'Turk-e Shirazi' in the Costume of 'Sweet Maid': Jones' Orientalist Translation of Hafiz Ghazal Reframed[1]

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Abstract

The sixteenth century on the Indian continent is marked by a further expansion of Persographia in the commercial sphere. This was due in part to the rise of the English East India Company which laid the foundation of a new direction in translation, as well. Against this backdrop, translation of Persian classics found a new edge, and Persian literature opened up new territories in Europe. Jones' translation of the Ghazal 'Turk-e Shirazi', which opened up new avenues for Western scholars, was an example of this, generally regarded as an Orientalist translation in the service of imperialist purposes. However, this study aims to elucidate this translation through the idea of 'virtuality' of translation proposed by Chittiphalangsri (2014). To this end, not only was the English translation of this ghazal examined, but Jones' conceptualization of Persian literature in paratext included in *Poems Chiefly Consisting of Translations from Asiatic Languages* was also considered. In conclusion, it appears that Jones' domestication method was not adopted to exercise hegemonic power or to emphasize the Otherness of Hafiz. Instead, it originated from cultural negotiation rather than cultural hegemony and was intended to provide a 'sufficient' representation of this ghazal to the audience of the Romantic age.

Keywords: Domestication, Jones, Orientalist translation, 'Turk-e Shirazi' ghazal, Virtuality

Introduction

In the early modern period, Persian literature and culture was socio-politically situated in the tension between rival powers such as the Safavids and the

Ottomans. Moreover, Persian language continued to expand into new territories that 'stretched from China to the Balkans and from Siberia to southern India' (Green, 2019, p. 1). These greatly influenced the translation trajectory. In other words, the power struggles between the Safavid and Ottoman empires gave rise to Arabic-Persian and Persian-Turkish translation movements aimed at certain acculturation policies such as "legitimizing Shi'ism as the official state religion", (Ma'azallahi, 2022), and 'refining a new imperial language' (Krstić in Woodhead, 2012, pp. 131–132).

In the context of the Indian continent, Persian as the state language was drawn upon for 'trade and diplomacy with European states and their trading companies such as the English East India Company (1600–1858)', (Green, 2019, pp. 40–41), which not only acted as a mercantile enterprise but also had long patronized learning for practical reasons, (Ehrlich, 2018). Initiatives such as undertaking 'scholarly projects to compile and translate Hindu and Islamic law for the practical purposes of assisting British judges in India in their decision-making', (ibid., 43), should be seen in view of this functioning. Consequently, the cultural policy of patronage-based translation pursued by the Mughal courts continued in the hands of new patrons, i.e., the governors and officials of the English East Indian Company, and translation of Persian literature experienced a new flowering in this environment. Translation projects commissioned or undertaken by agents such as Warren Hastings and Sir William Jones (1746–1794) as governor-general and high-ranking personnel of this incorporation opened new horizons for European readers and aroused great interest in the literary East. For example, Jones' translation of *Kalidasa's Sakuntala* from Sanskrit into English was so enthusiastically received in the West that some such as Goethe and Faust wrote some works based on this translation (Cannon & Panday, 1976, p. 528). The same was true of Jones' translations of Persian literature, which were enthusiastically received by litterateurs such as Byron and contributed to the development of Persian studies in Europe

(Arberry, 1946, pp. 699–700). Such productions, which drew the attention of Europeans to Persian literature, as well as 'Persian printing in Calcutta and London […] expanded the frontiers of Persian as far as cities such as Birmingham and London' (Green, 2019, p. 44). However, many view the productions of Jones and his colleagues in light of Orientalism, interpreting them in terms of Said's (1979, p.3) definition of Orientalism as a 'Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient'. Moreover, they seem to adopt Said's conceptualization of Oriental studies not as scholarly activities but as instruments of national policy toward the newly independent and intractable nations of the postcolonial world (ibid., pp. 275–6).

The domesticating translation method employed in Oriental translations, including Jones' is further evidence for these people who argue that such translations served imperialistic purposes by providing a Westernized representation of Oriental writings and were a means of exercising power over a less powerful culture. This study attempts to problematize this conceptualization in the case of Jones' translations by elucidating the context in which these translations were produced and his intellectual background underlying his translational conceptions. Therefore, a decontextualized analysis of Jones translations and his conceptualization as a subject rather than an agent has been refrained from and the paratext provided by him is also considered. In this context, Jones' translation of the ghazal 'Turk-e Shirazi' was primarily examined, in the context of his attitude toward Oriental literature and culture as expressed in *Poems Consisting Chiefly of Translations from the Asiatic Languages*. To this end, two main questions are posed: (1) Is Jones domestication of Hafiz indicative of cultural hegemony? (2) Is Jones framing as an Orientalist in the service of imperialistic prejudice sound?

This study is informed by Chittiphalangsri's (2014) concept of the translation 'virtuality' in Orientalism and focuses on Jones agency and the context in which his

translations are embedded, rather than just the translated text. Therefore, this study seems to fall into the category of 'context-oriented translation studies' operationalized through case studies, as the cases are the 'Turk-e Shirazi' ghazal as well as pretexts Jones provided in *Poems Consisting Chiefly of Translations from the Asiatic Languages.*

Sir William Jones: Orientalist or Imperialist Translator of Hafiz?

Jones' contribution to the intellectual milieu of the eighteenth century and to subsequent linguistics and literary studies is so extensive that he can be described as a versatile scholar who broke new ground in several areas. Jones is noted among linguists and literary scholars for developing the concept of comparative linguistics and literature and as someone who opened up to the West a dazzling new view of themes, styles, and even subjects (Cannon, 1971, p. 418). Yet, his contributions have been heavily criticized by both Western and Eastern scholars for a variety of reasons.

Western scholars found fault with his works, especially his Oriental translations, because he had taken liberties in translating the Persian classics into English. In this vein, Wallpole (1857, p. 389) wrote to his friend in the year of the publication of Jones' translation: 'there is a Mr. Jones too, who has published imitations of Asiatic poets; but as Chambers' book was advertised by the title of Ornamental Gardening instead of Oriental, I think Mr. Jones' is a blunder of Oriental for ornamental, for it is very flowery, and not at all Eastern.'

That the Jones translations do not resonate the East seems to be the most important reason for their rejection, although it is expressed in different ways. Western critics such as Wallpole, censure this translation because it erases the Oriental attributes and presents it as a Western poem. In the same line, Reginald Hewitt (1943, pp. 52–3) believes that Jones translation of Hafiz ghazal is to be strongly criticized because of the transformation of the original rhyme system and

stanzas and the inflation of the poem by exactly half. On the other hand, the Eastern critics criticize this translation for the massive changes in the original poem attributed to the imperialistic tendencies of Jones and function of his translations as instruments of colonial rule or cultural hegemony. The post-Enlightenment intellectual environment provides further evidence of this orientation. In Sarwar's (2012, p. 9) words, translation is characterized as a 'central act' of European colonialism and imperialism because in a post-Enlightenment intellectual environment, Europeans began to define themselves as modern or civilized vis-à-vis Orientals, and rationalized their imperial vision from the last quarter of the eighteenth century that witnessed the so-called civilizing mission, began primarily with the study of colonial culture and heritage in order to learn about the socio-cultural base of the colonized.

The same critical reading of Jones' Oriental translations, is evident in recent scholarship on the subject, and Jones' translation decisions are seen as acts of cultural domination. In this respect, Anushiravi and Atashi (2012) interpret changes made in the ghazal 'Turk-e Shirazi' under the influence of the political agenda and the workings of power, which made Jones' translation, i.e., *A Persian Song of Hafiz*, an ideologically driven translation. Comparing each line of Hafiz ghazal with Jones' translation, they conclude that Jones constructed a colorful, sensual, picturesque landscape from the Orient and, created a hypersexual and promiscuous East that indulges in the primitive life of instincts (ibid., p. 57). Adaptation of poetic form, the erasure of local color and mystical associations, the emphasis on Western humanism and empiricism instead of Eastern mysticism, and the imposition of transparency instead of opacity were seen as means of Westernizing Hafiz and exercising colonial power for a harmful representation of the East.

Textual analysis through comparative study of the original ghazal and Jones translation is a commonality between the charge of Eastern critics such as Anushiravi and Atashi (2012) and the criticism of Western critics such as Wallpole

and Hewitt. Moreover, it seems that both Western and Eastern critics have lost sight of the context of Jones' translation and view it in light of the strong nineteenth-century imperialist atmosphere that followed Jones' translations and from their perspective, Jones is nothing more than an Imperialist translator who portrayed the Easter Other as backward.

For many, however, this question has remained unanswered: Is Jones really a bad Orientalist? Mohapatra (2003, p. 11) answers this question through a negotiation between Jones and Said, arguing that Said gives us one side of the story about the Orientalist enterprise of Jones and many others, and this story cannot be complete without asking the following questions:

> Why did the Europeans—and Jones in this case—turn to the classical Orient in the first place? […] What were the individual compulsions and private desires of the Orientalists? Were they mere mechanical agents of the great imperial machine, bound to its magisterial logic, and not human beings capable of apolitical volition, predilections and urges? (Mohaparta, 2003, p. 11)

These questions are articulations of the second question posed here in a different language, i.e., is Jones' framing as an Orientalist in the service of imperialism sound? To answer this question, this study seeks to contextualize Jones' translation of 'Turk-e Shirazi' historically and textually in terms of his conceptualizations of Oriental literature, particularly Persian literature, as expressed in *Poems Consisting Chiefly of Translations from the Asiatic Languages*. This will hopefully paint a picture of Jones as an agent or as a 'human being capable of apolitical volition,' (Mohapatra, 2003, p. 11). Consideration will also be given to Jones' domesticating translation method to determine whether or not the changes made are based on biases related to imperialism. Also, Jones' translation enterprise is considered from Chittiphalangsri's (2014) perspective, which focuses on a contextualized and agent-driven conceptualization of Oriental translation.

Jones Translation Enterprise: A Reflection of a Virtualized or Otherized Oriental Practice?

Virtuality in Oriental translation is formulated to address the polarity problem inherent in the dichotomy of domestication and foreignization of translation, which amounts to ignoring the fact that translation necessarily takes place in different historical, cultural, and ideological contexts and ignores the circumstances of the agent (Chittiphalangsri, 2014). In this context, it is argued that textual modification is not sufficient to proclaim Oriental translations as acts of subjugation of the native, as there is a division between strategy and effect, and a foreignized translation does not guarantee the reception of the translation. Moreover, a foreignized text realized through literalism makes the texts difficult to read and 'signals a need for Orientalist commentators whose presence would facilitate reading for non-professional readers,' but presents the Orient as an entity for which Western experts must speak (ibid.). On this basis, domesticating translations are virtualized translations because they can represent the virtues or potentialities of the original through the mediating agency of translators who decide whether and how a translation is 'sufficient' to be recognized as a legitimate representation of the original. In other words, the Orientalist translator decides how much of the literary repertoire is sufficient for his audience to achieve his goals. This is achieved through the mechanism of 'virtualization,' which refers to a broader cultural negotiation that cannot be limited to an act of literalism or distortion, and it is a mechanism for justifying the Orientalist's position in representing the Oriental material (ibid, Pp. 56–57). Chittiphalangsri adds that the effect of virtualization must be recognized by the participating users for it to be successful, and that the effectiveness of virtualization depends strategically on whether the translation is seen as having the potential to replace the original (ibid., p. 59). In this process, the paratext acts as a technology through which virtuality takes a concrete form and creates the illusion of reading the original through the presence of the text printed in foreign characters.

Here, an attempt is made to look at Jones' translation of 'Turk-e Shirazi' in terms of virtuality in Oriental translations and to shed light on the implications of Jones' domestication method to see whether or not the perception of this Orientalist as an imperialist is justified. In this context, both textual and contextual analysis of Jones' translation were brought to the fore as follows.

اگر آن ترک شیرازی به دست آرد دل ما را   به خال هندویش بخشم سمرقند و بخارا را

Sweet maid, if thou wouldst charm my sight
And bid these arms thy neck infole
That rosy cheek, that lily hand
Would give thy poet more delight
Than all Bokhara' vaunted gold,
Than all the gems of Samarcand

بده ساقی می باقی که در جنت نخواهی یافت   کنار آب رُکن‌آباد و گُلگَشت مُصَلّا را

Boy, let yon liquid ruby flow,
And bid thy pensive heart be glad,
Whate'er the frowning zealots say:
Tell them, their Eden cannot show
A stream so clear as Rocnabad,
A bower so sweet as Mosellay

فَغان کاین لولیانِ شوخِ شیرین‌کارِ شهرآشوب   چنان بردند صبر از دل که تُرکان خوانِ یغما را

O! when these fair perfidious maids,
Whose eyes our secret haunts infest,
Their dear destructive charms display;
Each glance my tender breast invades,
And robs my wounded soul of rest,
As tartars seize their destined preys

ز عشق ناتمام ما جمال یار مستغنی است   به آب و رنگ و خال و خط چه حاجت روی زیبا را

In vain with love our bosoms glow:
Can all our tears, can all our sighs,
New luster to those charms impart?
Can cheeks, where living roses blow,
Where nature spreads her richest dyes,
Require the borrowed gloss of art

من از آن حسن روزافزون که یوسف داشت دانستم   که عشق از پردهٔ عصمت برون آرد زلیخا را

Beauty has such resistless power,

That even the chaste Egyptian dame
Sighed for the blooming Hebrew boy;
For her how fatal was the hour,
Where nature spreads her richest dyes,
A youth so lovely and so coy!

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جواب تلخ می‌زیبد، لب لعل شکرخا را   اگر دشنام فرمایی و گر نفرین، دعا گویم

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What cruel answer have I heard
And yet, by heaven, I love thee still:
Can aught be cruel from thy lip?
Yet say, how fell that bitter word from lips
which streams of sweetness
fills Which naught but drops of honey sip

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جوانان سعادتمند پند پیر دانا را   نصیحت گوش کن جانا که از جان دوست‌تر دارند

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But ah! Sweet maid, my counsel hear
(youth should attend when those advise
Whom long experience renders sage):
While music charms the ravish'd ear;
While sparkling cups delight our eyes,
Be gay; and scorn the frowns of age

<div dir="rtl">

که کس نگشود و نگشاید به حکمت این معما را   حدیث از مطرب و می گو و راز دَهر کمتر جو

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Speak not of fate:--ah! Change the theme,
And talk of odours, talk of wine,
Talk of the flowers that round us bloom:
'Tis all a cloud, 'tis all a dream;
To love and joy thy thoughts confine,
Nor hope to pierce the sacred gloom

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که بر نظم تو افشاند فلک عِقد ثریا را   غزل گفتی و دُر سفتی، بیا و خوش بخوان حافظ

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Go boldly forth, my simple lay,
Whose accents flow with artless ease,
Like orient pearls at random strung:
Thy notes are sweet, the damsels say;
But O! Far sweeter, if they please
Thy nymph for whom these notes are sung

This translation, which has been criticized by both Easterners and Westerners for various reasons, most notably the notion that it is not Eastern

because it has been Westernized or filtered through imperialist prejudices, has also been analyzed by some scholars, such as Arberry (1946), within the broader framework of English literary and translation traditions, who has attempted to elucidate the reasons for the transformations made by Jones. Against this background, Anushirvani and Atashi (2012, p. 44) criticized the substitution of the English octosyllabic rhyme for the original prosodic pattern as a free reworking of the Oriental source and an appropriation of the original for Western readers. While, Arberry (1946, pp. 700–701) discussed this in light of the unsuccessful efforts to imitate the Persian rhythmic pattern by Leaf and John which culminated in 'tiresome literary antics and 'a mirthless buffoonery of verse'.Arberry (1946, pp. 700–701) added that such transformations are inevitable because English is a language poverty-stricken in rhymes, while Persian is wealthy in them. This can also be seen in the light of Jones' explanatory essay on *A Persian Song*, in which he explains (1777, p. 181) that the sweetness of the sounds and the smoothness of the music are tied to the language, and their imitation appears very harsh to Western eyes. This rationale is in line with what Chittiphalangsri (2014) explains as the mediating position of Orientalists as necessary for authorizing an acceptable version of the Orient by the West.

As for the length of the translation, Anushirvani and Atashi (2012, p. 56) interpret the addition of lines to the *Persian Song* as Jones' misunderstanding or his deliberate manipulation of Hafiz's words. However, Arberry (ibid., p. 701) argues that in poetry translation, the ideal is for the version to contain exactly as many lines as the original, but in the case of Persian poetry, any such condensation is futile. This is because the strangeness of Persian figures often requires expansion. Moreover, Jones lived in the second half of the 18th century, when, according to the taste of his time, elegant prolixity was preferred to concision (ibid.). The peculiarity of figurative language in the case of each nation, (Jones, 1777, pp. 183 & 178), can be seen as the reason for the expansion strategy Jones chose, and it seems that

Jones considered the original length insufficient for the eighteenth-century English audience, which preferred prolixity to brevity.

According to Anushirvani and Atashi (2012, 56), another blameworthy aspect of the Jones translation is the deletion of proper names, which removed the identity of people such as Hafiz and made the translation smooth. Nevertheless, this change is the one for which Jones (in Yohannan, 1952, p. 148) asks his readers to forgive him, writing that: 'the reader will excuse the measure I have used, if he considers the difficulty of bringing so many Eastern proper names into our stanzas. I have endeavored [...] to give my translation the easy turn of the original'. Meanwhile, Hafiz's proper name was inserted into the title of Jones' translation as *A Persian Song by Hafiz*, so the erasure of Hafiz's identity may not have been logically intended. Moreover, Jones' explanations on translation of Eastern proper names may reflect his activist role as an agent whose decisions were not informed by imperialist whims. Rather, they were based on his own perception of the translation.

With regard to the above-mentioned changes in the 'Turk-e Shirazi' ghazal, it can be concluded that the Jones translation is a highly domesticated and also a virtual oriental translation, but not an orientalizing translation. For both a textual and a contextual analysis of this translation in light of the translation strategies employed and the sociocultural ambience of the eighteenth century reveal that many of the changes made by Jones served the needs of his audience rather than an imperialist power or out of disrespect for the literary status of Hafiz. As a virtual translation, it leans toward prolixity, following familiar prosodic patterns and omitting some Eastern proper names that seem odd to English audiences. He does, however, attempt to signal the poem's Eastern origin through the insertion of paratext in various forms, such as the insertion of the transliterated version of the Persian poem into the English translation, signaling the unfamiliarity of the original,

as well as adding an extended essay foregrounding his conceptualizations of the Oriental. In this essay, he portrays Persian poets as litterateurs who have nothing less than Shakespeare, Homer, and Anacreon, and whose poems are a remedy for the exhaustion of old themes, images, and forms in English poetry and can rejuvenate Western poetry by offering new images (ibid, 142). This essay, as well as Jones' translation preface, show that his translation enterprise is far from an imperialist act to Otherize Hafiz through Western stereotypes and prejudices. Instead, he asserts that many European poets, in terms of the similarity of Asiatic poems to those of Europeans, seem to be writing in the true spirit of Eastern poets, especially in cases such as Petrarch (Jones preface to Poems consisting chiefly of translations from Asiatic languages, 1777, xi-xii). He adds that novelty of Asiatic poems translated by him can recommend to the European readers that there are many other poets of equal and superior merit to the European poets whom have never appeared in European languages (ibid, xiii, xiv). Free from any Imperialistic and colonial positioning, Jones also attempted to reply to criticisms made of Persian poets for overusing metaphors and allusion using sun and moon and pointed to peculiarity of poetic language for ever nation due to their specific history, manners and climate and adds that this originate from their old languages and religions and are no less void of meaning than those of Europeans' (ibid, 178). For Jones, Persian literature is among the softest and richest due to delicacy of Persians' lives which affected their language and sentiments (ibid). This can be traced in the preface written to other works of Jones including *A Grammar of the Persian Language* where he translated many Persian poems into Persian and used the following expressions on the title page, as well:

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«کتاب شکرستان در صرف و نحو پارسی»

چو عندلیب فصاحت فروشد ای حافظ   تو قدر او به سخن گفتن دری بشکن

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Here, Jones (1777, p. xiii) emphasizes that the 'civil and natural history of such mighty empires as India, Persia, etc. cannot fail delighting those who love to view the great picture of the universe', and 'the man of taste will undoubtedly please to unlock the stores of native genius, and to gather the flowers of unrestrained and luxuriant fancy'.

The above conceptualization of Persian literature stands far different from those conceptions held by other Orientalists especially the 19th century ones such as Fitzgerald. Because, Orientalism was not a discourse of domination during the second half of the eighteenth-century and cultural attitudes were "Orientalist" (eastward-facing) rather than "Anglicist" (westward-facing), (Ehrlich, 2018, p. 15) words. However, during the nineteenth century, Orientalism was so strongly associated with prejudices that Fitzgerald wrote: 'I am more and more convinced that keeping the Oriental form is necessary, […] It is better to be Orientally obscure than Europeanly clear', (Arberry, 1956, p.20). Premised on such polaristic conceptions, Fitzgerald's translation of Rubaiyat is believed to 'reflect the hubris of imperial Britain, reinforcing the imperialistic prejudices and bolstering imperialistic aims, (Drudry, 2008, p.37), although it managed to introduce Rubayi to European readers through fidelity to the form of Khayyam poems. Accordingly, Fitzgerald's translation can be assumed as an Otherizing oriental translation built upon a belief on inherent superiority of Europeans, while, Jones translation, still being a domesticating one, is a virtual oriental translation which established a justifiable translation with sufficient potentials to replace the original. Further evidence for this is Arberry's (1946, p. 699) view of *A Persian Song* saying that: 'of the various important contributions made by Jones to the initiation and development of Persian studies in Europe, none was more felicitous or more far-reaching, than his early labors with the lyrics of Hafiz; and none bore sweeter fruit than his making of the immortal *Shirazi Turk* into *A Persian Song.*'

Conclusion

Jones translation of 'Turk-e Shirazi' ghazal as a domesticated one has been criticized for representing a Westernized version and censured as an oriental translation which authenticated the European superiority through transformations made in this translation. However, it appears that such a positioning is taken through a decontextualized analysis of this translation which has given priority to the textual analysis of this translation at the cost of ignoring Jones as an agent or losing sight of the paratext provided by him or even the sociocultural milieu dominating his translation. While, a contextual analysis of his translation can reveal its potentials as a virtual oriental translation, rather than an Otherizing one. Because, in spite of domesticating the ghazal, Jones did not distort the image of the orient and persistently emphasized on the Oriental literary prestige and its comparability with the European canonical texts and transformations made by him has been justified in the light of literary and translation traditions of his time. Accordingly, he can be reframed as a virtual oriental translation rather than an Otherizing one in the service of 18th-century English readers.

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