

**The parameters of poetry translation:
A stylistic analysis of the linguistic
and literary techniques used in the
translations of the *Odyssey* and the
*Iliad***

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Sobia Ilyas¹**Abstract**

The paper posits that Poetry Translation is an unimpeded and uninhibited genre of Translation Studies which allows immense freedom to the translator to perceive and project the source text according to her social, cultural, and moral sensibilities and above all her aesthetic tendencies. This stance is supported through a diachronic and synchronic evaluation of diverse translations of selected passages of Homeric epics: the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The research draws upon Eugene Nida's sociolinguistic approach to translation and his concept of Dynamic Equivalence for the interpretation and analysis of the Homeric texts. In doing so, the researcher highlighted the various literary techniques and approaches used by three renowned translators of Homeric epics: George Chapman, Alexander Pope, and Robert Fitzgerald, through a stylistic analysis and explored the socio-cultural factors behind their choice of translation strategies. The findings reiterated the viewpoint that poetry translators over the centuries have adopted fluid approaches to translating poetry in keeping with their individual perceptions regarding the principles that govern the craft of literary translation.

Keywords: Poetry translation, stylistics, Homeric epics, sociolinguistic approach

Introduction: Background of the Study

Literary translators despite being the strongest interlocutors between two alien cultures, preservers of languages and promoters of literary treasures have perhaps suffered the worst fate in history: from being accused of heresy (for translating the bible) and getting burnt at the stake as in the case of William Tyndale (1494-1536) or being exposed to ruthless criticism (of contemporaries and critics) and being branded as a slavish imitator (for translating Petrarchan sonnets) as in the case of Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542). Moreover, there have been other philosophers and thinkers who have out

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rightly rejected the notion of a true or genuine translation. The oft quoted statement by John Bester, famous translator of Japanese fiction reaffirms this belief, “The attempt to render into one language the meaning, feeling and, so far as possible, style of a piece written in another language...I realize that this can only be an ideal. Translation, like politics, is an art of the possible; compromise is inevitable and universal” (Landers, 2010). French writer, historian and philosopher, Voltaire was more explicit in his denunciation, “Woe to the makers of literal translations, who by rendering every word weaken the meaning! It is indeed by so doing that we can say the letter kills and the spirit gives life” (McNiff, 2015, p. 102). Russian- American, poet and translator, Vladimir Nabokov was thrown into “spasms of helpless fury” if a translation read smoothly because according to him “the term “free translation” smacks of knavery and tyranny” (Nabokov, 2004). However, there have been counter views: Bassnett (2011) calls it a “highly skilled and highly creative activity”. George Steiner’s famous quote expresses similar sentiments: “Without translation, we would be living in provinces bordering on silence” (Jayasingh, 2020). The diverse opinions about the credibility and legitimacy of the art of translation gave way to diverse philosophies and strategies of translation specifically literary translation which is a specialized and sensitized field of translation considering the perils and challenges involved in translating literary texts specifically poetry and the indomitable issue of striking the correct balance between form, content, and spirit. Translation theory whether in the past or in the twentieth century has primarily been concerned with core topics such as “equivalence and shifts, audience and function, identity, and ideology” with the translator hoping to bridge “the linguistic and cultural boundaries among readerships” (Venuti & Baker, 2000). Thus, for all their misfortunes, translators have played a prominent role in the transmittance of history and culture and for introducing fresh and novel approaches in the field of literary translation. More recently the genre of Literary Translation is giving way to more flexible approaches of interpretation and is becoming increasingly sensitive to the sociocultural contexts of the source text. Furthermore, Translation Studies (TS) as a discipline has shifted towards producing research that is more interested in the social and cultural contexts in which literary translations are produced” (Basnett, 2010 as cited in Siegel, 2013).

The current study focuses on the prominent English translations of the Odyssey and the Iliad to explore the principles and parameters of poetry translation as reflected in these famous renditions of Homeric texts. It also examines the individual choices of the translators and their preferred modes of translation to propose that literary translation is broad and diverse in its methods and techniques. The study elucidates the efficacy of the

Sociolinguistic Approach for its prolific techniques of translating classical texts of Homeric stature. Eugene Nida's sociolinguistic approach to translation was chosen for analysis on the premise that all translations are targeted for a specific age, people and culture and the translator cannot help but reflect her own moral and cultural inclinations in translating a literary text. The sociolinguistic approach was considered pertinent for the current research as both the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* are regarded as timeless historical and cultural artifacts. Each translator of these classical texts had specific goals at heart in reproducing these poems in their own native style. Most of these goals and aspirations concerned the sociolinguistic priorities of the translators. Moreover, a sociolinguistic approach offers a more richer reading experience to the readers since the translator strives to give the best flavor of both the source and target culture to the readers. In the case of the Homeric epics, almost all the notable translations attempt at a vibrant and palpable reconstruction of a culturally remote and archaic civilization thus allowing the English readers to enjoy the grandeur of the Greek through English syllables and colors. In his oft quoted statement, Eugene Nida opines that "the conformance of a translation to the receptor language and culture as a whole is an essential ingredient in any stylistically acceptable rendering" (Nida, 2004, p. 136). Nida believed that effective interlingual communication was dependent on sociolinguistic rather than linguistic factors "because it is in the blend of language and culture, of words and concepts" that the true significance of translation and interpretation can be realized, and the principles of sociolinguistics be productively employed (Nida, 2012). Before moving to an analysis of Homeric translations, let us review the most common challenges confronting translators of poetry and the strategies adopted to overcome them:

Poetry Translation: Challenges for the Translator

Within the field of Literary Translation, poetry translation enjoys a unique status since it is the most difficult and artistic of all forms of literary translation. It is as Beier (2017) says "If poetry translation is difficult, this is perhaps partly because poetry itself is difficult. It could indeed be argued that it is poetry's 'resistance to facile communication' that makes it work" (p. 476). Beier, goes on to say that it is extremely important to assess how our understanding of poetry influences our understanding of its translation. Translating poetry involves innumerable challenges. Apart from issues of transfer of content, form and function, an important consideration is the translation of poetic style that is a keen sensitivity to shape, repetition, and pattern both in source and target cultures. It also requires the translator to develop a familiarity with the acoustic qualities and language politics of the source language to make the language transfer an aesthetic and communicative

process. However, the decision regarding ‘transfer’ may not always be so simple: since most modern approaches tend to favor open – ended interpretations of poetry to reduce the possibility of creative inhibitions. In such situations, a translator’s job is fraught with further challenges: the choice of an analytical framework. Whether to choose an interpretive approach or a behaviorist, dogmatic, cultural, or semiotic approach may be the translator’s greatest nightmare. Moving beyond the theoretical and technical issues, poetry translation calls for a deep understanding of the psychological and socio-cultural factors involved in the transition from the source to the target text: how the lexical and semantic choices of a translator may affect the poetic sensibilities of the readers and align within the sociocultural context of the target text. While these maybe the most common challenges to translating poetry and which many conscientious translators may take into consideration, there is however, a lot of freedom granted to literary translators in general, whereby they make a lot of personal choices regarding the mode and manner of translation and the audience they target. Ironically, the choices made by literary translators of the past and present have given rise to some permanent trends in translation specifically in the translation of poetry. The proceeding discussion will highlight some common techniques used by literary translators which are usually influenced by the nature of the source text, the target audience and the translator’s personal preferences:

1. **Adaptation:** A technique whereby one cultural element is replaced by another which is typical of the receiving culture. More precisely, adaptation can be defined as a ‘set of translative interventions’ resulting in a text that is not a standardized translation but a representation of the source text. Adaption is also associated with the concepts of appropriation, domestication, imitation, and rewriting (Bastin, 2019).
2. **Amplification:** This translation technique adds new linguistic elements in the target text. It is the opposite of the linguistic compression technique. In the field of Translation Studies, Amplification refers to a technique of adding information in the target language to make the text more comprehensible to the readers of the target language. In other words, it refers to the process of making stronger, bigger, and louder (Zulkifli, Bayusena, & Ampera, 2021).
3. **Compensation:** This technique is intended to compensate for the losses that a text suffers when it is translated or more precisely, it is a “technique which involves making up for the loss of a source text effect by creating a similar effect in the target text through means that

are specific to the target language and/or text” (Harvey 2001 as cited in Dziedraviciute, 2009).

4. Borrowing: This is a technique frequently used in literary translation. It involves using a word or an expression in the original text and placing it as it is, with no modification, in the target text. Borrowing is a translation whereby the translator makes a conscious choice to insert the same word in the target text as it is found in the source text. This usually happens when there is no equivalent word in the target language. Moreover, “this technique also allows the translator to put a text clearly within a particular cultural context through the register of the vocabulary it uses” (Grassilli, 2015).

The above-mentioned techniques have been invariably used by poetry translators over the centuries in their struggles to achieve their poetic ambitions. These ambitions include translations which abide by the social and cultural norms of the target audience and strive to capture the socio-cultural spirit of the source culture. Translators also incline to moralize through a didactic approach such as mentioned in the case of French author and translator, Antoine Houdar de la Motte who in translating the *Iliad* into French in 1714, took unlimited freedom: ‘he cut out half the poem, speeded up the action, invented new material and changed the behavior of characters in accordance with societal norms of his age (Bassnett, 2011). He justified his decision to do so by declaring that he retained those parts of the *Iliad* that were ‘worth keeping’. Many translators choose the form over content and vice versa. Yet others aspire for aesthetic reproductions (of the original) with special emphasis on the melody and meter. Last but not the least, literal translations are also a common occurrence when the translator tries to produce the most faithful translations in terms of sense and meaning while compromising over style and rhythm.

The current study focuses on the broad parameters set out by different translators in translating the iconic epic poems: The *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* whereby they exercised different levels of creative freedom in altering, transforming, and recreating the form and content of the two poems. Homeric texts have always had a timeless fascination for translators belonging to different periods of English literary history resulting in the production of a prolific range of translations from religious adaptations, pompous imitations to formulaic and prose translations. Revered through the ages, as the ultimate epics, Homer’s *Iliad*, and its companion-piece, the *Odyssey* were adored by the ancient Greeks themselves as an epitome of their civilization. In presenting a challenging standard for all the poets aspiring to write in the epic tradition and by force of their prestige, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* became the basis of

Greek education and the crux of Greek literary imagination. The *Iliad* survived and withstood the literary evolvments which took place over a period of two thousand years by remaining central to the western literary heritage. The importance of the *Iliad* is reflected not only through the massive critical attention it has attracted but also through the number of translations it has inspired: more than 200 complete or selected translations into English from 1581 to the present day. The same holds true for the *Odyssey* which remains to date the most celebrated of Greek poems with many scholarly English translations to its credit. English translations of Homer have been produced by a diverse social group: philosophers, prime ministers, clergymen, academics, poets, and scholars. Some of these attempts at translation have become enduring and cherished literary works. Homeric translations surfaced as early as the 1660s, with the verse and prose translations of the *Iliad* by John Ogilby and the philosopher Thomas Hobbes. However, the first significant and scholarly attempt at translating Homer was made by the great English poet Alexander Pope during the period between 1715- 1720 when he translated the *Iliad* and 1725-1726 when with the help of collaborators, he translated the *Odyssey*. His grand and elegant style of using rhyming heroic couplets for his translations, was celebrated by his contemporary, Samuel Johnson and many others but it got its share of criticism as well: the classical scholar Richard Bentley said regarding Pope's translation of the *Iliad*, "It is a pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer" (Wong, 2019, p. 351). While there was a growing trend among the classical poets to translate Greek texts into English, it being considered not only the most intellectual and aesthetic pursuit but a daring one too, another scholarly tendency was also developing parallel to the raging passion for translating Homer: criticism of Homeric translations. The best of the translation critics contributed towards the understanding of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* through their vast knowledge of the Greek language and of Homer's unique style and poetic meter. Such criticism also proved useful in providing rich guidelines for future translators of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*. Among other translation critics the most noteworthy is Mathew Arnold who in his famous Oxford lecture series 'On Translating Homer' (1861) gave a vivid description of a Homeric translator:

"He is eminently rapid; that he is eminently plain and direct both in the evolution of his thought and in the expression of it, that is, both in his syntax and in his words; that he is eminently plain and direct in the substance of his thought, that is, in his matter and ideas; and, finally, that he is eminently noble (Arnold, 1861 as cited in O. Classe, 2000).

Arnold's opinions as to how Homer should be approached went a long way to shape the ideologies of Homeric translators. The paper will analyze some renowned translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to explore the various literary conventions adopted by the translators. In doing so, the paper will also explore the socio-cultural factors that determine the translators' preferences and the impact created upon the readers.

Aims and Objectives

1. To explore the parameters of poetry translation through a stylistic analysis of selected excerpts from four renowned Homeric translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.
2. To explore the socio-cultural factors that determine the translators' literary choices in these chosen texts.
3. To highlight the various linguistic and stylistic aspects of these translated texts.

Research Questions

1. What are the prescribed boundaries of translating classical poetry as reflected through famous English translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*?
2. What socio-cultural factors influenced the translators' style and approach towards the Homeric epics?
3. What are the prominent linguistic and stylistic traits of the translations?

Literature Review

What should be the principles and parameters of poetic translation? This is a question that has sparked heated debates in the field of Translation Studies since time immemorial. To answer this one need to review the different approaches taken to poetry translation in the past and those being practiced currently. Different approaches have been adopted by the early and modern translators to revive, energize, and recreate classical and modern genres of poetry. These new trends highlighted the regional, ethno-cultural and the Eurocentric, bias of previous translation theories and called for more versatility and leniency of approach. However, not much research has been done on evaluating the principles and parameters of poetry translation through a comparison of diverse translation techniques as practiced by the famous translators of Homeric poems.

The paper posits that the principles and parameters of literary translation are diversely broad since poetry itself is a liberal creation which does not allow for rules and regulations. The current study narrows its focus to the various translations of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* to demonstrate how

these two great classical poems, rich in form and content, replete with poetic grandeur and the most revered cultural artifacts of their times, were handled diversely by their translators. Following is a review of some prominent studies conducted on the stylistic and the translation techniques of the Homeric poems: *Odyssey* and *Iliad*. One of the earliest studies on the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* is by Gaisser (1969) which explores the structural digressions in the two poems, attributing them to the evolution and of the poetic style and the growing need to “modify stylistic techniques to suit narrative requirements”. Another interesting study on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is by Marindale & Tuffin (1996) which focuses on the famous contention that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are written by different poets and produces textual evidence to support the claim. In contrast to the earlier studies which mostly focused on the versification and stylistic features of Homeric epics, current research is more far reaching in its goals. The Homeric epics are explored in the context of contemporary issues such as linguistic evolution and variation, the latest trends in Stylistics and Translation Studies and the social and cultural factors informing the interpretation of these classical poems. Barlea (2015) examines the history of the Romanian translations keeping in perspective the evolution of Roman literary language. The study generalises that among other factors : theoretical and ideological, the personality of the translator has a marked influence on the act of translation.

Gap in the Research

The paper posits that the principles and parameters of literary translation are diversely broad since poetry itself is a liberal creation which does not allow for rules and regulations. The current study narrows its focus to the famous translations of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* to demonstrate how these two great classical poems, rich in form and content, replete with poetic grandeur and the most revered cultural artifacts of their times, were handled diversely by their translators. Previous studies have not sufficiently addressed this issue thus leaving considerable room for exploring the diversity of approaches adopted for translating poetry specifically Homeric poems. The current study in its exploration of the renowned Homeric translations provides fresh vantage points for research on the diversity and multiplicity of translation techniques and the social and cultural factors influencing these approaches. Moreover, the research invites new perspectives towards the understanding and perception of literary translation as an ever evolving, all-inclusive domain and a palpable art, sensitive to regional and cultural sentiments.

Methodology

Data Collection

Data which is collected from secondary sources: libraries and websites, comprises of selected extracts from the original translations of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* by George Chapman (published in 1616), Alexander Pope (1726 and 1720 respectively) and Robert Fitzgerald (1961 and 1963 respectively). The selection of the extracts depended upon issues of accessibility, representation, and compatibility with the research goals.

Theoretical Framework

The study will draw upon Eugene Nida's Sociolinguistic approach towards translation and interpretation in cognizance with his famous concept of Dynamic Equivalence as a theoretical framework. According to Nida (2012) "sociolinguistics analyzes levels or registers of language (from highly ritual to decidedly intimate), competition between dialects and between languages, the growth and death of languages, the roles of jargons, slang, and verbal innovations" (p. 44). Similarly, his concept (of a translation) of Dynamic Equivalence reflects his awareness of the cultural constraints upon the translating choices of the translator. Such a translation aims at "complete naturalness of expression" by emphasizing modes of behavior relevant to the receptor's cultural context. It is not concerned with developing familiarity with the cultural patterns of the source text as such (Nida E. , 2004). The Dynamic Equivalence mode of translation aspires for equivalence of response rather than equivalence of form. The concept of 'naturalness' then refers to the "(1) the receptor language and culture as a whole, (2) the context of the particular message, and (3) the receptor-language audience" (Nida E. , 2019). The Sociolinguistic Approach in unison with the concept of Dynamic Equivalence provided the researcher with a robust framework for interpreting the Homeric translations keeping in view the challenges, preferences, and the literary goals of the translators.

Framework for Analysis

The chosen framework for analyzing the selected translations is Stylistics since this approach offers a wide scope for analyzing texts from a linguistic as well as a literary perspective. Within Stylistics, the researcher will use a sociolinguistic perspective for interpreting the Homeric translations since it allows for a holistic analysis of the texts and 'expresses through language the historical, cultural and linguistic setting which frames a narrative' Simpson (2004). Stylistics is believed to be a bridge between linguistics and literature. It has been defined as a sub-discipline of Linguistics

that is concerned with the systematic analysis of style in language and how this can vary according to such factors as, for example genre, context, historical period, and author (Leech, 2008 as cited in Jeffries and McIntyre, 2010). Furthermore, Stylistics can be defined as promoting ‘ the principled study of language use and a concentration on functional explanations for the forms found ’ (Hall, 2017). Stylistics is thus a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to language. Furthermore, Stylistics focuses on language as ‘a function of texts in context’ , testifying that utterances (literary or otherwise) are produced in a time, place, and in a cultural context (Simpson, 2004). The premise for a Stylistic analysis through Nida’s sociolinguistic approach and the concept of Dynamic Equivalence is that historical and cultural texts like the Homeric odes can be effectively interpreted through linguistic techniques that are sensitive to the social and cultural nuances of a language.

Steps of the Methodology

A stylistic analysis will be conducted upon the chosen extracts of the two epic poems. This will involve a comparative study of the various techniques adopted by all the translators in question with the purpose of exploring the possible parameters of poetic translation. In doing so the following levels of comparison between the different translations renderings will be considered:

I. Phonological

A phonological analysis will focus on the sound patterns such as alliteration, assonance, and consonance used by the translators to create rhyming schemes and patterns

II. Morphological

A morphological analysis will reveal possible word formation processes utilized in the translations. Since Homeric language is mostly an artificial language comprised of epithets and formulaic expressions, English translators of Homeric poems had to frequently use word formation processes like affixation and compounding to create English equivalents of Greek.

III. Semantic

A semantic analysis of the translations will explore the various devices used by the translators to transfer meaning from Greek to English. This will also focus on the translator’s approach towards the religious, social, and cultural aspects of the epics, in other words, the standpoint chosen for interpretation. The epics have been translated as cultural, religious, and

dogmatic statements by different translators and this is what is meant by a semantic analysis. The technique of ‘foregrounding’ will be used to observe how certain linguistic elements are highlighted in the text through deviation and unconventional use. In stylistics, the notion of foregrounding, a term borrowed from the Prague School of Linguistics, to refer to ‘artistically motivated deviation’ or the range of stylistic effects that occur in literature, whether at the grammatical level (e.g., inversion, ellipsis), or the semantic level (e.g., metaphor, irony). Foregrounding is structured: it tends to be both systematic and hierarchical. That is, similar features may recur, such as a pattern of assonance or a related group of metaphors, and one set of features will dominate the others.

Data Analysis

The study explores the parameters of poetry translation as observed through three famous translations of the Iliad and the Odyssey. In doing so, the researcher will focus on the socio-cultural factors that influenced the style and approach of the translators. The analysis will be divided into three levels: phonological, morphological, and semantic. The first translations to be analyzed are George Chapman’s versions of the Iliad and the Odyssey.

George Chapman’s Translation

George Chapman is a famous English poet, dramatist and literary translator and his translations of Homer are celebrated by contemporaries and critics alike. When Chapman undertook the challenging task of translating these great epics (which took him almost thirty years to complete) he had certain clear objectives in mind. He wished to present it as a philosophical piece replete with allegorical interpretations and a deep sense of Christian values.

Phonological Level

The phonological patterns adopted by Chapman reflect his cumulative ideology of translation which allows for expansions, deviations, and alterations. His translation of the *Odyssey* is written in iambic pentameter, whereas his *Iliad* is written in iambic heptameter while the Greek original is in dactylic hexameter. This gave him the edge he wanted, his translations are exuberant and vivacious pieces and possess a song like quality. Observe the following verses from the *Odyssey*, Book 1:

‘The Man, O Muse, informe, that many a way/wound with his wisdom to his wished stay’

There is a profuse use of *alliteration* as can be seen in the above example where the repeated use of ‘w’ creates not just melody but also

provides an articulate platform for voicing philosophical and moral thoughts. Also, the choice of ‘wisdom’ is deliberately made to diminish the effect of ‘slyness’ usually associated with Odysseus’s character. Observe the following extract from Book 5:

*The Cloud-assembler answered: ‘What words flie,
Bold daughter, from thy Pale of Ivorie?
As if I ever could cast from my care
Divine Ulysseus, who exceeds so farre
All men in wisdom, and so oft given
To th’ Immortals thron’d in ample heaven
So, great and sacred gifts*

The phonetic effects in the above stanza are meant to create a spirited and a moralizing tone. The AABBCC rhyming style is used to foreground the final words of the stanza such as ‘Ivorie’, ‘Care’. ‘Farre’, ‘Given’ and ‘Heaven’ and to facilitate enjambment. The conscious use of ‘Ivorie’ instead of ‘white’ is to give the effect of remote purity. Again, the words ‘farre’ and ‘ample heaven’ give the impression of plenitude and vastness which is in tune with the philosophical tone of the translation. Chapman’s enthusiasm for poetic craft makes him explore and experiment with his art: he explores the multiple cadences and sonic effects imbued in a fourteen -syllable line. Observe the *onomatopoeic effects* of the famous vulture simile in Book 16 of the *Iliad*:

*‘a cast of vultures fight, fly on each other, strike and truss,
part, meet, and then stick by,
Tug both with crooked beaks and seres, cry, fight and fight and
cry.*

In the opening lines of the *Iliad*:

*Achille’s banefull wrath resound, O Goddess, that imposed
Infinite sorrows on the Greekes, and many brave souls load
From breasts Heroique- sent them farre, to that invisible cave
That no light comforts; and their lims to dogs and vultures gave*

Chapman creates a vivid picture of the torment of hell in keeping with the moralistic purpose of his translation. The notion of sin, punishment and the superiority of the gods is imposed through phonic and metrical effects. The *parallelism* of ‘brave souls’ and ‘breasts heroique’ highlights the poet’s admiration for the courtly traits: valor and gallantry. The depiction of Hades as an ‘invisible cave’ that ‘no light comforts’ is an emphatic reiteration of his Christian beliefs. The collocation of ‘dogs and vultures’ creates consonantal

roughness which in turn produces a grim and appalling image of divine wrath and hell.

Morphological Level

Regarding the morphological innovations made by Chapman in his renderings, they mostly consist of ‘compounding’, suffixation, and a frequent use of ‘neologisms’. The vast repository of his neologisms includes some of the most unique and commonly used words of the English language as listed in (Miola, 2017):

Table 1:

Compound words	Neologisms	Suffixation
drift-wind	aversation	Amazeful
needle-painted	scoptical	Futurely
dog-giv’n	insecution	Amendsful
well-greaved	pervially	Orby
in-muscles	peccancy	Yieldy
more-than-honey-sweet discourse	expiscating	Manlessly
golden-ribbon-bound-maned horse	impugned	Disinflamed

Another morphological invention by Chapman is the ‘compression of similes’ through which he converts speeches into brief paraphrases. On another extreme, he makes use of expansions to suit his poetic purposes: the 12, 150 lines of the original were stretched to 16,663.

Semantic Level

On a semantic level, Chapman’s translation can be analyzed as a projection of his own noble ideals under the influence of which he frequently resorts to deviations from the original epics. There is a fastidious adherence to the notion that a translation ought to revitalize and rejuvenate the original. Accordingly, Chapman’s translations stray liberally from the original to highlight what he must have believed to be latent but important themes in the poem. As mentioned earlier, the foregrounding technique used by Chapman will be considered at a semantic level: his strategic use of language to posit a

social and cultural stance. In this regard, the most notable thing is the element of 'deviation'. Chapman in his translations makes frequent and generous deviations from the original text. These deviations include expansions, aesthetic enhancement and shifts in subject matter and character projection. George Chapman through the Homeric epics wished to foreground the following elements: humanism and heroism and he does so using forceful and magnificent language.

Alexander Pope's Translation

Alexander Pope's translations display his elevated and erudite style and approach towards the Homeric epics. Following are the images of the original scripts of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* obtained from the internet:

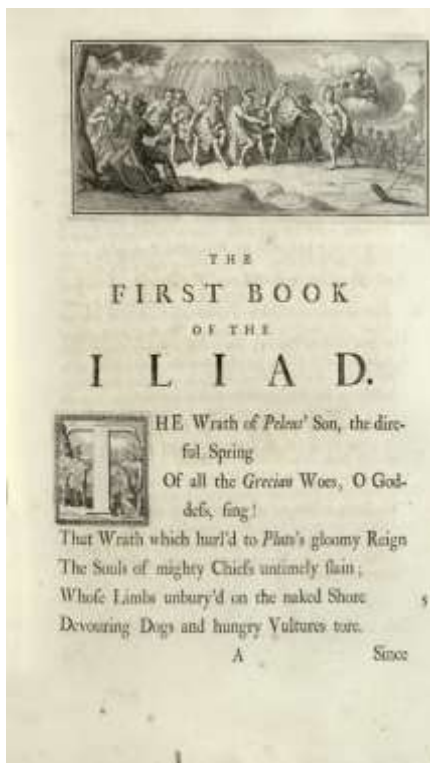


Image 1.0



Image 2.0

Phonological Level

Pope passionately believed that sound can and therefore should be used to convey meaning in poetry and this belief caused him to experiment with the 52,000 sounds or phonemes in his translations of the Iliad and the Odyssey. Pope translated the Homeric poems into "heroic couplets," consisting of a sequence of rhyming pairs of iambic pentameter lines. Likewise, a pentameter is a succession of five iambic feet, each of which contains an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. With Pope, poetic music consisted of the use of words and phrases that expressed the poet's own emotions and those he wished his characters to experience. Thus, Achilles' 'wrath' is more felt than imagined by the readers and the 'direful' spring with all its misfortunes is also hurled upon the readers. Phonology in Pope's translations is used for picture sketching and for stirring emotions as we traverse the ups and downs of his poetic narration. The Iliad opens evocatively with the ringing sounds of /r/ and /s/: the rhotic consonant /r/ and the stressed /s/ sounds create an ambience of majestic power and austere authority more than perhaps was intended by Homer in his original epics. The overriding passion, the grand style and the eruditeness in Pope's translations maybe seen as the freedom of the translator to color a work in whatever emotional tones he chooses, to project his own philosophy and establish his dominance over the text. Also, such a pompous and imposing style suggests the transference of poetic power from Homer to Pope, thus challenging the superiority of the translator over the original poet.

Table 2:

Rhotic /r/	Stressed /s/
direful	Spring
unnumber'd	Sing
hurl'd	Slain
wrath	Shore

Morphological Level

At a morphological level, Pope's linguistic variations consist mostly of transforming Homer's similes. Although a great admirer and defender of Homeric similes (which were considered by many critics to be too superfluous, repetitive, and extraneous), Pope worked tenaciously towards refining and restructuring these similes for a better appreciation of the

Homeric epic. Pope transforms many Homeric similes by aligning them metaphorically with the narrative, for example the one comparing Diomedes and the flooding river. Pope often reformed such ‘unruly similes’ to make them aesthetically meaningful. He also worked to adjust an inexact comparison, such as the one in which the Trojan ally, Asius, compares two Greeks defending their wall to a swarm of wasps defending their nest. Pope thoroughly reconstructed the Homeric similes so that they could become a strong and integral part of an English narrative poem of profound depth and status. Pope’s treatment of Homeric similes reflects an extended parameter of poetic translation: a translator in reverence and admiration for the original poet may resort to making positive amendments in the original poem to give it prestige and recognition in the target language.

Semantic Level

Like Chapman, Pope also had certain ambitions to fulfill through his translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. He wrote in a pompous and verbose style because he wished to recreate an intellectual and aesthetic version of these poems for his English readers. Pope's Homeric translations which are notorious for their deviations and freedom prove how ideology is manifested in translated texts and infused in the language and thought of the target culture. Thus, the most noticeable foregrounding in the poems occurs in the form of Pope’s ideology which is the promotion of English beliefs, culture, morality and above all religious sobriety. He gives a scholarly and allegorical interpretation of both the poems. He has been accused of verbose presentations of Odysseus’s speeches thus smothering the intrinsic humor of the original and lending it an emotional remoteness and decorous reserve. Pope’s translations were lauded because he knew ‘how to point the sentiments of the author’ to ‘write for his own age and his own nation’ (Johnson, 1926, p. 438).

Robert Fitzgerald’s Translation

Robert Fitzgerald’s celebrated translations of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* mark the beginning of a new era in displaying the characteristic traits of modern translations. Like his worthy predecessors, Fitzgerald had certain aspirations that were fulfilled through these remarkable ventures.

Phonological Level

Fitzgerald’s renditions of Homer stand distinctly apart from those of his predecessors in that they were written for an entirely different age and period and for equally different motives. Thus, we do not observe in them the use of pompous and grand language nor the melodic cadences of the classical translations. Fitzgerald translated these great epics to revive the true spirit of

Homer for a generation of readers who had drifted far away from the classical traditions. Although, Fitzgerald deliberately avoids the heroic couplets and the dactylic hexameter in his compositions, he does not deprive his translations of narrative beauty. He experiments with different poetic styles, careful to mitigate monotony and dullness as far as possible. It is apparent, that in choosing a rather direct and simple style of writing, Fitzgerald was able to create a spontaneity of expression that comes with an unforced and natural use of the English language:

*I hear the old man comes to town no longer,
stays up country, ailing, with only one
old woman to prepare his meat and drink*

The opening lines of the *Iliad* have none of the imposing grandeur of the classical masters. Yet, the following lines are anything but dull and bland:

*Anger be now your song, immortal one,
Akhilleus' anger, doomed and ruinous,
That caused the Akhaians loss on bitter loss
And crowded brave souls into the undergloom,
Leaving so many dead men-carrion
For dogs and birds, and the will of Zeus was done*

The beauty of expression is never compromised because Fitzgerald's narrative verse can effortlessly modulate into poetry:

*A man whose bones are rotting somewhere now,
white in the rain on dark earth where they lie,
or tumbling in the groundswell of the sea*

Fitzgerald uses the iambic decasyllabic line to promote the English verse tradition since it was always his intention to write free prose in a style that is interpretive rather than literal. Fitzgerald's translations won acclaim for this very quality of fluent narration blended with Homeric contours of witty playfulness:

*Whoever gets around you must be sharp
And guileful as a snake: even a god
Might bow to you in ways of dissimulation
You! Chameleon*

It is worth noting how modern translators such as Fitzgerald in endeavoring to write for their time and age can digress so audaciously to

produce a modern version of an archaic text which has little or no similarity with the poetic meter and versification of the original. Such flexible parameters are perhaps the sole privilege of poetry translators.

Morphological Level

In a translation such as attempted by Fitzgerald, the translator's concern goes well beyond constructing new word combinations, expanding battle scenes, displaying verbosity, and experimenting through linguistic variation which had been the practice for most earlier translators. Fitzgerald was confronted with greater challenges: the challenge of bridging a huge and tumultuous gap between the past and the present and doing it as Eliot would have said with the consciousness of 'not only the pastness of the past but its presence'. Fitzgerald's choice of words and diction was thus influenced more by socio cultural factors than stylistic features. As a modern translator, Fitzgerald was entrusted with the grave responsibility of stimulating the modern reader's mind with a sparkling animation of Greek cultural life and more specifically the Homeric spirit which he achieves meticulously.

*only my loneliness for you, Odysseus,
for your kind heart and counsel, gentle Odysseus,
took my own life away."
I bit my lip,
rising perplexed, with longing to embrace her,
and tried three times, putting my arms around her,
but she went sifting through my hands, impalpable
as shadows are, and wavering like a dream.
Now this embittered all the pain I bore, and I cried in the
darkness:
"O my mother, will you not stay, be still, here in my arms,
may we not, in this place of Death, as well,
hold one another, touch with love, and taste salt tears'
relief, the twinge of welling tears?
Or is this all hallucination, sent Against me by the iron Queen,
Persephone...*

As stated earlier, Fitzgerald's translation was beset with the challenge of faithfully transferring one culture to another, keeping in mind the aesthetics and mindset of both. He was also conscious of what the Greek audience's reaction would have been at the recitation of an epic and this required an alertness to images, dislocations, juxtapositions, and resonances. Fitzgerald is also aware of the power of poetry: how it stirs and provokes both the poet and the reader, and thus his morphological choices reflect all these aspirations.

Semantic Level

Robert Fitzgerald's translations of the Homeric epics were done with a purpose: to revive and restore the Homeric spirit and all that was manifested therein. It was also one of Fitzgerald's prime objectives to uphold the English poetic tradition and to create a beautiful blend of the Greek and English cultural and aesthetic norms. Moreover, these translations are marked for their energetic representation of Homeric ideals and the simple, yet elevated style of writing. All these elements are foregrounded in Fitzgerald's narrative voice and in his skillful depiction of the battle scenes, the rhetorical speeches, and other interesting episodes. Fitzgerald's translations reach out and connect with his modern readers and evoke in them a deep appreciation for the epic genre and its artistic splendor. These translations also highlight a distinctive parameter of poetic translation: the actual role of the translator. Fitzgerald is perhaps one of the most conscientious translators of poetry in that he rediscovers the Homeric tradition for his age and his people and in doing so becomes an interlocutor of Greek culture and history.

Conclusion

The paper through a three-tier analysis of selected translations of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* by three renowned translators: George Chapman, Alexander Pope and Robert Fitzgerald, attempted to highlight the broad parameters of poetic translation. Homeric epics have been diversely translated by different social groups: poets, philosophers, clergymen, academics, poets, and scholars. In doing so, some remained true to the form and structure, working hard to revive their phonological quality: rhyme, prosody, and melody. While others strove to highlight their semantic features: religious, cultural, and ideological connotations. Yet others were sensitive to the pragmatic requirements and therefore molded the translations according to their time and age to connect the modern readers with the ancient Greek Culture. All these renditions of the great Greek Epics: *Odyssey* and *Iliad* paved the way for future translators of classical texts through defining the principles and parameters of Literary Translation.

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