

Reza Baraheni as a Resistant Translator Before the Islamic Revolution (1961–1979)¹

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Abstract

Provided that translation is a purposeful activity and conditioned by the receiving context, this study aimed at investigating how 'resistance' has been enacted in Reza Baraheni's three literary translations into Persian, produced during a period of time from 1961 to the Islamic Revolution in 1979 in Iran. These chosen works include Ivo Andrić's *The Bridge on the Drina* (1915), William Shakespeare's *Richard III* (1597), and Carlo Maria Franzero's *Cleopatra* (1962). In order to explain the causes of such translations, an analytical model based on Aristotle's four types of cause, as proposed by Pym (1998/2014) to study causation in translation was used, attempting to explore how the translator's affiliations and ideologies as the efficient cause, his selections of texts to translate as the material cause, and his translation strategies and stylistic choices as the formal cause, facilitated the purpose of resistance in his translations as the final cause in an Aristotelian sense.

Keywords: Aristotle's causal model, Resistance, Resistant translation

1. Introduction

As Maria Tymoczko (2010, p. 15) points out: "translation is instrumental, a means serving larger political and ideological purposes", not simply a mechanical linguistic transposition or literary art. In other words, translation could play a pivotal

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role in ideological dialogue and struggle, including resistance to oppression, subjection, and restriction of all types. (Tymoczko, 2010)

According to Sangari (2010, p. 2–5), literature would be influenced by conditions such as the suppression of internal and external tyranny and domination, of war and military occupation and foreign hegemony and the suppression of social freedoms; that is, literature could be used as a means to resist anti-freedom currents. He adds that expressing the pain of the weak classes of society, instilling hope in the struggle for liberation, honoring the martyrs on the path to freedom and promising victory in the future are among the themes that might be conveyed by a resistant literature (our translation). The same can be said about a resistant translation. However, such resistant translations would be operationalized by different translators in different settings divergently; not just by Venuti's (1995/2002/2008) 'foreignizing' translation, for instance.

Translators' choices, including their selections of texts, their translation strategies and stylistic choices, and their purposes of translation are not random but are driven by the immediate ideological, political, and cultural contexts the translator is working in and translating for. These choices are also driven by the translator's affiliations and place of enunciation in those contexts. (Tymoczko, 2007/2010/2014, pp. 250–251)

This present study intends to explore causation in Reza Baraheni's three literary translations before the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, to reveal how resistance was enacted in his translations and to identify how he managed to use translation as a means to oppose and resist the second Pahlavi's regime (1941–1979). In other words, his translations are analyzed to explain how his selections of texts to translate, his translation strategies and stylistic choices, under his own ideologies and affiliations serve his translation purpose of resistance. These factors correspond respectively to four causes of action in the Aristotelian model, consisting of material cause, formal cause, efficient cause, and final cause. This analytical model has been proposed by Pym (1998/2014) to translation situation and applied by Huang (2019) to the Chinese situation of the Late Qing dynasty (1811–1911) for instance.

2. Theoretical Framework

In *Method in Translation History*, Anthony Pym (1998/2014, p. ix) states that translation history should explain why translations were produced in a

particular social time and place. In other words, translation history should address problems of social causation and explain them. Explanation deals with the central question of translation history: it asks why things happened. He adds that there are so many factors involved in translation that causation is more likely to be diffuse and multiple than focused and unitary. Dealing with this issue properly can only be done if the notion of causation is given some formal organization. He proposes to do this by returning to Aristotle as the author of a useful little checklist comprising four types of cause (Pym 1998/2014, pp. 143–144).

In this respect, based on Pym's (1998/2014) discussions of 'explanations' in translation history, particularly his elaboration of Aristotle's 'causes', Chesterman's (2007) 'causality model', also inspired by Huang's (2019), this present study applies the Aristotelian causes of action to the analysis of translations in the following model:

- (1) Efficient Cause (Translator as Producer of TT)
- (2) Material Cause (Text Selection)
- (3) Formal Cause (Translation Strategies and Stylistic Choices)
- (4) Final Cause (Translation Purpose)

Based on the aforementioned model, Baraheni's translations are examined at different levels to see how translation facilitates the purpose of resistance by seeing which source texts were selected for translation, which translation strategies were taken and what stylistic features were made, and finally, how the translator's affiliations and ideological stances affected that purpose.

3. Reza Baraheni (1935–2022)

Reza Baraheni was born in 1935 in Tabriz, Iran. He was a poet, novelist, literary theorist and translator, as well as a human rights activist. Baraheni received the World Writers Association Award for Best Human Rights Journalist in 1977 for activities that raise awareness of the international community on human rights issues. Along with his fellow-writers, Jalal Al- Ahmed and Gholamhussain Saedi, he initiated the first steps in 1966 leading to the founding of the Writers Association of Iran in the following year. In spite of their struggle to turn it into an officially recognized human rights organization, Mohammad Reza Shah government suppressed the association, intimidated many of its members, arresting and torturing some of its members among them was Baraheni. He was arrested and

imprisoned in 1973. His release was due to public pressure generated by the American branch of PEN, Amnesty International, and the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (Sale, 1977). In 1974, he immigrated, actually exiled to the U.S.

He was recognized worldwide as one of the most prominent voices of the Iranian opposition against the Pahlavi regime. As Qarabagli (2022) reports, Baraheni's historical novel *The Infernal Days of Mr. Ayaz* (1972), which was a criticism of the social and political reality of its time led to its being banned by the Shah's censorship apparatus. A year later Baraheni published *Masculine History: The Dominant Culture and the Subjugated Culture* which critically discussed oppression against women and minoritized ethnic groups in Iran. That book was also banned, and led to his arrest.

4. Data Analysis

The three literary translations produced by Reza Baraheni during a period of time from 1961 to 1979 which are analyzed in this study include: *The Bridge on the Drina* by Ivo Andrich, written in 1915 and translated into Persian in 1961, *Richard III* by William Shakespeare in 1597 and translated into Persian in 1962, and *Cleopatra* by Carlo Maria Franzero in 1962, translated into Persian in 1963.

4.1. The Analysis of *The Bridge on the Drina* (1915) and its Persian translation

Ivo Andrich (1892–1975), the Bosnian well-known literary writer, is recognized in the world and awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1961. Andrich was born near Travnik in Bosnia in 1892. He was still in high school when he joined the Yugoslav Revolutionary Youth Organization, which was involved in the assassination of the Austrian Archduke in Sarajevo. This incident became the pretext for the outbreak of World War I during which Andrich was in prison. After the war, Bosnia became part of Yugoslavia, and Ivo, seeing the fulfillment of the aspirations of the Yugoslav youth, in 1919 published his first collection of patriotic and poetic stories which he had written in prison. He then wrote some well-reputed short stories and novels (Baraheni, 1961, my translation).

Andrich's birthplace, near a river called the Drina, later became his source of inspiration for writing the novel *The Bridge on the Drina* (1915), based on his childhood experiences in the same area. In this novel, Andrich describes the small town by the bridge on the Drina River and the history and spirit of the people from the time of Turkish rule to the bourgeoisie period, in such a way that the reader

becomes acquainted with the history of four centuries of this land from a social development viewpoint. He rewrites the history of the Yugoslav nation, which fought for years against foreign domination and finally ousted it. To connect the different parts of the story that cover very long years and many time intervals, he uses a huge and beautiful bridge that was built by the Ottomans on the Drina River.

Baraheni translated this novel into Persian from its English version which had been translated in 1919 by F. L. Edwards from the Serbo-Croat original *Na Drini Cuprija* (1915). At the foreword to the target text, Bagdanovich states that many of the spirits of the heroes and the way of life and human relations in this novel match exactly with the spirits and way of life of the Iranian people. The customs, friendships, loves and emotions of the novel's heroes all have the same characteristics that are going on among the people of Iran and in their lives. He adds, through Turkey, Islamic customs, culture and civilization, including Persian literature and language which was one of the languages of Ottoman court literature, have been able to find their way into the literature of the Balkan nations, especially that of the Bosnian people. Persian words abound in this novel, such as *halvā*, *qīyāmat*, *boqcheh*, *cāravānserāi*, *seftalo*, *shīsseh*, *takhteh*, *tāzeh*, *tekyeh*, *mazeh*, and *zamān* (Baraheni, 1961, my translation).

A detailed 15-page foreword to the Persian text has been written by Dian Bagdanovich, a former Yugoslav student studying literature at the University of Tehran. In his foreword, he tries to portray the universality of the events of the story and the similarities between the Bosnian and Persian socio-cultures. At the beginning, Bagdanovich says that the events of this novel, although taken place in a certain historical and geographical environment, have universal and common aspects (Baraheni, 1961, my translation).

Referring to a young Montenegrin in the foreword, for instance, who secretly sings the national poems of Serbia with his own instrument, after the word *Montenegrin*, a Persian common surname (*Garadaqi*) has been written in parentheses in order to assimilate this character to the Persian readers.

- On the other hand, although Andrich has been mindful not to incite the religious and ethnic confrontations, the translator has tried to eliminate the rare cases of religious and ethnic mentions or modify them observing the Iranian Islamic beliefs, such as:

p. 31: *Turks of the town kept the practices of Islam very strictly* →omitted

p. 31: *the Moslem women had to keep their faces veiled* → *zan-ha hameh* ('all of the women')....

p. 57: *in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy spirit* → *be nām-e khodā, 'īsa va rūh al-qodos* ('in the name of God, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit')

p. 99: *Mohammed* → *Mohammed (PBUH)*

- Many of the proper names, unknown place names, foreign and unfamiliar words and phrases have been omitted in the translated text, like:

Kolo (p. 19), *the Magyar fashion* (p. 28), *Banja* (p. 32), *chai* (p. 56), *Spahis* (p. 72), *kum* (p. 88), *konak* (p. 138), and *Okoliste* (p. 236).

- A lot of idioms and culture-specific items have been domesticated through Persian idiomatic expressions or omitted, such as:

p. 28: *under my Linden tree there is no shade* → *kār-e man vaqfeh bardār nīst* ('my work is not intermittent')

p. 62: *an inch* → *yek zarreh* ('a bit')

p. 263: *what is to become of us?* → *cheh khākī bāyad be saremān berīzīm?* ('what dirt should we pour on our heads?')

p. 274: *she hardened her heart* → *'ū dandān rūy-e jegar gozāsht* ('She put teeth on her liver')

April (p. 61) and *August* (p. 235) → omitted.

- Somewhere the translator resorts to explicitation, especially when dealing with the sexual expressions, like:

p. 254: *the girls whom Terdik had brought and kept there* → *zanān-e fāhesheh ke Terdik āvardeh va be kār andākhteh būd* ('the prostitutes whom Terdik had brought and employed')

p. 261: *vinegary* → *dokhtar-e torshīdeh* ('the overripe girl')

- Mentions of German language phrases have been omitted or in some cases translated into the Persian, such as:

p. 262: *sub auspiciis regis* → *tebg-e gavānin-e mosavvabeh* ('according to the approved rules')

p. 287 : *Herr Oberleutnant, Herr Oberleutnant, urn Gottes willen* → omitted

- There are examples of politically motivated replacements, such as:

p. 245: *the people* → *'āzādī-khāhān* ('freedom seekers')

p. 303: *what sort of connection had he with that bridge, he who all his life had paid no attention to anything save his work and his family?* → *sarnevēsht-e in pol che rabti be man dārad? man ke dar tamām-e zendegi be chizi joz kār va*

khānevādeh-ye khod tavajjohi nadāshteh-am ('what sort of connection had the fate of this bridge with me? Lwho all my life had paid no attention to anything save my work and my family?')

p. 305: *in fact you do not live at all*→*dar vāge mā aslan zendegi nemikonim* ('in fact we do not live at all')

Finally, at the end of the story, the verb *lay* (p. 314) has been replaced by *stand* which may be a reason that the translator wants to encourage hope in his addressees.

4.2. The Analysis of *Richard III* (1597) and its Persian translation

William Shakespeare (1564–1616), an English poet, dramatist, and actor is often called the English national poet and considered by many to be the greatest dramatist of all time. He wrote 37 plays revolving around several main themes of histories, tragedies, comedies and tragicomedies. His plays are highly popular and constantly studied and reinterpreted in performances with diverse cultural and political contexts. The genius of Shakespeare's characters and plots are that they present real human beings in a wide range of emotions and conflicts that transcend their origins in Elizabethan England (William Shakespeare Biography, n.d.). According to Kuiper, K. (2013), the story line in *Richard III* is one of suffering and of eventual salvation, of deliverance by mighty forces of history and of divine oversight that will not allow England to continue to suffer once she has returned to the true path of duty and decency. In this novel, Richard of Gloucester (1452–1485) foments strife, lies, and murders, and makes outrageous promises he has no intention of keeping. Shakespeare gives him every defect that popular tradition imagined: a hunchback, a baleful glittering eye, a conspiratorial genius.

Richard III is about the struggle to get and hold on to political power. On the one hand, the play portrays Richard as a "Machiavelli," an unscrupulous ruler who will do just about anything to gain the crown and remain in power. Much of Richard's accomplishments in the play come from his pure ability to manipulate those around him, through betrayal and deceit. His tyranny ends at the Bosworth battlefield by Richmond where he extremely frustrated, cries: "a horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!"

In his foreword to *Richard III*, Baraheni adds a summary of the story of the play, which is a translation of a paper that Irene Buckman wrote in her book *Twenty Tales from Shakespeare* (1963). In the footnote to this translated foreword, Baraheni (1962) says that this summary is a very free translation of the Buckman's essay in

which he has made shifts in order for the Iranian readers get acquainted with the historical and drama characters and not be confused with the names (our translation).

Baraheni's the most frequently used translation strategies and stylistic choices applied in *Richard III* are as follows:

- Baraheni has tried to clarify the characters of the play by shifting pronouns to proper names, or by replacing some of the proper names by family relationship words and roles:
 Act 1, Scene 1: *Lord Chamberlain* → *sadr-e 'azam* ('the prime minister')
 Act 3, Scene 4: *the Duke of Gloucester* → *nāyeb al-saltaneh* ('the Protector')
- Many instances of explicitation have been made:
 Act 1, Scene 2: *Mortal eyes* → *'ensān-e fānī* ('mortal man')
 Act 2, Scene 1: *pour soul* → *Clarence-e bīchāreh* ('pour Clarence')
 Gloucester addresses his brother's wife "sister", but Baraheni, in order not to confuse the readers shifts it to *bānū* ('lady')
 Act 4, Scene 4: *in the entrail of the wolf* → *dar dahān-e marg* ('in the mouth of death')
 Act 5, Scene 4: *the day is lost* → *maghlūb khāhīm shod* ('we would be defeated')
- Several additions to clarify probable ambiguities were found:
 Act 1, Scene 1: *the jealous o'er-worn widow* → *Elizabeth*
 Act 2, Scene 4: *and weeds make haste* →, *bīkhod berast* ('unpurposefully grew')
- Some parts especially those with sexual hints have been omitted:
 Act 1, Scene 4: *a man cannot lie with his neighbor's wife, but it detects it*
 Act 4, Scene 4: *King Richard: If I have kill'd the issue of our womb, to quicken your increase I will beget mine issue of your blood upon your daughter*
Queen Elizabeth: Yet thou didst kill my children
King Richard: But in your daughter's womb I bury them.
 Act 5, Scene 3: *[they] lie with our wives, ravish our daughters?*
- There are several cases of domestication through Persian idiomatic expressions:
 Act 2, Scene 3: *pitchers have ears* → *dīvār mūsh dārad va mūsh gūsh* ('the wall has a mouse and the mouse ear')
 Act 5, Scene 1: *Margaret's curse falls heavy on my neck* → *nefrīn-e Margaret dar haqq-e man mostajāb shodeh 'ast* ('Margaret's curse on me has been answered')

4.3. The Analysis of *Cleopatra* (1962) and its Persian translation

Carlo Maria Franzero (1892–1986) was an Italian journalist and writer. When the Second World War loomed, this opponent of Benito Mussolini's fascism fled Italy and found a second home in England. He worked from 1941 to 1946 as a journalist. After the end of the war, he stayed in London and took up a job as a foreign correspondent for the Italian newspaper *Il Tempo*. In addition, he wrote non-fiction books on historical and literary subjects. However, he became famous in England for his numerous novels, mainly set in Ancient Rome, which dealt with the lives of important historical figures in the form of biographies.

Franzero, who also published under the pseudonym Charles Marie Franzero, was a member of the PEN, which is an international association of poets, essayists, and novelists advocating for human rights. The members point out that freedom of expression and literature are inseparable. He was also a holder of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic which is the highest-rank honor of the Republic, awarded for the "merit acquired by the nation" in the field of literature the arts, economy, public service, social, philanthropic and humanitarian activities and for long and conspicuous service in civilian and military careers (boowiki.info, n.d.).

Cleopatra (1962) is a historical novel about the time and life of the Cleopatra VII (70–30 BCE), Egyptian queen, last ruler of the Ptolemaic dynasty, famous in history and drama as the lover of Julius Caesar and later as the wife of Mark Antony.

After the assassination of Caesar, Cleopatra returned to Egypt to install Caesarion on the throne. She lured Mark Antony into marriage, inviting the wrath of Octavian, whose sister Antony had earlier wed. Octavian declared war on Cleopatra and Antony and defeated their joint forces at the Battle of Actium. Antony committed suicide, then, so did Cleopatra, by means of an asp, as Tyldesley (2022) states.

Along with Cleopatra's persuasion, Caesar's own ambition to pass over from republic into kingdom is obvious when he says: *"if a dictator could not occasionally rise a little above the law, what was the benefit in being a dictator? Now with a son he could found a dynasty; and he was beginning to think Rome has been a republic long enough; what it really needed was a king"* (Cleopatra, p. 46).

The storyteller ends his story by these words: *"Her husband [Mark Anthony] sat still, unheeding, his mind filled with the grandeur and majesty of kings, their littleness and luxury and violent ends. These three, Caesar, Cleopatra, Antony- they were given so much by the gods... they had made such a mark in the world; yet each had declined from the full stature of his greatness, had shrunk to mortal level, exposing human vanities and frailties, before reaching an untimely violent death"* (Cleopatra, p. 223).

Though the common people's lives in Egypt were miserable, *"Above all, one overriding consideration loomed like the terrible shadow of a tyrant: taxation. Every last coin that could be wrung from the toil-worn peasants and workmen fell tinkling into them Kings' treasury"* (Cleopatra, p. 15).

- Regarding the translation strategies and stylistic choices, several cases of explicitations were identified which are introduced in what follows:
 - p. 12: *Hercules* → *Herkūl* , *qahremān-e 'afsāneh-ī* ('Hercules, the legendary hero')
 - p. 28: *which suggested that their breath would mingle sweetly together* →....*va shekl-e būseh be khod begīrad* ('and formed a kiss')
 - p. 143: *the time has come* → *vaqt-e 'eshgh bāzī farā resīdeh 'ast* ('the time for making love has come')
 - p. 209: *he would have fallen upon his sword before now* →.... *va mordeh 'ast* ('and has died')
- Several examples of domestication through Persian expressions were found:
 - p. 13: *thirty-five miles* → *50 kilometers*
 - p. 25: *dramcha* → *derham*

p. 59: *Cleopatra was overjoyed* → *Cleopatra 'az shogh va sha'af dar pūst-e khod nemīgonjīd ('Cleopatra wasn't fitted her skin because of her joy and happiness')*

p. 147: *Jerusalem* → *Bait al-Moqaddas*

p. 222: *he had feared* → *mū bar 'andādash rāst mīshod ('the hair was standing straight on his body')*

- In cases of Latin terms plus their defining appositions, the Latin has been omitted: *the Bruchion* or *Royal City* (p. 13), *Socius Republicae-Ally of the Roman Republic* (p. 51), *the Arbiter, or Judge of Drinks* (p. 145).
- Some significant replacements were found:
 - p. 15: *took their seat on twin thrones* → *be tor-e moshtarak be saltanat-e in keshvar-e be zāher ghanī valī dar bāten faghīr va badbakht jolūs kardand ('they jointly sat on the throne seat of this seemingly wealthy, but actually poor and miserable country')*
 - p. 67: *not meeting much resistance once the Persians are defeated* → *pas 'az tasarrof-e Iran ('after occupying Iran')*.

5. Results and Discussion

It seems that Baraheni finds many similarities between the content of the source text, its sociopolitical and cultural conditions and the receiving Iranian circumstances of the Pahlavi regime era in the novel *The Bridge on the Drina*. Perhaps, the Iranian receivers' familiarity with and sympathy to at least the following events in the source text have persuaded the translator to select this novel to translate: changes, innovations and introducing of new technologies into the society and people's way of life according to the West world patterns; dispatch of the youth to Europe to study and the appearance of the resultant elite classes; hot discussions and debates by these educated youth on philosophical, social and political matters, especially those by the left wing and socialist circles; distribution of anti-regime leaflets. Assimilation of the events, omission of the unknown, domestication of the foreign, explicitation of the ambiguities and replacements of some expressions which serve better the purpose of resistance are among the most frequently used translation strategies and stylistic choices here.

As mentioned before, Richard the Third was a Machiavellist for whom one thing matters, i.e. to gain the throne by any possible means. The issues of succession, civil wars, and unjustifiable struggles to gain and hold power abound in the Iranian people's historical memory of the 2500 years of monarchy too.

Therefore, it is not surprising that Baraheni selected Shakespeare's *Richard III* to translate. Clarification of the characters and roles, addition of explanations, domestication of the foreign items, and omission of probably irritating sexual expressions are the prevalent features of this translation.

The events in *Cleopatra* are not foreign to the Iranian readers: Caesar's wife in Rome was barren, and he could divorce her on that account in order to gain Cleopatra to bear a heir son for him; a desire to transfer a republic to a kingdom by Caesar; the newfangled calendar that Caesar has imported from Egypt; the event of the Festival of Serapis in the Egyptian calendar, which are similar to the events of Mohammad-Reza Shah's second marriage, his dictatorship and rulling against the spirit of the Constitutional Kingdom, the substitution of the Islamic calendar with the Imperial one, and the 2500 year Celebrations in Iran, respectively. Explication of the probable ambiguities, domestication of the foreign, omission, and replacements of some expressions which serve better the purpose of resistance abound in this translation.

6. Conclusion

Reza Baraheni, as the efficient cause of the translations analyzed, was a known opponent to the Pahlavi regime whose imprisonment, exile and torture before the Islamic Revolution as well as his political leftist affiliation can be clear enough to prove him as a resistant translator. The selected source texts to translate, which are the material causes of these resistant translations, as discussed, provide a plenty of evidence to be regarded suitable for resistant translations. It can be concluded that by selecting to the point source texts, the translator has gone much of the way of resistance and little effort was required to facilitate the purpose (the final cause) of resistant translations. The remaining has been taken by Baraheni's assimilative approach to his translations. By using explication, domestication, omission, and addition, he makes his translation strategies and stylistic choices in the service of an easy, fluent, and effective communication with the Iranian readers of the time. The last factor plays the role of the formal cause - in an Aristotelian sense - in his translations which facilitates the purpose of resistance in and by his translations.

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