

Sexual Pun: A Case Study of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*

JEU DE MOTS SEXUEL: UNE ETUDE DE CAS DE ROMEO ET JULIETTE DE SHAKESPEARE

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Abstract

In general, puns are of great artistic value which imbue and enrich a literary work with secondary and tertiary meanings. Because of the double or triple-tiered meanings involved, this stylistic device is not easily amenable to translation; however, the problems can still pile up where one of the given meanings of a pun refers to *the genitals* and with *sexuality* coming to the fore. The present study aims to analyze the translations of Shakespearean sexual puns in one of his famous plays, viz. *Romeo and Juliet*. In fact, sexual puns bear serious repercussions for many translating languages which have to be handled with care. Empirical analysis is based on the English source text and five translations, two French ones rendered by Hugo and Jouve, one Italian version by Raponi and two Persians by Naziri and Pazargadi. Having analyzed the ST and TT pairs as regards sexual pun, it was observed, interestingly enough, that in almost all the cases in the three mentioned languages, the sexuality aspect of the punnistic words had been deleted, euphemized and normalized; hence, culminating in loss of punning activity.

Key words: *Romeo and Juliet*; Sexual pun; Pun; Strategies; Translation

Résumé

En général, les jeux de mots sont de grande valeur artistique qui imprègnent et d'enrichir une œuvre littéraire avec des significations secondaires et tertiaires. En raison des significations des doubles ou des triples niveaux impliqués, cette figure de style n'est pas facile de les faire la traduction, mais les problèmes peuvent encore s'amorcer dans l'une des significations données d'un

jeu de mot se réfère aux organes génitaux et à la sexualité à venir au premier plan. La présente étude vise à analyser les traductions de Shakespeare calembours sexuels dans une de ses célèbres pièces de théâtre, à savoir. Roméo et Juliette. En fait, les jeux de mots sexuels porter de graves répercussions pour de nombreux langages traduction qui doivent être manipulés avec soin. L'analyse empirique est basée sur le texte source anglais et cinq traductions, deux en français fournis par Hugo et Jouve, une version italienne par Raponi et deux Persans par Naziri et Pazargadi. Après avoir analysé les paires ST et TT en ce qui concerne calembour sexuelle, il a été observé, assez curieusement, que dans presque tous les cas dans les trois langues mentionnées, l'aspect sexualité des mots punnistic avait été supprimé, euphémisée et normalisée; donc, aboutissant à perte d'activité calembour.

Mots clés: Roméo et Juliette; Jeu de mots sexuel; Calembour; Les stratégies; La traduction

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/j.ccc.1923670020120802.1854>.

INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare is one of the most punning dramatists who according to scholar Samuel T. Coleridge, a Shakespearean play contained an average of 78 puns, and over the life of his career Shakespeare had managed to work in no less than 3000 puns into his plays; however, it can be said that the works of Shakespeare contain more than 700 puns on sex and more than 400 on genitals. *Filthy Shakespeare: Shakespeare's Most Outrageous Sexual Puns*, written by scholar and dramatist Pauline Kiernan is an entertaining compendium of Shakespeare's

sexual puns and their often lost meanings.

Shakespeare's sexual wordplay ranges from uproarious innuendoes to profoundly moving expressions of emotional pain. His kings, queens and aristocrats are as foul-mouthed as his clowns, and his women are expert dealers in the raciest double-entendres (Kiernan, 2007).

One of Shakespeare's most punning plays is *Romeo and Juliet*, which tots up to one hundred seventy-five quibbles. Shakespeare knew what he was about in his wordplay, which is as functional here as any of his later tragedies. It holds together the play's imagery in a rich pattern and gives an outlet to the tumultuous feelings of the central characters. By its prophetic second and third meanings it serves to sharpen the play's dramatic irony. Above all, it clarifies the conflict of incompatible truths and helps to establish their final equipoise (Mahood, 1957, p.56).

In this study, selected sexual puns will be looked upon in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* as to how this stylistic device comprising two or more meanings, one meaning of which is bawdy referring to genitals, has been dealt with by the different translators. The aim, in this study, has been to include three languages, i.e., French, Italian and Persian, to widen the scope of the study and to see how the bawdy aspects of the polysemous terms been treated in the three different cultures. Firstly, pun, its translation as well as drama translation will be dealt with followed by the analysis of sexual puns elicited from the above-mentioned translations.

THE CONCEPT OF PUN

The concept of "pun" has been defined in various ways; however the basic principle present in all definitions of pun is that all forms of punning expressions directly or indirectly derive their special effect from a specific combination of differences of meaning and likeness of form.

Shaw (1905), reminding us that puns have appeared in literature since the time of Homer (8th century B.C.) defines this term as "the humorous use of a word emphasizing different meanings or associations. According to Nash (1985), "we take punning for a tawdry and facetious thing, one of the less profound forms of humor, but that is the prejudice of our time; a pun may be profoundly serious, or charged with pathos."

A pun is a literary form whereby a portrayal of a word or a phrase has several meanings, all of which apply. This can be achieved by the same sound with a different spelling or the same spelling with a different meaning, and it causes the reader to consciously acknowledge the differences and the similarities of the word or words. All at once the same sentence can have totally different meanings. This wordplay brings an amusing and yet ambiguous curve to the context of the story. What

someone understands from a pun changes from person to person, time, culture, sex, background and worldview. The clever and humorous thing is the way that an author writes a pun in which both meanings of the word make sense and are understood or at least considered. It is a part of human nature to try to use humor or irony when communicating with other people, and if both parties have the same domain of human knowledge and experience, it will have a humorous effect on the addressee. If the receiver understands the pun both s/he and the punster will be united in taking pleasure from it; but if they do not, the punster may also derive pleasure from it, thinking that s/he is superior (Alexieva, 1997, p.139). Puns can also be cruel or unkind as well as a source of humor.

Dirk Delabastita, a scholar of Translation Studies doing numerous studies and research on punning and its translation, suggests a more cognitive and linguistic definition as follows:

"Wordplay is the general name for the various *textual* phenomena in which *structural features* of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a *communicatively significant confrontation* of two (or more) linguistic structures with *more or less similar forms* and *more or less different meanings*" (Delabastita, 1996, p.128).

In this definition, it is stated that the pun is based on the confrontation of linguistic forms that are formally similar, but have different meanings (Delabastita, 1993, p.58). The formal similarity is manifested in terms of spelling and pronunciation. It is therefore the confrontation of similar forms and dissimilar meanings between linguistic structures that gives rise to ambiguity. This means that ambiguity arises because words that look and/or sound the same but have different meanings are exploited in such a manner that an additional semantic layer is added to the otherwise stable relationship between signifier and signified (Sanderson, 2009). Delabastita (1996) states that pun is most common in languages like English which have many monosyllabic words.

Categorization of Pun in English

Puns can be vertical or horizontal. The former, as Delabastita (1996) asserts, hinges upon a simultaneous double context enabling a double meaning. In other words, the punning words may clash associatively by being co-present in the same portion of the text. This kind of pun is regarded to be the same as ambiguity and in Delabastita's distinction, ambiguity is a subcategory of pun. The latter is contingent upon the consecutiveness of linguistic components to set forth the double meaning. In this type of pun, the punning words are in a relation of continuity by occurring one after another in a text. Different types of horizontal pun are: homophony, homography, paranomy and homonymy.

- **Homographic pun** indicates two expressions, spelt the same way and creating graphemic ambiguity.

In orthography, it is the way of using a distinctive character to represent each sound. A word of the same spelling as another but derived from a different root and having a different meaning e.g. to wind and the wind; to present and a present or bow (the front part of a ship), bow (to bend) and bow (a decorative knot).

- **Homonymic pun** is comprised of words that are identical both in spelling and pronunciation. The words have different meaning, though. An example is the word 'bear', which can be a verb (to carry) or a noun (the animal).
- **Homophonic pun** is based on the exploitation of word pairs which sound alike, but are different in spelling. An example of such word pair is *tale* and *tail*.
- **Paronymic pun** exploits words that have slight differences in both spelling and pronunciation. An example of such a word pair is 'adding *in salt/insult* to injury' (Delabastita, 1993, p.79-80).

Pun Translation

Cross-cultural and cross-linguistic translation can be a challenging task, as the target culture readers might not be familiar with certain culture specific items from the source culture, or as linguistic structures from the ST might not have a readily available equivalent in the TL. Puns are deemed as linguistic-bound phenomenon which can be arduous to translate due to their language-specific difficulties.

Whether serious or comical, wordplay creates linguistic problems of translatability because different languages have different meaning-form distributions (Delabastita, 2004).

This stylistic device has been defined by many scholars, but the ways of their rendition into other languages have not been properly studied. For centuries, it has been considered an untranslatable stylistic phenomenon and translators have encountered much difficulty. One of the strategies they opted for was to give footnotes, explaining this word sound like a pun.

One aspect of wordplay and translation that many researchers have approached is whether wordplay is translatable at all, since it depends so strongly on the structure of the source language for meaning and effect. Alexieva (1997) considers wordplay to be universal in all languages in the sense that all languages seem to have words with different meaning but identical (or nearly identical) written or spoken form. This is caused by the asymmetry between language and the surrounding world, the latter of which exhibits many more objects and phenomena than a language can have words for.

The difficulty of translating puns, according to Alexieva (1997), is caused by the asymmetry between world and language manifesting itself in different ways in different languages. For example, a word which

has a set of multiple meanings in one language may have a corresponding word in another with only one meaning or with a different set of multiple meanings. The phonological and graphemic structures which are important for wordplay are also different in different languages.

Pun translation is a kind of individual work, because each translator transfers it in accord with his/her own taste. Translators use their imagination to achieve the purpose lying behind every pun which is the creation of stylistic effect on the reader.

Lefevere (1992) states that a translator must make conscious effort to distinguish between diverse meanings of a word and to find out which one the author intended. In Lefevere's view, a translator must be adroit enough to get both the obvious usual meaning as well as the less frequent one the author had in mind.

Delabastita (1996) believes that puns, due to the combination of the subject-oriented (reference) and the self-oriented (self reference) mode of language from which puns lend their individuality, present special problems to translators. Moreover, most problems lying in the translation of pun emanate from the fact that the semantic and pragmatic effects of source text pun stem from particular structural characteristics of the source text, for which a translator fails to reproduce a counterpart.

Delabastita reports how it is often assumed that the translatability of wordplay ultimately depends on the possibility of divorcing textual means (which may be highly language specific in case of wordplay) from textual function (which can be reproduced, e.g. by dint of compensation strategies).

In many cases, it appears that the view on translatability depends in fact on what one means by "translating" the wordplay. Delabastita (1996b) states that even replacing source language wordplay by target language wordplay will usually require changes in the structure or meaning. Sometimes the surrounding context also requires modification in order for the wordplay to work. According to Delabastita (1996b), this leads to the paradox where the translator is able to be faithful to the source text in terms of its wordplay only through being unfaithful to the grammatical and lexical aspects.

According to Delabastita, there are three possibilities where pun translation has potential to be recreated in other languages such as:

1. between historically related languages, especially wordplay based on sound similarity, for example, between Dutch and English.
2. Since it is rooted in extralingual reality, wordplay based on polysemy can be reduplicated with little loss even between historically unrelated languages.
3. Interlingual borrowings common to both the target language and source language.

As it is difficult to transfer all aspects of pun (form

and content) into a target text, the translator is placed in a dilemma and is forced to abandon one or more features of a source text pun; however, a translator is supposed to do his/her utmost in fulfilling the sensible task of diminishing translation loss. In reality, there seems to be no natural way of avoiding translation loss; neither the avoidance of encountering the predicament, nor its eradication seem to be feasible. Nonetheless, as Hervey & Higgins (1992) state, "the challenge to the translator is thus not to eliminate translation loss altogether, but to reduce it by deciding which of the relevant features in the ST is most important to preserve, and which can most legitimately be sacrificed in preserving them". In other words, the experienced translator will make up his/her mind to reduce translation loss by resorting to some specific strategies or, as they put it, s/he should make an effort to "minimize difference" in lieu of endeavoring "to maximizing sameness".

A variety of translation strategies is available to translators who encounter wordplay in the ST. Dirk Delabastita provides an elaborate list of eight "basic" options, which in turn can be divided into several different subtypes (Delabastita, Introduction 134):

1) *PUN > PUN*

This strategy involves translating the ST pun with a pun in the TT. It is not necessarily the case that the TT pun has the same properties at the ST pun. More often than not, it will be different from the ST pun in either its form, demantic content, Textual effect, or its contextual setting.

2) *PUN > NON-PUN*

The ST pun becomes a phrase in the TT that may contain both intended senses of the pun, or only one of its senses, i.e. the one that is deemed most important in the context.

3) *PUN > Related Rhetorical Device*

This strategy replaces the pun with a different rhetorical device, such as repetition, alliteration or rhyme that aims at creating the same effect as the ST pun.

4) *PUN > ZERO*

The pun is not only not translated, it is simply omitted together with its context.

5) *PUN ST = PUN TT*

In this case the translator is able to reproduce the ST pun without any changes to its form and semantic content.

6) *NON-PUN > PUN*

A pun is used to translate ST material that does not contain any instances of wordplay. This strategy compensates for any instances of loss of ST puns elsewhere in the TT.

7) *ZERO > PUN*

This strategy too, is a form of compensation. It is different from strategy (6) in that it adds totally new material to the text that contains wordplay.

8) *Editorial Techniques*

This strategy can be used when a ST pun cannot

be translated (in its entirety) and the translator wants to explain the ST pun to the reader through the use of footnotes.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The materials in this study encompass selected sexual puns from one of Shakespeare's tragedies, viz. *Romeo and Juliet* together with its translations into Italian, French and Persian as follows:

- *Romeo and Juliet* translated into Italian by Goffredo Raponi (1960).
- *Romeo and Juliet* translated into French by François-Victor Hugo (1970).
- *Romeo and Juliet* translated into French by Pierre Jean Jouve, the former translated in 1959 and the latter in 1955.
- *Romeo and Juliet* translated into Persian by Pazargadi (1978) and Foad Naziri (2005).

SEXUALITY IN SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare's use of bawdy—sexually suggestive, crude, or humorously indecent language—became an area of serious critical interest in the twentieth century. Eric Partridge (1947) is credited with pioneering the critical study of bawdy in his 1947 book *Shakespeare's Bawdy*. Although it met with the approval of Elizabethans, bawdy has been dismissed by some commentators as simply playing to the lowest common denominator of the audience. Many critics have chosen to ignore the bawdy elements in Shakespeare's works, viewing them as unworthy of extensive comment, while others have elected to omit or change the objectionable passages. Throughout the centuries editors and directors have removed the potentially offensive portions of Shakespeare's works. In 1818, Thomas Bowdler published *Family Shakespeare*, a censored version of Shakespeare's plays which cut passages that he considered obscene. Most modern scholars, however, appreciate Shakespeare's bawdy jokes and puns, and find that the clever wit of his sexual innuendo not only has comic significance, but is used to develop character, themes, and plot as well. While no one denies the presence of bawdy in Shakespeare's works, critics do not agree on the extent of it. E. A. M. Colman (1974) cautions against reading too many indecent elements in Shakespeare, and finds that many critics distort the significance of bawdy in Shakespeare's plays and poems. Most critics do agree, however, that a knowledge of Shakespeare's bawdy language is crucial for a thorough understanding of his works.

As for Shakespeare, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, attempts were frequently made, both on the page and on the stage, to suppress or deny the sexuality in Shakespeare's language.

Henrietta and Thomas Bowdler (Shakespeare's editors) removed what they saw as indecency and obscenity (as well as profanity) in their frequently reprinted 'Family Shakespeare', published in part in 1807 then complete, in ten volumes, in 1820. Theatre texts too were cleaned up, so that for example the word 'whore' was removed from nineteenth-century acting texts of *Othello*. It was often assumed that when Shakespeare used overtly sexual language he did so out of a desire to please the groundlings, patronizingly equated with spectators of low taste: early in the twentieth century the Poet Laureate Robert Bridges wrote that 'Shakespeare should not be put into the hands of the young without the warning that the foolish things in his plays were written to please the foolish, the filthy for the filthy, and the brutal for the brutal.' Certainly Shakespeare wrote to entertain a broad spectrum of playgoers, but there is no reason to suppose that he did so with a sense of self-abasement or of condescension. Well into the twentieth century school editions regularly expurgated their texts. Editors even of scholarly editions, some of them still current, evaded frankness in their glosses by using Latinisms such as 'pudendum'—which, heaven help us, means something of which one should be ashamed—for the female sexual organs, and phrases such as 'with a bawdy quibble' or 'with an obscene pun' to avoid explaining a sexual quip. On the other hand, during, especially, the later part of the twentieth century serious attempts have been made to dig beneath the surface meanings of what Shakespeare wrote in the effort to elucidate sexual significances that would have been apparent to his earlier readers and hearers but which have been submerged by the passage of time. Shakespeare sometimes unambiguously signals sexual wordplay. 'Out upon you, what a man are you!'

says the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* after Mercutio has talked about the 'bawdy hand of the dial' being 'upon the prick of noon' (2.3.104–6). But certain words that have an innocent surface meaning may have carried sexual overtones to his earliest readers, and he may have wished his audiences to pick them up (Wells, 2010, p.1).

Sexual Pun in *Romeo and Juliet*

Romeo and Juliet is a play crowded with lewd puns. Mercutio, Benvolio and Romeo toy with bawdy innuendoes; Gregory, Peter and Sampson delight in the proximity of maidenheads and their own naked weapons; the nurse both puns and is punned about. The play's lyricism contends with language intoxicated by carnality. Even Juliet, the romantic center of the play, quibbles with erotic meaning.

Critics such as Marion D. Perret (1982) maintain that Shakespeare's bawdy sexual references "illuminate" his works and are used to develop character, theme, and plot. In his study of the carnivalesque elements of *Romeo and Juliet*, Ronald Knowles (1996) contends that "bawdy is used not only for structural and thematic contrast, but for something larger and more positive—the carnivalesque embrace of existence." Mary Bly (1996) also examines *Romeo and Juliet*, which is considered by some critics to be the bawdiest of Shakespeare's plays. Bly focuses on Juliet's lewd puns and considers the influence of her character on the comic heroines of Shakespeare's contemporaries.

In this part, examples of sexual pun will be compared with the intended translations to evaluate the strategies deployed and the way they are treated by the translators.

- (1) *Mercutio*: For this drivelling love is like a great natural, That runs lolling up and down to hide his **bauble** In a hole (2.iv.79-81)

پازارگادی:

نظیری: آخر این عشق یاهو خوان، همچو ابلهی کبیر است که با زبان آویزان بالا و پایین می دود تا چوب زراندود خویش را در

به ثقبه بی نهان سازد.

Raponi: perché quel mocciosetto dell'amore assomiglia ad un povero imbecille che corre a perdefiato a destra e a manca all'affannosa ricerca d'un buco in cui nascondere il suo **gingillino**.

Jouve: Car cet amour pleurnicheur est comme un grand idiot qui court en tirant la Langue, pour cacher son **joujou** dans un trou.

Hugo: cet amour grognon n'est qu'un grand nigaud qui s'en va, tirant la langue, et cherchant un Trou où fourrer sa **marotte**.

In this example, the word *bauble* has two meanings.

One is *a short stick* and the other meaning is *penis*. Having a glance at the Persian translations, it becomes evident that Pazargadi has omitted the whole extract and Naziri has opted for the first meaning of the word, that is, *a stick*. In fact, the punning expression is translated by a non-punning expression in the TL. In the Italian translation of Raponi, the word *bauble* is rendered as *gingillo* which embraces none of the meanings inherent in the original word. It means *small trinket*. In fact, the sexuality tone of the word, by opting for this translation, is simply eliminated. Interestingly enough, in the French version, Jouve uses the word *joujou* that is used mainly in the language of small kids, which means *toy* and Hugo

renders this word as *marotte* which means *stick*. In fact, in the Italian and French version of Jouve, this word is toned down in favor of a non-bawdy term in the TL.

(2) *Mercutio*: Thou desirest me to stop in my **tale**
against the hair (2.iv.83)

پازارگادی: _

نظیری: پس تو از من می خواهی حکایت خویش را **خلاف میل خود** به پایان برم.

Raponi: Vuoi che tagli il discorso **a contropelo**?

"Against the hair", "contro il verso del pelo", cioè "contro il verso giusto del discorso"; o anche, come intende qualcuno (Chiarini), "contro il mio carattere".

Jouve: Tu veux que je m'arrête dans mon histoire à **rebrousse-poil** ?

Hugo: Tu veux que j'arrête mon histoire à **contre-poil** ?

In the above extract, there are two puns, one is the word *tale* playing on *tail* and the phrase *against the hair* which both means *contrary to my inclination* or *against the grain* and it quibbles on *pubic hair* as well. In the first Persian translation, again we see omission; however, the second has rendered the pun to a non-punning expression by opting for only one sense, i.e. is *against my will*. Raponi renders the ST pun availing himself of an editorial techniques. He renders the sentence as *vuoi che tagli il discorso a contropelo* which means *do you want*

that I cut the speech against the nap? In his footnote, he explains the different meanings; however, he doesn't mention the sexual meaning of the word. Again, in the French translation of Jouve, the ambiguity is not vivid since by rendering as *à rebrousse-poil* (*against the hair*), he conveys merely one meaning of the term. Despite the fact that this expression in French has the same semantic meaning as English, it does not arouse the sexual meaning in the ST, especially that the word *tale* is translated as *histoire* which means *story* and it does not restore the ST homophonic pun. The same thing is vivid in Hugo's translation that renders as *against the grain*. In general, none of the translators has transferred this beautiful case of pun into TL and by just adopting one meaning, the multi-tiered polysemy is lost.

(3) *MERCUTIO*: O, thou art deceived; I would have made it Short: for I was come to the whole **depth of my tale**; and Meant, indeed, to **occupy** the argument no longer (II.iv.90)

پازارگادی: _

نظیری: آه تو خیانت پیشه ای. چرا که من به **عمق حکایت خود** رسیده بودم، و حرف تو به واقع بدان معناست که جدل را

ادامه نگیرم

Raponi: No, ti sbagli, l'avrei tagliata lì, **perché alla coda c'ero già arrivato** e non avevo proprio alcuna voglia **d'occupare** più a lungo l'argomento.

Jouve: Oh erreur, je l'aurais faite courte, car j'étais précisément arrivé **dans la profondeur de mon histoire**, aussi n'avais-je pas l'intention **d'occuper** l'objet plus longtemps.

Hugo: Oh ! Tu te trompes : elle allait être fort courte; car **je suis à bout** et je n'ai pas l'intention **d'occuper** la place plus longtemps.

The quibble here is on the word *occupy* which means to *dwell upon* and *copulate* as well. The word *deep* is, in general, allusive of vaginal penetration. Mercutio concludes a series of *tail* puns with one on *occupy*. As it is vivid, Pazargadi, aware of the sexuality sense inherent in the ST, has omitted these parts. Naziri, the second Persian translator has replaced the word *occupy* by *continue*

and has literally translated *the depth of my tale* into TL. Here, the punning effect is lost since one meaning is to be interpreted out of the Persian text and the sexuality language is effaced. Raponi renders the *tail* meaning of the word *tale* in this way: *I had already come to the tail* which realizes only one meaning and renders *occupy* as *occupare* which is the nearest TL equivalent for this bawdy term. Likewise, Jouve has literally rendered the piece into French and rendering *depth of my tale* as *la profondeur de mon histoire* (the depth of my story) can only be a non-punning expression for the original. Hugo, on the other hand, translates ST pun into a TL pun by rendering *depth of my tale* as *je suis à bout*. This expression has three meanings in TL: 1) I am exhausted 2) I am fed up with that 3) I am exasperated. Here, the translator abandons the attempt to relay the pun as such and, instead, compensate by inserting French pun of his own which is not part of the source text. But equivalence of intention has been maintained'. Here, the same linguistic device is employed in both source and target texts to achieve a similar effect.

For the word *occupy*, in fact, in the Italian and French versions, the ST pun is copied as TT pun, without being translated.

(4) *PETER*: I saw no man **use** you at his pleasure; If I had, my weapon should quickly have been out (II.iv.136-7)

پازارگادی: من ندیدم که کسی هر طور دلش خواست با شما رفتار کند. اگر آنطور رفتار کرده بود، اسلحه من بیدرنگ از غلاف خارج می شد.

نظیری: کسی را ندیدم که شما را ملعبه خود سازد. اگر دیده بودم سلاح من بیدرنگ برون می آمد.

Raponi: Io, che qualcuno **vi svillaneggiasse** non l'ho visto; se mai l'avessi visto, questa mia spada, ve lo garantisco, sarebbe uscita subito dal fodero.

Jouve: Je n'ai jamais vu un homme **se servir de vous** pour son plaisir, et si je l'avais vu, mon Epée aurait été vite dégainée.

Hugo: Je n'ai vu personne **user de** vous a sa guise; si je l'avais vu, ma lame aurait bien vite été dehors.

The word *use* here means *to have sexual intercourse with*. The first Persian translator uses the word *behave* for *use* which is far removed from the original meaning and the second has has availed himself of another term, that is,

plaything rendering as *I saw no one to make a plaything out of you*. Raponi, instead, uses the word *svillaneggiare* which means *insult*. In all these cases, the punny word has been replaced by non-punny word which doesn't evoke any secondary or sexual connotation. Jouve and Hugo translate this word into French respectively as *se servir de vous* and *user de vous* which exactly means to *use you*. In the case of Jouve, the ST pun is translated by a TL pun and as for Hugo, ST pun copied as TT pun, without being translated.

(5) *MERCUTIO*: Now will he sit under a **medlar** tree, And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit As maids call medlars, when they laugh alone. (II.i.34-36)

پازارگادی: اکنون او زیر درخت ازگیل نشسته و آرزو می کند که معشوقه او همان میوه ای باشد که دختران در تنهایی، نام مضحکی بر آن گذاشته و می خندند.

نظیری: اینک او به زیر درخت ازگیل نشسته است، در آرزوی آن که محبوبش، از همان دست میوه هایی بود، که با کرگانش به مضحکه ازگیل می خوانند، و در خلوت خویش بدو می خندند.

Raponi: Starà invece seduto sotto un **nespolo** ad augurarsi che la sua ragazza sia magari quel genere di frutto che le fanciulle, quando vogliono ridere chiamano appunto nespolo.

Jouve: Il doit être assis sous un **néflier**, il désire que sa maitresse soit cette espèce de fruit que les Servantes nomment la nèfle.

Hugo: Sans doute Romeo s'est assis au pied d'un **pêcher**, pour rêver qu'il le commet avec sa Maitresse.

A *medlar* is a fruit with a large cup shaped eye between the persistent calyx-lobes. It is eaten when decayed to a soft pulpy state. Here, a) with quibble on *meddle*=to have sexual intercourse and b) by allusion to its obscene synonym. All the translators have literally rendered this

word into TL except Hugo. In fact, the words *nespolo* in Italian, *néflier* in French and *Ezgil* in Persian which are the exact equivalents for the intended word cannot evoke the *meddle* side of the word which brings with it an obscene act. Hence, here the pun is turned into a non-punning expression. Hugo, the second French translator opts for the word *pêcher* which means *peach tree* in French. In this case, the ST pun is rendered by a TL pun with more or less similar meaning. The word *pêcher* (*peach*) in French bears connotations as *beautiful*, with obscene connotations. This word also has the same sense and connotation; however, none of the Persian one have chosen this word.

(6) *MERCUTIO*: Romeo, that she were, O, that she were An **open-arse**, thou a poperin pear! (II.i.38-9)

پازارگادی: _

نظیری: آخ رومیو! اگر یار ازگیل نو شکفته بود. اگر یار ازگیل نو شکفته بود! و تو چون گلابی شهر فرنگ!

Raponi: se davvero ella fosse... s'ella fosse una... **ec-cetera... aperta**, e tu una pera di Poperin!...

Jouve: O Romeo si elle l'était, **nèfle ouverte** et toi une poire pointue !

Hugo: -

Open-arse is *medlar* and euphemistic for *pudendum*. As vivid, Pazargadi and Hugo have omitted this part and Naziri has only conveyed the *medlar* sense of the word, thus, a non-punning expression. Interesting is the translation of Raponi in which the word *arse* is omitted and in its lieu, the word *etcetera* is used, rendering this

way: *s'ella fosse una... eccetera... aperta* meaning *that she were an open etcetera*. And finally, Jouve has chosen only one meaning, viz. *the medlar*. What is conspicuous in this example is that there is a tendency towards

elimination and distancing from bad terms.

(7) Nurse: For Juliet's sake, for her sake, rise and stand; Why should you fall into so deep an O?
(III.iii.90)

پازارگادی: به خاطر ژولیت، برخیز و بایست! چرا تو باید خود را به چنین وضع نکبت باری بیندازی؟
نظیری: به خاطر ژولیت، به خاطر او برخیز و بایست، چرا شما باید اینچنین اسیر غم شوید؟

Raponi: Per amor di Giulietta, ritto in piedi! Perché dovete abbandonarvi entrambi ad un sì **disperato abbattimento!**

Jouve: Pour l'amour de Juliette, pour elle, redressez-vous. A quoi sert de tomber dans un si profond **ou-ouh!**

Hugo: Au nom de Juliette, au nom de Juliette, levez-vous, debout ! Pourquoi tomber dans un si **Profond désespoir?**

with a quibble on *pudendum*. As mentioned, the term *deep* is, in general, allusive of vaginal penetration and *O* is a quibble on *pudendum*. In this beautiful punny extract, all the translators, except Jouve, have opted for the first meaning of the term, i.e. *lament and moan*. By opting for this strategy, the piece is turned into a non-punny expression, devoid of any sexuality effect.

(8) SAMPSON: Ay, **the heads of the maids**, or their **Maidenheads**; take it in what sense thou wilt
(I.i.22-23)

In this example, the letter *O* means *lament and moan*

پازارگادی: هر طور مایلی آن را تعبیر کن.
نظیری: آری، سر دوشیزگان را، و یا ...هر چه خوش داری تو تعبیرش کن.

Raponi: la testa alle ragazze... Insomma **far loro la festa**. Prendila come vuoi.

Sansone è il tipo del soldato smargiasso di stampo plautino cui si addice il linguaggio scurrile: qui gioca coi termini "maid", "verGINE", "head", "testa" e la parola composta dai due: "maidenhead", "verginità" ("I will cut the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads", "Taglierò le teste alle vergini o le loro verginità"). Si è cercato di rendere alla meglio il bisticcio prendendo a prestito dal Lodovici l'assonanza "testa"/"festa".

Jouve: Je les passerai au fil de l'épée ou je les enfilerais, prends-le dans le sens qui te plaira.

Hugo: Ou tous **leurs pucelages**. Comprends la chose comme tu voudras.

A pun is Sampson saying to Gregory that he was going to cut off the montage women's maiden heads. While this sounds like he was going to cut off their heads, it means he will take their virginity. The sexual pun is omitted in the Persian translations and in the Italian translation of Raponi, the pun is rendered by another pun. The words *testa* (head) and *festa* (feast) are used by the translator which is a case of patronymic pun. This somehow restores the lost pun in the TL. He; however, renders *Maidenheads* as *far loro la festa*, an expression in Italian which means *give them a warm welcome*. In fact, in his footnote he gives the literal translation of the whole extract, referring to *virginity* sense; however, he says "I have borrowed the assonance of Lodovici, i.e. *testa/festa*, to render at best

the existing pun. As Delabastita says this is an editorial technique. In the French translation of Jouve, *the heads of the maids* is rendered by an idiomatic expression in the TL, viz. *Je les passerai au fil de l'épée* which means *I will kill them* and he renders *their maidenheads* as *je les enfilerais* which literally means *I will thread them*. In fact, the word *enfiler* in French means *passing thread from the eye of the needle*. Here, the translator has depicted the image; however, in a different way in which the sexuality aspect of the term is normalized and is not explicitly referred to. And finally Hugo, who has omitted the first part, i.e. *the heads of the maids*, directly renders the second part, i.e. *tous leurs pucelages* which means *all their virginity*.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, I have sought to delineate how the translation of sexual pun divulges the effects of constraints and priorities of diverse cultural settings. A glance at the translations indicate that both in Persian, French and Italian, almost all the bawdy terms have been obliterated and omitted and that the bawdy aspects of the terms have been suppressed. In Persian, Pazargadi has had more omissions than the others. He has simply omitted the pieces containing sexual puns except very few cases in which the non-bawdy sense of the terms have been conveyed. Such a case applies to other translators as well. The only word explicitly translated is the word *virginity* by Hugo. Raponi substitutes this pun with a patronymic pun

to make up for the loss though he mentions both senses in his footnote. Another interesting Italian translation by Raponi is the word *open-arse*. He conceals the sexual word under the word *etcetera...open*. In fact, in most of the cases, the bawdy language and the aesthetic aspects inherent in the original work are not felt by the TL readers and the double layer of meaning is transformed into non-punny expressions without any sexuality hue. The examples smack of considerable avoidance on the part of the translators in the languages mentioned to render explicitly the sexual puns. These all indicate translation to be an ideologically-governed activity which is under the influence of factors in the translating language. In fact, the reception, acceptance or rejection of literary texts is under the influence of factors which Lefevere call "rewriting literature". In fact, such factors constrain the translators' liberties. As Lefevere asserts, on every level of translation process, it can be shown that, if linguistic considerations enter into conflict with considerations of an ideological nature, the latter tend to win out. Such euphemistic translations are 'to no small extent indicative of the ideology dominant at a certain time in a certain society' and they 'quite literally become the play' for the TT audience that cannot read the ST.

In this study, it is somehow interesting that even in French and Italian, such an ideological tendency prevails since they are more open than the Persian culture which completely enjoys a non-open culture in which the slightest vestiges of sexual matters are to be avoided as the Persian translations demonstrate in this study.

It can be said that real or imagined target norms can transform translation into an ideological weapon for excluding an author, via having recourse to such ostensibly procedures as omission and normalization; however, it is not to be forgotten that translators themselves fall drastically victim to the exercise of power by editors upon whose discretions something has to be translated.

For me, such a kind of translation is a *double abuse* since not only the pun and its aesthetic aspects are lost but also the bawdy sense, under the influence and pressure of diverse factors, are effaced. On the other hand, it is an abuse to the author and the TL readers who are deprived of enjoying the pun.

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