

The Effects of Women Policies adopted by Two Administrations on the Selection and Non-Selection of Feminist Literary Works for Translation into Persian

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

The present study focused on the effects of the women policies adopted by the Reformist and the Fundamentalist administrations on the selection of feminist literary works for translation into Persian after the 1979 Revolution in Iran. The purpose was to assess the influence of power institutions and their policies on the development of translated feminist literature in the Iranian literary polysystem. The two administrations followed very different women policies: the Reformist administration (1997-2005) adopted policies which contributed toward the realization of gender equality and women's active presence in different areas of social life, and it showed more tolerance toward ideas introduced by Western feminists; the Fundamentalist administration (2005-2013), however, focused on the policy of 'women in family' and showed serious opposition with feminism and the ideas rooted in it, encouraging women to adhere to their traditional roles. The study attempted to investigate how such different policies affected the selection and non-selection of feminist literary works for translation into Persian.

Lefevere's (1992) theory of "patronage" was used as the theoretical framework of the study. Patronage is defined as the powers (persons and institutions) that can further or hinder the reading, writing, and rewriting of literature. According to Lefevere (1992), patrons try to regulate the relationship between the literary system and the other systems, which, together, make up a society, a culture. They see to it that the literary system does not fall too far out of step with the other subsystems society consists of. In order to publish their works and distribute them among their readers, the producers of literature should not write anything against their patrons. The ideological component of patronage, then, acts as a constraint on the choice and development of both form and subject matter. The selections of the translator and all those involved in the translation process, including those who make decisions about the selection of texts for translation, are determined by ideologically-based strategies governed by those in power. Before a book is published in Iran, it is required to be sent to a Book Bureau controlled by the administration in order to receive a publication permit. This means that the administration can exert strict control over

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what is published, and any book which does not match the ideological expectations of the administration might fail to receive the publication permit.

2. Methodology

To investigate how the different policies adopted by the two administrations affected the selection and non-selection of feminist literary works for translation into Persian, a list of “Best Feminist Fiction” (Retrieved in 2016) which consisted of 100 books and was posted on the goodreads website was chosen. The titles of the books were searched on the National Library and the House of Books websites to see which of the books had been selected for translation and which ones were published after they were translated. The publication dates of the published translations were extracted in order to find the number of feminist literary works published under each administration. As for the books which had been translated but not published, the publishers who had sent them to the Book Bureau were contacted to find the reasons behind their non-publication.

3. Discussion

Seventeen novels on the list (19.76%) were translated for the first time under the Reformist administration and thirteen novels (13.26%) were translated under the Fundamentalist administration. All the seventeen novels translated in the first period were published and distributed (100%), while only seven of the thirteen books (53.84%) translated in the second period had the chance to be published. This means that six of the books translated at that time were not published. Contact with the publishers revealed that five of the books did not receive the publication permit and one was not published for economic reasons.

4. Conclusion

The results of the study show that the selection of literary works for translation is not an arbitrary and haphazard phenomenon, but is determined by the conditions dominant in the cultural and political system in any society. Under the Reformists, who followed the policy of gender equality and attempted to maximize the presence of women in social life, more feminist novels found the chance to be published, but under the Fundamentalist, who opposed feminism and the idea of gender equality, fewer feminist works were translated and published. The patrons seem to have influenced the formation of translated women literature on two levels: 1) indirect influence, by encouraging the translation of certain works and discouraging translators from translating other literary works; the results of the present study show that not only the selection of works for translation, but also their non-selection is determined by the dominant ideology and the state policies in countries like Iran. 2) direct influence, through the censorship bureaus which control the publication of literary books. It seems that the Iranian literary translators enjoyed more freedom under the Reformists to select and translate feminist literary works, while they faced more restrictions when the Fundamentalists came to power. Textual analysis of the

translations of feminist literary works and the manipulations in those works can contribute to the better understanding of the effects of the dominant ideologies on the formation of translated literature in any society.

Key Words: Reformist administration, Fundamentalist administration, Ideology, Feminism, Translation

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