructed gender principle is a crucial determinant in the field of translation and can thus be one of the parameters to judge the quality of translation. Therefore the Target language i.e. Marathi has to be reconstructed in such a way – as it is done by the French scholars – norms should be developed in such a manner so as to form a 'New Poetics'.