Translation Historiography in Iran: A Case Study of *Bā Cherāgh o Āʾeene* (With Lamp and Mirror) from the Perspective of Translation Historiography Based on Pym's Model

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Modern historiography is based on theory, methodology, and research epistemology. This discussion has recently entered the field of Translation Studies and many Translation Studies researchers have since focused on the concepts of history, historiography, and methodology in translation historiography, enriching the field by offering and promoting different approaches to translation history. Though over the last three decades the focus has turned to translation history and numerous research studies have been conducted in the field, research on translation history cannot be compared to other types of research in Translation Studies in terms of quality and quantity. However, the progress that has been made over the last few decades has been so huge that today many scholars propose to consider translation history as an independent research area.

2. Theoretical Framework

Anthony Pym's ideas are important in this respect. He sees translation historiography as having three levels: archeology, criticism, and interpretation. Archeology addresses such questions as "who has translated a text?", "where the translation has taken place?", "when the translation has been done?" and "which text has been translated?" and provides the necessary data to be used in the next levels. The provided data can also be used to defend or attack historical hypotheses. In this level, the information is presented as lists or catalogues. Historical criticism explores intertextual relations in order to address the question "how?" and to project the values which are necessary for an ethical or aesthetic appreciation of historical hypotheses. According to Pym (1992), archeological research may reveal some motives pertinent to such questions and criticism may provide further theoretical insights, but neither can become properly historical until they address such questions as "why this text",

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"why in this way? " and "with what actual effect?", questions which fall within the realm of interpretation which is the objective of true historiography. Pym (1992) believes that most of what we commonly accept as texts on the history of translation belong to the field of archeology or criticism, and not to historiography as such; neither archeology nor criticism is able to formulate hypotheses pertinent to the dynamics of change, both failing to capture and explain change – a feature which must be placed above all other things in historiography.

 Pym (1992) argues that this complication stems from the fact that few researchers know exactly what they aspire to find and how they wish to find it. According to Pym (1992), therefore, the historiography of translation remains mostly impressionistic, with little attention given to a scientific basis that might be gained through the testing of falsifiable hypotheses. In his article *shortcomings in the historiography of translation*, Pym (1992) complains about a situation that translation history has been stuck in and attribute this situation to seven shortcomings: "(1) archeological accumulation of data that respond to no explicitly formulated problematic, (2) dependence on anecdotal evidence, (3) indiscriminate periodization, (4) visions of translations as expressions rather than potential agents of historical change, (5) axiomatic privileging of target cultures, (6) the use of unfalsifiable methodological hypotheses, and (7) failure to appreciate the interculturality of the translator's position" (Pym, 1992, p. 15).

3. Methodology

The present study is a case study which is qualitative in nature. Drawing on Pym's approach to translation history, this article aims to study *Bā Cherāgh o Āʾeene: Dar Jostojūye Taḥavvole Sheʿre Moāṣere Fārsī* (With Lamp and Mirror: In Search of the Roots of Modem Persian Poetry) written by Mohammad Reza Shafiee Kadkani.

4. Discussion

Through the analysis of the book, it was found that Kadkani has avoided the common shortcomings in translation historiographies by using documents, avoiding anecdotal narrative, and stressing the active role of translation and translators in the process of change. By focusing on the source culture, Kadkani has also overcome the objections raised by Pym to system theory which mostly focuses on the receiving end in the translation process.

5. Conclusion

Given these points, it can be said that Kadkani's methodology in historiography is very similar to Pym's in the following respects:

- Responding to an explicitly formulated problem (the evolution of modern Persian Poetry);
- Dependence on the documents and avoiding anecdotal evidence;
- Seeing translations as the potential agents of historical change;
- Privileging source cultures;

- Appreciating the interculturality of the translator's position;
- Applying falsifiable methodological hypotheses.

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