

Metaphor and Cultural Models in Translation

Rahman Veisi Hasar (Corresponding author)

PHD student in linguistics, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

Tel: 98-914-980-9436 E-mail: veisirahman@yahoo.com

Manoochehr Tavangar

Department of Linguistics, University of Isfahan, Iran

Tel: 98-311-793-4217 E-mail: tavangar@fgn.ui.ac.ir

Vali Rezai

Department of Linguistics, University of Isfahan, Iran

Tel: 98-311-793-4217 E-mail: vali.rezai@fgn.ui.ac.ir

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to investigate the relationship holding between metaphor and cultural models within the context of interlingual translation. More specifically, the paper seeks to ascertain the extent to which metaphors which are dependent on cultural models are translatable. For this purpose, we draw on the concept of ‘experiential equivalence’ in the case of metaphor translation and on that of cultural models as intersubjective manifestations of culture in the speaker’s mind. By way of elucidation, four Persian poetic texts by Khayyam and their English translations by Fitzgerald are examined in detail. Finally, this paper tries to propose a new definition of metaphor equivalence in translation.

Keywords: Cultural models, Translation, Khayyam, Fitzgerald

1. Introduction

Investigating the nature of the relationship between metaphor and cultural models has been the preoccupation of scholars over the recent years (see, for example; Quinn 1987; Lakoff and Kovecses 1987; Yu 1998; Cienki 1999; Kovecses 2005; Shanghai 2009). Consequently, it is now generally acknowledged that cultural models play a crucial role in the manner in which metaphor is produced and interpreted in both ordinary and poetic language. Germane to this acknowledgement is the indisputable fact that cultural models can pose serious problems when it comes to translating metaphors between languages. A case in point is provided by Fitzgerald's (1942) translation of metaphors occurring in the poems composed by Omar Khayyam (1048-1123), the world-renowned Persian astronomer-poet. However, before we examine the obstacles Fitzgerald ran into on account of the cultural models associated with the poetic language he set out to translate, a brief sketch of Khayyam's poetry is requisite at this stage.

Given its enigmatic nature, Khayyam's poetry has invariably been a controversial issue with various schools. Different, and even contradictory, interpretations, evaluations and classifications of Khayyam's authentic, as well as fake, poems are still unresolved dilemmas in the field of Khayyamian studies (Hedayat 1934; Christensen 1994; Forooghi and Ghani 2008; Dashti 2002). By the same token, Fitzgerald's world-famous translation of these poems has suffered a similar predicament. That is, it has proved a highly disputed topic in translatology in the sense that it has been subjected to commendatory and deprecatory evaluation, respectively (Dad 1994; Yarmohammadi 2004; Farahzad 2006; Shafii 2009; Zare-Behtash 1994).

It is interesting to note that most research work carried out regarding the translations of Khayyam's poetry is founded on either traditional or structuralist approaches. This implies that the research in question restricts itself to the formal aspects of his poetic language without paying any attention to its underlying conceptual structures. The research also treats the poetic metaphors involved as purely ornamental entities. Fortunately, recent years have seen a shift of interest to a new approach (i.e. cognitive linguistics) which provides translation scholars with new insights into the nature and structure of metaphor. As a consequence, Fitzgerald's translation of Khayyam's metaphors can be re-examined within a new theoretical framework. In point of fact, Sadeghi (2011) has deployed cognitive poetics as a literary theory in terms of which Khayyam's poetry can be analyzed.

The assumption underlying this paper is that any investigation of Fitzgerald's handling of metaphor in the process of his translation is bound to benefit from the three major findings of cognitive linguistics: (1) metaphor theory; (2) cultural models theory; and (3) experiential equivalence. Each of these will be taken up in some detail below.

2. Metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics

Cognitive linguistics can be said to have revolutionized the status of metaphor studies. Whereas on the classical views metaphor was merely a marginalized figurative device regarded as a kind of aberration from normal everyday language use, cognitive linguistics

elevated it to a central position where it functions as a building block in day-to-day language, as well as in cognitive-conceptual systems, thus rejecting the classical distinction between the metaphorical nature of poetic language and the literal sense of non-figurative language (Lakoff and Johnson 1980/2003; Lakoff 2006).

According to the proponents of cognitive linguistics, metaphor consists in experiencing and understanding something in terms of something else. This metaphorical process, which occurs between two conceptual domains, involves mapping from a source domain onto a target domain. In other words, mapping can be defined as a set of correspondences between the elements of two domains (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:5; Lakoff 2006:190). A case of point is provided by the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY. It should, however, be noted that a distinction is often made between a conceptual metaphor and a metaphorical linguistic expression in the sense that the latter is a manifestation of the former, which constitutes a conceptual entity (Lakoff 2006:191-2; Kovecses 2010:14). It must also be remembered that metonymy, which is closely allied to metaphor, constitutes a device whereby reference is made to an entity through another entity within a single conceptual domain. The relationship between the substituted entity and its referent is based on direct or logical contiguity. A typical example is the expression *the bar*, which is used to refer to the lawyer's profession.

There are different kinds of metaphors. Lakoff (2006:215) makes a distinction between conceptual metaphors and image metaphors. This means that Conceptual entities are mapped from a source domain into a target domain in conceptual metaphors, whereas an image is mapped from a source domain to a target domain in image metaphor. The sentence “my wifewhose waist is an hourglass” by Andre Breton includes an image metaphor by mapping the image of the middle of an hourglass onto the waist of a woman. Conceptual metaphors fall into three kinds: structural, ontological, orientational. The essence of a structural metaphor resides in the fact that a source domain supplies a rich knowledge structure for a target domain. In contrast, what characterizes an ontological metaphor is that a source domain yields less cognitive structure for a target domain. Besides, ontological metaphors functioning at a general level are, by elaboration, susceptible to becoming structural metaphors. By way of illustration, TIME IS MOTION is a structural metaphor, while MIND IS OBJECT typifies an ontological metaphor. As for orientational metaphor, they are conceptualized in terms of human spatial orientation. In MORE IS UP, for instance, the conceptualization of MORE is mediated through the spatial concept UP (Lakoff and Johnson 1980/2003; Kovecses 2010:37-43). Finally, metaphors, when judged according to their level of generality, can be identified on two levels: general and specific. For example, EVENTS ARE ACTIONS represents a general metaphor, whereas LIFE IS JOURNEY typifies a specific-level one (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 108-9).

3. Metaphor and Cultural Models

Cognitive linguistics maintains that idealized cognitive models (ICM) are definable as complex structured wholes which serve to organize the knowledge and experience of human beings. More specifically, this means that we comprehend and experience the world through the mediation of ICMs. These models are credited with a dual identity. On the one hand, they

are described as being cognitive in order to show their mental nature; on the other hand, they are labelled cultural to bring out their engagement with culture (Lakoff 1987:68; Lakoff and Turner 1989:65-7). As pointed out by Gibbs (1999:153): “Cultural models are intersubjectively shared cultural schemas that function to interpret experience and guide action in a wide variety of domains including events, institutions and physical and mental objects”. By and large, ICMs can be said to subsume metaphoric, metonymic, propositional and image-schematic models. Metaphoric models involve abstract concepts which are conceptualized by being mapped between source and target domains. For instance, ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER exemplifies a metaphoric model for the abstract concept of anger. In contrast, metonymic models are characterized by the fact that a member can stand for a whole class. This is the case when we use ‘robin’ to represent an entire category of birds.

Unlike their metaphoric and metonymic counterparts, propositional models do not utilize any kind of imaginative devices. Rather, they build on ontological elements and the structural relations holding between them. Scenarios like going to a restaurant or playing football are cases in point. As for image-schematic models, they involve structuring an abstract concept like space in terms of an image-schematic one like a container or through part-whole image-schemas which bring about models like SPACE IS CONTAINER (Quinn and Holland 1987:24; Lakoff 1987: 185,285-8; Evans and Green 2006:280-1).

The relationship between metaphor and cultural models has been an object of inquiry by many scholars. Quinn (1987) contends that metaphors are shaped and organized by some pre-existing cultural propositions which serve as cultural models. On this view, metaphors can be said to constitute reflections of cultural models. According to Kovecses (2005: 205), what Quinn is suggesting is that abstract concepts as cultural models are understood literally, and that metaphors fit into these already available models. Cienki (1999) borrows terms like profile and base from Cognitive Grammar to account for the nature of the relationship in question. By a base is meant a whole cognitive structure while profile is designed to represent a highlighted part of this whole. Seen from this perspective, a cultural model is a gestalt cognitive whole, with metaphor, which is used in the capacity of a profile being interpreted and shaped as a part which depends on that whole.

Lakoff and Kovecses (1987) argue that abstract concepts functioning as cultural models are metaphorically constructed. For this reason, they criticize Quinn’s (1987) approach by claiming that cultural models themselves are metaphorical in nature. However Kovecses (2005: 224) attempts to strike a balance between Quinn’s position and his own by maintaining that human beings take for granted the existence of some pre-existent metaphorical cultural models, go on to conceive them as being literal, and then produce and interpret novel metaphors by using these pseudo-literal metaphorical cultural models.

Yu (1998) and Shanghai (2009) propose a dialectical relationship between metaphors and cultural models. They hold that we produce and interpret metaphors on the basis of cultural models, but that some of these models can have a metaphorical character.

Taking into account the various theoretical stances that we have examined so far, it would not

be totally implausible to infer that there must be a dialectical and reciprocal relationship between metaphor and cultural models. It is presumably this relationship that accounts for the circumstance that human beings produce and construe metaphorical expressions in terms of cultural models.

4. Metaphor, Culture and Translation

The dependence of metaphor interpretation on cultural models, seen as an unconscious knowledge existing in the minds of native speakers, can pose serious problems to translators. A fundamental question arising in this respect is: how is it possible for a translator to establish equivalence at the metaphorical level when metaphors themselves are inextricably tied to a cultural model? Tabakowska (1993; 1997) provides an answer by considering translation as a cognitive interpretation or construal, and presenting the concept of ‘experiential equivalency’. This means that equivalence, which is regarded as the ultimate goal of translation, should be perceived in terms of cognitive experience and conceptualization, rather than as the outcome of merely focusing on linguistic expressions. Consequently, two texts (i.e. source and target) are said to be equivalent if they represent the equivalence of two conceptualizations. In other words, a translator is supposed to go beyond linguistic expressions, and try to achieve equivalence by reconstructing the conceptual structure underlying the original text. The implication is that s/he should guide the readers of the translated text toward experiencing it as the source text at conceptualization level. It is worth stressing that Tabakowska (1993:128) views “experience as a continuum”, with one extreme representing idiosyncratic individual instances and the other reflecting universal (i.e. basic, mainly bodily) cases. The middle of this continuum, however, is occupied by culture-specific experiences of various kinds. The continuum, in turn, gives rise to a scale of equivalence and translatability ranging from translatable (or universal) concepts to untranslatable (or idiosyncratic) ones. In this respect, it must be noted that the non-convergent conceptual systems associated with different cultures are the major obstacles to translation. This implies that cultural models, which are based on different conceptual systems in different cultures, bring about non-equivalence, and hence untranslatability, although, it must be admitted, there are instances where non-equivalence stems from a lack of understanding, or misinterpretation, on the part of translators.

5. Delimitation of Aim, Scope and Method

The aim of this paper is to evaluate the concept of cultural models and the translator’s awareness of them with respect to metaphor translation and the possibility of setting up equivalence. More precisely, the paper seeks to examine the relationship holding between metaphor and cultural models, and the extent to which such linkage tends to affect the translator’s interpretive strategies when it comes to rendering figurative language.

As for our data, which have been selected by purposive sampling, they comprise four quatrains from the collected works of Omar Khayyam (Christensen 1994; Foroughi and Ghani 2008). The selection has involved an initial assessment of the entire collection in terms of its wealth of cultural models and metaphoric and occasionally metonymic, language. The objective has been to single out those quatrains which are most representative in terms of

incorporating such entities. The advantage of our sampling method is that it will allow us to closely investigate the role of the translator's cultural consciousness in achieving equivalence. To attain our goal in this respect, we will focus on Fitzgerald's translation since it enjoys an international reputation for being the best rendition undertaken so far.

For the benefit of those readers who happen to be unfamiliar with the Persian script, each quatrain is accompanied by a phonemic transcription to give them an idea of the prosodic features involved, and to acquaint them with the way in which the individual words are pronounced. In addition, each cited quatrain comes with a gloss which serves as a background against which to carry out the preliminary analysis of the source text before embarking on a full-scale assessment of Fitzgerald's translation of it to ascertain how far he has approximated to the cultural models and metaphorization processes associated with the text under discussion.

6. Data Analysis

Having delineated our theoretical framework, together with the aim, scope and method characteristic of the present paper, we shall now begin the analysis of our data with the following quatrain, which happens to be the first one tackled by Fitzgerald.

Text 1:

/ xorshid kæmænd-e sobh bæ r bâm æfkand + keyxosrov-e ruz mohre dær jâm æfkand// mey
xor ke monâdi-ye sæhærgæh xizân + âvâze-ye ešræbu dær æyyâm æfkænd/

(Christensen 1994: 183)

'The sun threw the noose of morning around the roof; the Cyrus of daylight put marbles in the drum. Drink wine for the herald of early-risers sent the cry 'imbibe' resounding through the days'.

Fundamental to a reasonable interpretation of the source text cited above is the ability on the part of the recipient to identify the metaphorization and metonymization processes involved, as well as cultural models which motivated them in the first place. As can be inferred from the seemingly incoherent gloss, the poet depicts the turning of 'night' into 'day' through the agency of some metaphors and metonyms. In the first hemistich, the sun is conceptualized as a warrior, which exemplifies an ontological metaphor. The expression 'morning' implicates 'beams of light' in the sense that an effect (morning) is used for a cause (light). Hence we can treat 'morning' as a metonym. If 'morning' is replaced with 'light' in the expression 'noose of morning' then we end up with 'noose of light', which constitutes an image metaphor like BEAM OF LIGHT IS A NOOSE. Given the atmosphere of bellicosity involved, it would not be irrational to say that the roof in question belongs to castle. If this is the case, the term 'roof' can be interpreted as a part-whole metonymy. Implicitly associated with this metonymous relation is yet another metaphor in which the world is compared to a castle.

From what we have discussed so far it follows that a cultural model of war underlies the metaphors and metonymies identifiable in the first hemistich. It is precisely on the basis of such a model that the following conceptual metaphors and metonymies can be identified:

- (1) SUN IS A WARRIOR
- (2) MORNING FOR LIGHT (metonymy)
- (3) BEAM OF LIGHT IS A NOOS
- (4) ROOF FOR CASTLE
- (5) WORLD IS A CASTLE

When it comes to focusing on the second hemistich, we are confronted with a range of avowedly intertwined metaphors. Here the sun is conceptualized as a king, the world as a 'drum' and light as marbles. By implication, the triadic metaphorization process links up with yet a dual one in which the conceptualization of the sky as a battlefield and of sunrise as a king's departure for battle is assumed. The cultural model underlying these metaphors is traceable to a military practice common in ancient Persia. Accordingly, before a king engaged in warfare, a proclaimer would beat a drum containing marbles- which were designed to enhance its reverberation- to announce the king's departure for battle (Dehkhoda 1972: 209). On the basis of the cultural model in question, the conceptual metaphors given below are worth mulling over:

- (6) SUN IS A KING
- (7) WORLD IS A DRUM
- (8) LIGHT IS A MARBLE
- (9) SKY IS A BATTLEFIELD

What we witness in the third and fourth hemistich is a type of metaphoricity which is notoriously complicated. In this connection, a number of questions arise: What is the relevance of wine? Why are early-risers urged to drink? How does this injunction fit in with the previous conceptualization of the sun as a warrior and a king? The answers to these questions are to be sought in an underlying cultural model: *æzân* (i.e. the Muslim call to prayers). *æzân* as a cultural model refers to a situation in which a religious proclaimer sings a song to wake people up for worshipping in early morning. This means that the urge to drink wine must be construed as one designed to summon early-risers to mosque for congregational prayers. On this interpretation, the sun is conceptualized as a religious proclaimer (i.e. an ontological metaphor). Interestingly enough, many old versions of Khayyam's poetry use the term '*muæzzen*' (religious proclaimer) in the third hemistich, which tends to bear out this statement (1994: 183). Granted that the sun is conceived of as a religious proclaimer, what is the nature of this call and how does he go about waking believers up for prayers? From the perspective taken here, the sun can be said to do so by shining. In other words, sunshine is conceptualized as making a call to prayers. However, when we examine the fourth hemistich, we come up against a problem: the call to drink. How are we to reconcile this call with the one referred to above? Within the framework of the cultural models under discussion, we are led to believe that drinking is deployed as a metaphor for worshipping, which is fully in accord with the conception of the sun as a religious proclaimer. As for the other metaphors occurring

in the fourth hemistich, they are also worth mentioning. Here time is construed as a container, and the proclaimer's call as an object which can be thrown into it. Note, however that our gloss fails to recapture this metaphorization process, the reason being that the latter simply defies translation. Given the deployment of the cultural model of 'æzân', the conceptual metaphors associated with it are as follows:

(10) SUN IS A RELEGIOUS PROCLAIMER

(11) SUNSHINE IS A CALL TO PRAYERS

(12) WORSHIPING IS DRINKING

(13) TIME IS A CONTAINER

(14) CALL TO PRAYER IS AN OBJECT

Having provided a brief account of the metaphorization and metonymization processes identifiable in the source text investigated above, we are now in a position to focus on Fitzgerald's translation of it, which runs as follows:

'Wake for sun, who scattered into flight

The star before him from the field of night;

Drives night along with them from the heaven and strike

The sultan's turret with a shaft of light' (Fitzgerald 1942: 121)

A cursory glance at the target text above reveals that Fitzgerald, like Khayyam, employs metaphors, but no metonyms, to describe how night changes into day. What characterizes the first, second and third hemistiches is that this changing process is conceptualized as a set of volitional movements. This means that the underlying conceptual metaphor involved is of a general event structural type (NATURAL CHANGES ARE VOLITIONAL MOVEMENTS), which serves as a background against which the other metaphors occurring in the text are identifiable. From this perspective, the sun is conceptualized as a warrior, and the stars and night as enemies. Similarly, night and the sky are conceived of as a battlefield and a container respectively.

As far as the fourth hemistich is concerned, we encounter two other metaphors: the conceptualization of light as a shaft, and of the sultan's turret as the world. In view of the observations made above, the conceptual structures associated with the metaphors Fitzgerald uses are as follows:

(15) NATURAL CHANGES ARE VOLITIONAL MOVEMENT

(16) SUN IS A WARRIOR

(17) STARS ARE ENEMIES

(18) NIGHT IS ENEMY

(19) NIGHT IS A BATTLEFIELD

(20) LIGHT IS A SHAFT

(21) WORLD IS A TURRET

As is evident from Fitzgerald's translation, all the metaphors he uses are based on the cultural model of war. In this respect, it can be argued that the translator succeeded in recapturing part of the metaphorized structures of the source text. In other words, he has achieved experiential experience to some extent. However, when we take into account the metaphors based on other cultural models (i.e. æzân model and the king's departure-for-battlefield model) discussed above, he is incontestably wide of the mark. One possible explanation might be that the neglected metaphors and models are alien to English. Another reason for this inadequacy could be that the translator lacked the requisite cultural knowledge inherent in the source text itself.

Text 2:

/æz ruye hæqiqæti næ æz ruy-e mæjâz + mâ lobætakânim-o fælak lobæt bâz// bâziče hæmi konim bær næt?-e vojud + ræftim be sænduq-e ædam yek yek bâz/

(Christensen 1994: 93)

'In reality, not figuratively, we humans are puppets and the celestial sphere a puppeteer; we play on the checker-board of existence, only to go, one by one, into the box of non-existence'

Examination of the source text brings us face to face with a paradox: the metaphorization processes involved are viewed as being. Indisputably, this is at odds with our linguistic intuitions, according to which metaphoricity is not expected to mirror reality in toto. Yet we experience no difficulty in understanding the metaphorical expressions under study. How can this incongruity be accounted for?

One possible answer could be that the emphasis on reality, rather than on expected figurativeness, is motivated by the poet's tendency to endow his metaphors with a high degree of tangibility, and hence more cogency, than would have been the case if he had opted for mere figurativeness. Another probable explication might be that the metaphors in question are treated as being tantamount to reality. In other words, the distinction between reality and metaphoricity seems to have been neutralized. Exactly what incentive lies behind this process is an issue that, given the limited scope of our paper, we cannot delve into.

Having identified and discussed the reality-figurativeness dilemma associated with the first hemistich, let's now turn our attention to the metaphorical expressions recognizable in the second hemistich. Here is a case in which human life is conceptualized as a puppet-show, humans as puppets, and the celestial spheres as a puppeteer. When it comes to dealing with the third and fourth hemistiches, we encounter a drawback. That is to say, the lexical item /næt?/ (leather mat) can, out of context, designate three different entities—a tablecloth, a gaming board, and a sheet on which executioners decapitate convicts. However, given the context in question, it is only the second and third designations that are relevant here.

Accordingly, the term /næt?/ lends itself to two distinct interpretations. On the one hand,

humans are conceived of as playing at the checker-board of life, with their opponent (most probably destiny) being invisible to them. When the game is over, humans disappear, one by one, into the box of non-being (i.e. the grave). On the other hand, the lexical item under discussion is associated with a different set of conceptualizations. This time life is metaphorized as a leather mat on which humans are beheaded by an executer (i.e. the celestial sphere) and put away in their graves.

All in all, the conceptual metaphors underlying the metaphrization processes identified so far can be itemized as follow:

- (22) LIFE IS A PUPPET-SHOW
- (23) HUMANS ARE PUPPETS
- (24) CELESTIAL SPHERE IS A PUPPETEER
- (25) EXISTENCE IS A CHECKER-BOARD
- (26) HUMANS ARE PLAYERS
- (27) CELESTIAL SPHERE IS AN OPPONENT
- (28) NON-EXISTENCE IS A CONTAINER
- (29) HUMANS ARE CONVICTS
- (30) CELESTIAL SPHERE IS AN EXECUTIONER

Corresponding to the metaphorization processes discussed above are four cultural models. The first model pertains to a form of mock drama which was in vogue in ancient Persia, and whose aim was to entertain children (Dehkhoda 1972: 1017). The second model is philosophical in nature and derives from old Persian astronomy, according to which the earth was encompassed by nine heavenly spheres, each turning around its own axis. This rotation was believed to give rise to the genesis of time and, as such, to be responsible for the combination and disintegration of elements. On this view, life and death were products of the aforesaid rotation (Fakhry 2004: 123). The third model is based on a gambling game, in which humans are pitted against an indomitable adversary. Finally, the fourth model is grounded in an old Persian penal code, accordingly to which convicts were decapitated on a leather mat. So The metaphors are based on these models. As the source text attests, all four models are integrated into a coherent whole which, as we will demonstrate below, tends, by and large, to defy translation. Bearing the foregoing observation in mind, we must now turn to Fitzgerald's translation to determine how far he succeeded in recreating the metaphors based on the cultural models identifiable in the source text. Following in his translated text:

‘But helpless pieces of the game he plays

Upon this chequer-board of nights and days;

Hither and thither moves and checks and slays

And one by one back in the closet lays (Fitzgerald 1942: 146)

As is evident from this translation, Fitzgerald views the abstract concept of life in terms of a chequer-board, with humans, functioning as involuntary pieces on it. The board itself is made up of black and white squares, which are designed to conceptualize night and day, respectively. As for the players involved in this game, one, who is vaguely referred to as 'he', is mentioned explicitly while his opponent remains enigmatically unspecified. In this regard, life is conceived of as the duration, and death as the termination, of the game. And finally, the grave undergoes a metaphorization process by being construed as a closet into which pieces are placed.

On the basis of the remarks made so far, the relevant conceptual metaphors can be represented as follow:

- (31) LIFE IS A CHEQUER-BORD
- (32) HUMANS ARE PIECES
- (33) DAY IS A WHITE SQUARE
- (34) NIGHT IS A BLACK SQUARE
- (35) LIFE IS DURATION OF GAME
- (36) DEATH IS END OF GAME
- (37) GRAVE IS A CLOSET
- (38) DEITY IS A MALE PLAYER

At this juncture, we are in a position to ascertain the extent to which Fitzgerald was capable of tackling the metaphors and cultural models associated with the source text. As far as the chequer-board model is concerned, he can be said to have retained it with relative accuracy, thus conveying the ironic atmosphere characteristic of the original. Nonetheless, it must be conceded that even here we run into a snag: the non-divine player (i.e. the celestial sphere in the old astronomy model) in the source text is supplanted by a male deity in the English text. The implication of this seemingly innocuous replacement is that the metaphorization processes attached to the Persian cultural models are only imperfectly recreated.

When we shift our attention to the remaining cultural models (astronomy, penal code), Fitzgerald is palpably out on a limb. The fact that none of the metaphors he utilizes are motivated by corresponding underlying models bears out our claim. Why this should be so is by no means clear. What, however, is evident is that his translation fails to achieve experiential equivalence to the target text.

Text 3:

/ dær dâyere-ye sepehr-e nâpeydâqor + jâmist ke jomle râ çeşânænd be dor// nobæt čo be dor-e to resæd âh makon + mey nuş bexoşdeli ke dor æst be xor/

(Foroughi and Ghani 2008: 140)

‘Within the circle of the fathomless heaven is a cup out of which everyone is made to drink

by turns; when your turn comes up, do not say ‘alas’ but drink cheerfully for the rotation (of the celestial spheres) is right.

As is evident from our admittedly cumbersome gloss, the metaphorization processes involved in the source text are too complicated for a straightforward interpretation. For instance, what relationship can be set up between the celestial spheres and a cup? What is it that everyone is compelled to drink? Why should everyone refrain from expressing sorrow at indulging in drink? In what sense is the rotation of the celestial spheres right?

The pieces in this metaphorical puzzle begin to fall into place when we realize that the whole text hinges on two main concepts: time and death. As we mentioned earlier, the genesis of time is traceable to the rotation of nine celestial spheres round their individual axes. Apart from this, the spheres are conceptualized as a circular seemingly at which wine is imbibed. In this context, time is treated as a cup-bearer. The function of such metaphorization is to point up the inevitability of the rotational nature of the celestial spheres in the sense that all humans are doomed to drink, willy –nilly, the wine of death. To sum up, the conceptual structures associated with the metaphorical expressions under study are as follows:

(39) CELESTIAL SPHERES ARE AN ASSEMBLY OF VENOCITY

(40) TIME IS A CUP-BEARER

(41) DEATH IS WINE

The cultural models from which the metaphors in the source text derive are dual-astronomical and tavern-oriented. The former has already been dealt with in the preceding sections of the paper. As for the latter, it relates to the taverns in old Persian cities where a circular assembly of drinkers used to be waited on by a cup-bearer (*sâqi*), whose job was to hand out drinks by turns.

Having investigated the source text in terms of its metaphors and their associated cultural models, we are now ready to examine Fitzgerald’s translation, given below, to find out how far he achieved experiential equivalence.

‘While the rose blows along the river brink

With old Khayyam the ruby vintage drinks;

And when the angel with his darker draught,

Draws up to thee, take that and don’t shrink (Fitzgerald 1942:35)

It can be easily demonstrated that the first hemistich depicts nature, whereas the second is an injunction to drink. Admittedly, there is no similarity between the source and the target texts except that in both of them people are urged to drink. However, what we witness in the third and fourth hemistiches is a horse of a different colour. Here the translator tries, with relative success, to reconstruct the metaphors occurring in the original. In this connection, he refers to a male angel, with a chalice of dark wine in his hand, who incites people to drink. From a metaphorical perspective, the translator conceptualizes death as wine and the colour dark as

gloominess. Underlying these metaphorization processes are the conceptual metaphors given below:

(42) WINE IS DEATH

(43) DARK IS GLOOMY

Note, however, that there is a striking dissimilarity between the source and target texts when it comes to translating the term *sâqi*, which is rendered into English as ‘angel’. This implies that the conceptualization of time has undergone a drastic change in terms of the cultural models the translator adhered to. Whereas Khayyam focuses on a non-theological cause of death (according to old astronomy model), which is time conceived of as a cup-bearer, Fitzgerald utilizes a spiritual entity whose origin harks back to the Christian religion. In other words, the non-equivalence of metaphoricity between the source and target texts can be attributed to the fact that the translator misinterpreted the agency of time in life and death. For this reason, the translation is deficient in terms of experiential equivalence.

Text 4:

/ jâmist ke æql âfarin mizænædæš + sæd buse ze mehr bær jæbin mizænædæš// in kuzegære dæhr čonin jâme latif + misâzædo bâz bær zæmin mizænædæš/

(Foroughi and Ghani 2008: 143)

‘It is a cup which intellect creates and, out of love, kisses on the forehead a hundred times. This potter of time makes such a fragile cup, and dashes it against the ground again’

A striking feature of the metaphorical riddles occurring in the source text is that they have their origins in old Persian philosophical cosmology. In this respect, two key concepts stand out: intellect and time, both of which are assumed to be heavenly in nature. As was discussed in detail before, the heavenly spheres rotate round their individual axes, thus producing time. However, cosmologically speaking, there are ten heavenly intellects which are viewed as being creators of heavenly spheres in that they are more powerful and, consequently, enjoy a higher status. It is the tenth and last intellect, the cosmological argument goes, that endows materials on earth with form. These materials are, in turn, affected by heavenly spheres in the sense that their configuration is subjected to change. However, once the materials in question are given a specific form, they undergo disintegration through the rotation of the heavenly spheres and, as a result, the passage of time (Fakhry 2004:123-4). Needless to say, it is against this philosophical-cosmological background that Khayyam’s metaphorization takes on significance. With this caveat in mind, we can now proceed to examine the text.

As can be seen evident from our gloss, in the first and second hemistichs, intellect is spoken of as creating a cup and then kissing its forehead affectionately. In other words, intellect engages in giving form to a shapeless material. Metaphorically speaking, intellect is conceptualized as a lover osculating his beloved; that is, we are faced with two metaphors:

(44) INTELLECT IS A LOVER

(45) CUP IS A BELOVED

With respect to the third and fourth hemistichs, we encounter three highly creative metaphors. Intellect, a heavenly creator who endows shapeless materials with form, is conceptualized as an absurd potter, heavenly spheres as a potter's wheel, and human beings as cups to be made and destroyed again. The associated conceptual metaphors are given below:

(46) HEAVENLY INTELECT IS A POTTER

(47) HEAVENLY SPHERE IS POTTER'S WHEEL

(48) HUMANS ARE CUPS

As for the cultural models underlying the metaphorization in question, that relate, it was pointed out above, to old Persian cosmology on the one hand, and to the art of pottery, on the other. Here we are dealing with a philosophical and teleological account of the universe metaphorized in terms of a potter's shop. It is precisely through the agency of these cultural models that Khayyam is enabled to pick holes in cosmological system which, as far as he is concerned, is fraught with puzzles of one sort or another.

Having examined the metaphorical structure of the source text, we can now turn our attention to Fitzgerald's translation and investigate the manner in which he tackled the metaphors under discussion:

'Said one among them-"Surely not in vain

My substance of the common earth was taken

And to this figure moulded, to be broke

Or trampled back to shapeless earth again' (Fitzgerald 1942: 151)

The distinguishing mark of Fitzgerald's target text is his adoption of a vessel narrator to tell the absurd story of being. The reason why he opts for such a narrator is that the translated poems preceding the present one in his collected all focus on vessels. As can easily be inferred from the text cited above, one vessel among others in the pottery affirms that the potter had some logical purpose in mind. In metaphorical terms, this must be construed as designating that humans are conceptualizable as vessel, the creator as potter and the world as a pottery. Corresponding to this triadic set are the following conceptual metaphors:

(49) HUMANS ARE VESSELS

(50) CREATOR IS A POTTER

(51) WORLD IS A POTTERY

The discussion so far demonstrates that Fitzgerald did not come up against any difficulty in recapturing the metaphors based on cultural model of pottery characteristic of the source text, although it must be admitted that whereas the potter in the original was Intellect, he ended up as the creator in the process of translation. Yet the main snag Fitzgerald seems to have run into is his failure to deal successfully with the cultural model of old Persian philosophical cosmology which plays a crucial role in the metaphorization processes associated with the

source text. This slip-up accounts for the partial lack of metaphorical equivalence between the original and the translation.

7. Conclusion

In this paper, our inquiry into Khayyam's poetic language and its English translation started from the premise that there is a close affinity between metaphorization and cultural models, and that the concept of experiential equivalence plays a crucial role in determining the extent of translability. By the same token, our assumption was that, as far as metaphor study is concerned, cognitive linguistics is capable of providing requisite analysis tools from which our investigation could benefit.

The results of our inquiry revealed that cultural models are highly significant when it comes to producing and interpreting poetic metaphors. By implication, this means that no translator can tackle metaphors unless s/he is aware of their contingent on such models. In other contingency words, metaphors as conceptualization process cannot dispense with these entities.

Our analysis of Khayyam's quatrains and their English rendition proved, beyond dispute, that the greatest obstacle Fitzgerald encountered was how to achieve experiential equivalence where cultural models in the source and target texts failed to tally. The incongruity came about as a consequence either of his inability to reckon with the models, or of their non-existence in English. What this situation points up is that, when translating metaphor, sole reliance on linguistic form would be a fruitless endeavour.

Insofar as our data analysis is concerned, a comparison between the four quatrains and their English translation brought to light the following facts about the problems encountered by Fitzgerald.

- (a) In rendering text 1, the translator failed to retain the metonyms. Moreover, although he managed to recapture the metaphors based on the cultural model of war, the cultural model of *æzân* and a king's departure for battlefield and accordingly their metaphors simply vanished into thin air.
- (b) In tackling text 2, out of the four cultural models and their metaphors – mock drama, astronomy, gambling game and penal code- the translator preserved only one model and its associated metaphors (i.e. the puppet show).
- (c) In coming to grips with text 3, the translator lost sight of metaphors based on the cultural models of astronomy and tavern, and had serious problems with the term *Sâqi*, which had undergone a metaphorization process in the origin. In addition, the conceptualization of time in the source text was subjected to a drastic change, and the non-theological cause of death (i.e. time) was supplanted by a spiritual entity.
- (d) In handling text 4, the translator passed over the conceptualization of 'intellect' and 'time', but ran into no impediments as far as the cultural models of pottery was concerned except that the potter was replaced by a creator. Apropos of the metaphors based on the cultural model of old Persian philosophical cosmology, the translator

drew a blank.

With the preceding remarks in mind, we could tentatively assume that on occasions when English and Persian shared a cultural model, the translator succeeded in achieving relative experiential equivalence in the processes of metaphor translation. In contrast, when the Persian cultural models under discussion had no counterparts in English, the translator was simply incapable of setting up proper equivalence between the source and target texts. As Tabakowska (1993:129) points out “a non-equivalent translation may result from the lack of understanding on the part of the translator, or as an objective impossibility of bridging the gap between two different conceptual systems”

We could hardly be charged with unfounded optimism if we claimed that a translator’s cultural-conceptual awareness of the agency of cultural models in the genesis of metaphors associated with a particular source text, together with her/his creativity, can, to a considerable extent, delimit the gap between separating two distinct conceptual systems. A case in point is provided by the fact that Fitzgerald, being familiar with the agency of the cultural model of the old Persian puppet-show underlying the second source text, managed to set up a creative analogy between the Persian puppet-show and chequer-board thus achieving approximate equivalence.

Finally, what we consider to be a claim to novelty is our conviction that the potential relationship between a conceptual metaphor and a specific cultural model is the main obstacle in achieving metaphor equivalency. Regarding this problem, the translator should try to reconstruct the complicated conceptual structures underlying metaphorical expressions in a text. These underlying conceptual structure include conceptual metaphor and its potential link with cultural models. Therefore, s/he should take into account not just metaphor itself, but also its relationship to ICMS. As a result, we should redefine experiential equivalency in the context of metaphor translation as reconceptualizing the conceptual metaphor together with its potential relationship to cultural models in the target text.

Our investigation into the problems encountered when translating Khayyam’s metaphor can be said to be no more than an initial step toward exploring the uncharted realm of his poetic language. It is our firm belief that further research on the relationship between cultural models, metaphorization and translability in this context is bound to shed light on what the present paper failed to elucidate. Seeing that Khayyam’s poetry has most probably been translated into other languages, it would also be worthwhile to examine how for such renditions succeeded in establishing experiential equivalence between source and target texts.

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