

The Aesthetic-Poetic Translation Analysis on *The Moon is High*

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Abstract

As several studies emerge analysing some literary work translation, there is lack of study focusing on such translation with certain point of view. This study then exists with the aim to qualitatively analyse Toety Heraty's poetry entitled 'The Moon is High' translated by Carole Satyamurti, a British poet, with the aesthetic-poetic view. As the findings, it is concluded that, even though the translator employs some literal translations, but more often she implements aesthetic-poetic translation method to replicate the poetry along with retaining the poetic nuance from the word choices. However, it will be a challenge for whoever translating literary work with aesthetic-poetic translation method, since the transfer of the message will not only demand the lexical equivalence, but also the similar 'beauty' of the work.

Keywords: aesthetic-poetic translation, poetry, toety heraty, carole satyamurti, the moon is high

Introduction

Different from other texts, poetry has something to do with the beauty of message delivery. Although, in one hand, sometimes poetry does not follow the rule of forming a well-structured text, it also, on the other hand can be very aesthetically written, even by considering good rhyme. Besides, a poetry often conveys multi-interpretations which are designed to satiate the readers in the name of art. These appear for a poetry often uses stylistic figures of speech which do not express explicit meanings.

The absence of guidance or border to seal the core message of a poetry incommodes translators while transferring message of a poetry from source language to target language. Moreover, the shortcoming in poetry translation is not only finding the parallelism in words, but also in the beauty, rhyme, and so on. Unlike an ordinary text which is simply translated in one single way in focusing only on word parallelism, a poetry can only be translated using proper dictions right after some 'meditation' to find the implied meaning is completed. Liu in Zhang (2012: 298) highlights that even in two related languages, a poetry translation cannot be fully obtained. This gets more challenging while a translator has to do a



job with two disparate languages. Moreover, other several factors also affect the agent to render the original text to target text ranging from ideology, poetics, up to patronage (Levefere in Shuping, 2013). An example shifted from James Legge who was a Scottish missionary and a translator. As a missionary who was also aided financially by London Missionary Society, he once used the framework of Christian to transfer the Ancient Chinese religious belief in his translations (Wang and Huang, 2016). It obviously represents the patronage manipulation in a translation work. In addition, a case study was brought by Naghmeh-Abbaspour, Mahadi and Zulkali (2021) revealing ideological manipulation portrayed in the translator's comments of Rumi's poetry translation, proving that ideology plays a prominent part to consider by a translator to work: whether the original text implies a principle accepted by the target readers or irritate them.

Since literary work translation, especially poetry, is not as easy as eating a piece of pie, several related studies emerge to help the readers understand the art of literary work translation. Raharjo (2018), Dastjerdi, Hakimshafaaii, and Jannesaari (2008), Astuti, et al. (2018), Prafitasari, Nababan, and Santosa (2019), and Febriyani, Rohayani, and Syafradin (2020) similarly investigate the techniques used in translated poetry compared to the original one. Having similar focus, Saleh and Weda (2018) study the poetry translation results from Indonesia's English Department students and lecturers. At the end of their analysis, they highlight the importance of literary sensitivity in translating literary work, implying that poetry translation is much beyond the literal translation since it needs art. Jiayu and Yuyan (2022) have different way in studying translation work by having comparative analysis on two versions of translated poetry from two different translators. The study then explores the similarities and differences in both writings and connect them with the translators' styles and identities.

This study, filling in a gap from the aforementioned related references, tries to learn the poetry translation through aesthetic-poetic translation view. Sin-wai (2004: 7) describes it as a translation method proposed by Joseph B. Casagrande which refers to the retention of the expressive and stylistic features of the original in poetry translation. This kind of translation method is frequently dissimilar to literal translation which pays attention on three points: identical word order, one-to-one correspondence of items between both source and target texts, and the limitation of translated form (Schaeffer and Carl, 2014: 29-30). Specifically, Brislin via Indriyani (2012: 40) argues that the translator should focus on the emotion, feeling, and beauty of the poetry, without neglecting the importance of the information, although it is not an easy thing to do (Astuti, Rahmat, Hidayat, and Adiansha, 2019: 66). Moreover, using more sophisticated terms, Shuttleworth and Cowie (2014) emphasize the translator's work to keep the atmosphere of rhyme, meter or metaphor used by the writer previously.

For the implementation of the study, Toety Heraty's poetry entitled *The Moon is High* will be scrutinized. Initially, the poetry is in Bahasa Indonesia and is translated into English by Carole Satyamurti. Toety is an outstanding Indonesian female poet whose poetries had been translated into several languages one of which is English (Rahamad and Damono, 2014). Then, her poet translator, Carole Satyamurti, is a British poet as well who started her soaring poetic life after winning the national poetry competition and some related awards (Sampson, 2020). The next



section brings the readers to the analysis of translating a poetry through aesthetic-poetic way. The analysis pays attention on the translation kind implementation; it is about how the translator renders the information, as well as the comparison and the contrast between both versions from the same poetry.

Method

This study applies qualitative approach. Stated by Yilmaz (2013: 312), this is inductive and interpretive to give descriptive terms as a result. First, the data were collected through taking notes technique in the perspective of library research concerning on both version of poems. Second, after collecting the data, they were analyzed through hermeneutic approach concerning on interpretation toward every single word of the poem. Third, both versions of the poems were compared to gain the same interpretation between Bahasa Indonesia and English versions. Every single difference found in those versions was noted and checked into categorization. Forth, as the realization, some descriptive analyses are made after comparing Toety Heraty's original poetry entitled *The Moon is High* with the English version of it by Carole Satyamurti using the analysis of aesthetic-poetic translation view. The analyses cover whether this kind of translation is beautifully depicted in the translated poetry or not. The analysis covered the use of dictions, equivalence of the meaning, and the essence of interpretation of every single word. The authors used several translation approaches to gain the essence and equivalence of the meaning. The last, conclusion were drawn to picture the essence of the poems' values.

Findings and Discussions

To start with, the original version of Toety Heraty's poem entitled *The Moon Is High* and its translation by Carole Satyamurti are provided below:

- (1) *The Moon Is High*
- 1 Bulan tinggi di langit
Ini kali bukan bulan sabit
di pulau Gilimeno, di pasir pantai
di seberang pengalaman, tangan
- 5 yang luput menggapai
- Bulan tinggi di langit
memang putih bulat genderang
bertalu, bercak perak cemerlang
cemara berderap, ombak berderai
- 10 nafsu hidup, cinta makna
keping-keping yang perlu
dirangkai
- Bulan tinggi di langit
madu Sumbawa di Mataram!
- 15 tanya-jawab menyentuh sengit
bulan madu yang geram



dalam senandung kesenjangan
 bila tivi sudah mati, percakapan
 terhenti, bila perahu sudah karam

- 20 Ini kali kau memang mahir
 mengulur tali tambang penyelamat
 dari pulau ke pulau, aku
 tenggelam belum, terapung tidak
 tanpa jangkar tertambat
- 25 Bulan sihir membelai
 properti Melbourne & Sydney di atas pantai
 menopang pendopo dengan bugenvil
 alang-alang dan puring, cemas roboh
 sebelum naskah selesai
- 30 karena usia diterpa badai

Bulan tinggi di langit
 terang benderang seperti gemerincing
 bunyi mata uang asing, menyebar
 karang tercemar dan mimpi turis petualang
 bulan madu, lirik lagu dan sisa melodi

- 36 dicari dan nyaris ketemu

taken from Selendang Pelangi: Antologi Puisi 17 Perempuan Penyair Indonesia
 (Heraty, 2006: 89-90)

(2) ***The Moon Is High***

- 1 The moon is high
 Not a crescent this time.
 On Gilimeno island, on the sandy beach,
 it glides beyond experience
- 5 beyond the reach of my hand.

- The moon is high
 Pale and round, the drum
 Beats, speckled silver-bright.
 The casuarinas dance, the waves lash out;
- 10 The passion of life, love, their meaning
 Pages that need
 To be sorted.

- The moon is high.
 Honey from Sumbawa in Mataram!
- 15 Questions and answers are a bitterness -
 An angry honey moon
 Very late, a distant, intermittent hum



After the TV has been switched off, and conversation
Has died down; after the boats have foundered.

20 This time you have mastered the skill
Of throwing the safety rope
From island to island.
I have not yet drowned, I have not drifted
Even though I have no anchor.

25 A bewitching moon beckons
Melbourne and Sidney-style property on the beach
Verandas draped with bougainvillea
Tall grasses and crotons will collapse in fear
Battered by storms

30 Before this manuscript, this life story
Has reached its final age.

The moon is high
Clear as the tinkle of a bell
The sound of foreign cash spreads
35 The corals are desecrated, and the tourist's dream.

Wanderer, honey moon,
Lyrics of a song, fragments of a tune

38 Searched for and nearly found.

taken from <http://www.poetrytranslation.org/poems/the-moon-is-high>

In the initial analysis, it is noted that there is a difference number of lines in both poem versions. The English version, which comprises 38 lines, is a little bit longer than the original one, which has only 36 lines. There is an assumption of the phenomenon, claiming that the translator wants to elaborate the essence of source text in order to make the readers have more clear understanding. The fifth verse can exemplify the aforementioned statement. The fifth and the last lines in the original text are prolonged into three lines. Similarly, it also occurs in the last verse. In the original text, there are only 6 lines. However, the translator breaks down the fifth line into two interconnected lines.

Moving from number, the analysis now focuses on how the translator conveys the message of the poem without neglecting the beauty of poetic aura. To start with, there is something interesting to discuss where the title of the poem is not altered since the original title has been in English. This makes translators do their job easier. Besides title, there is elaborative discussion in relation to the verses in the poem. In the first verse, it seems that the writer only gives two sentences from the two initial lines in which the second one has numerous adverbial phrases. Differently, the translator treats the second line not as the sentence. Rather, she changes the function of the second line as the additional noun phrase explaining the first one. Regardless the functions of each line, the translated version can be regarded to be convincing since the messages are not translated freely, even distortedly. It can be clearly seen through the second and third lines, for instance, which are translated literally. The



first line is translated well, although the words *di langit* are omitted in the translation. It might be tolerable as the moon is always in the sky. It can be assumed, then, that the message is still conveyed when the place of the moon is not stated explicitly.

Apart from that, the translator seems to make all the messages unconcealed by adding pronoun *it* referring to the moon, though it is not written in the original text. Besides, Satyamurti prefers writing down *di seberang pengalaman* as *it glides beyond experience* although the original one only depicts the place without any other parts of speech to form a sentence, as portrayed in the target text. The choice of *glides* is still closely related to the activities in the sky, which is the place for moon itself as the actor of the verse. It does also highlight the flexibility of poetic diction representing something that is very scientific. In fact, previously the translator only writes down two lines not even in sentences, but in parts of sentence like adverb or noun phrase. But then, how she decides to change her mind on the third line is assumed to beautify the text and to keep the focus of the readers on the what to discuss in the verse. Satyamurti also adds the word *my* in the translated version even though it is not written in original one. Obviously, this decision is successful in specifying the meaning of the poem. The more thorough display is given below:

Table 1. First Verse Translation

Verse	Original	Translated
1	<i>Bulan tinggi di langit Ini kali bukan bulan sabit di pulau Gilimeno, di pasir pantai di seberang pengalaman, tangan yang luput menggapai</i>	The moon is high Not a crescent this time. On Gilimeno island, on the sandy beach, it glides beyond experience beyond the reach of my hand.

The second verse is also stunningly rendered. Although both the original and the translated poetries are not rhymed like *pantun*, the translated poetry still keeps the way the original one sings, indeed. From Table 2, it can be seen that the translator does not play with literal translation, though the option to repeat the initially translated first line of the verse is maintained. There are some alterations of words emerging. Firstly, the word *putih* is changed into *pale*. The writer of the poetry actually wants to describe the color of the moon; it is white. However, the translator decides to choose pale rather than white itself. However, it is still not too far from the original word, since there is common sense that pale is equivalent with white. The second one, Satyamurti chooses to use *dance* instead of the literal translated word such as *trot* or *gallop* to equivalently render the word *berderap*. In the same line, additionally, she prefers using *lash out* to find a connection, often called as thesaurus in a dictionary, with the *wave* itself. In contrast, Heraty originally writes down the *berderai* which can be literally translated into *drizzle*. However, it cannot be linked well to the noun phrases *the waves* eventually. The third alteration happens with the word *keping-keping* that, in English, are known as *pieces*. Yet, the translator alters the word in the source text with *pages* with the



ending *to be sorted*. Here, the use of *pages*, though are not literally representing the original words, are still in the same nuance when merged with the words *to be sorted*. All of the choices, finally, still present the aesthetics of the poetry.

Table 2. Second Verse Translation

Verse	Original	Translated
2	<i>Bulan tinggi di langit memang putih bulat genderang bertalu, bercak perak cemerlang cemara berderap, ombak berderai nafsu hidup, cinta makna keping-keping yang perlu dirangkai</i>	The moon is high Pale and round, the drum Beats, speckled silver-bright. The casuarinas dance, the waves lash out; The passion of life, love, their meaning Pages that need To be sorted

In relation to the third verse, all translated words are set as naturally as possible, but not with the third line. If the words *tanya-jawab menyentuh sengit* undergo literal translation, these will be *questions and answers touch the bitterness*. Nevertheless, the translator prefers erasing the word *touch* and replacing it with a linking verb, as written below. Again, the words *dalam senandung kesenjangan* are translated into *very late, a distant, intermittent hum*. The original words actually might be rendered as *in hum of discrepancy*. Here, there is different way of the translator in the replacing *discrepancy* as bulks of adjective like *very late, distant, and intermittent*, though the second word still has relation. It is also happening in the word choice of *after* to translate *bila* which is meant as *when* or *as*. Still, the preference used does not give great change in the meaning. Instead, it keeps supporting the beauty of the writing. Moreover, it is translator's duty, indulging aesthetic translation postulates, to create the translated poetry as poetry. This implies that the translator needs to think about both the most appropriate and the most beautiful words used for poetry without losing their elegance.

Table 3. Third Verse Translation

Verse	Original	Translated
3	<i>Bulan tinggi di langit madu Sumbawa di Mataram! tanya-jawab menyentuh sengit bulan madu yang geram dalam senandung kesenjangan bila tivi sudah mati, percakapan terhenti, bila perahu sudah karam</i>	The moon is high. Honey from Sumbawa in Mataram! Questions and answers are a bitterness - An angry honey moon Very late, a distant, intermittent hum After the TV has been switched off, and conversation Has died down; after the boats have foundered.



Finding the most equivalent words are also proven by the translator from the fourth verse she makes. The word *mahir* which is *skillful* in English is transferred to *mastered the skill*. The change of parts of speech from adjective to verb, in fact, does not change the core of the meaning. In contrast, the translator amplifies the meaning by giving more words to represent one word in the source text. Besides, there is also different punctuation in the third line and the more improved delivery of the fourth line words. There is a use of full stop instead of comma in the third line. This, again, is done to make the readers get more enlightenment of yielding the gist of the text without getting blundered with run-on sentences. Moreover, the words *aku tenggelam belum, terapung tidak* could be translated into *I have neither drowned nor drifted*. In fact, the translator chooses to repeat the use of *I have not* for strengthening the smell of poetry. The last finding is on the words *tanpa jangkar tertambat* which could be simply rendered to *without any tied anchor*. Yet, the translator adds the conjunction *even though* to strengthen the core of the poem since it is already in the last line with some commas there. Here, she also removes the word *tertambat* (*tied*). It can be forgiven since it only completes the word *anchor*. However, without any existence of *tied* itself, every reader has known that there is no anchor, even the tied one around the subject in the text.

Table 4. Fourth Verse Translation

Verse	Original	Translated
4	<i>Ini kali kau memang mahir mengulur tali tambang penyelamat dari pulau ke pulau, aku tenggelam belum, terapung tidak tanpa jangkar tertambat</i>	This time you have mastered the skill Of throwing the safety rope From island to island. I have not yet drowned, I have not drifted Even though I have no anchor.

The translator starts to wilder in interpreting the fifth verse. As mentioned earlier, there are two verses in which their lines have been added: fifth and sixth verses. This becomes a signal that the translator wants to do elaboration. The verse not only has different line number, but also different translation. It can be initially evaluated from the word *membelai* in the first line. If that word is translated innocently, it becomes *caress* or *stroke*. Nonetheless, the translator translates the word into *beckon*. As a matter of fact, *beckon* is less likely to be similar with *caress*. In Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (3rd ed.), *beckon* has several meanings like (1) to move your hand or head in a way that tells someone to come nearer, (2) to attract, or (3) to be likely to happen. From those options, there is no one which is similar to the meaning of *caress* or *stroke*. Yet, the word selected will be valid if the translator thinks through the underlying meaning interpretation, not the explicit words, to provide the translated version. Then, the word *menopang pendopo* is translated aesthetically with *verandas draped*. The word *menopang* in English is equal with *prop*, *support*, or *sustain*. In contrast, the translator chooses not to use those common words. Instead, she applies *draped* which has synonym of *decorated*: such beautiful picked equivalence in beauty of poetry.



Following that, there is also distinction in ordering the message. Instead of placing the fifth and sixth lines in the same lines, the translator switches the line order, even adds one more line to ornate the message. From the following table, it can be seen that *battered by storms* which is the rendered version of *diterpa badai*, is placed much earlier. It can also be accepted, when the translator interprets that the objects battered by storms are tall grasses and crotons. But, from the original text, it seems that the multiple interpretations might occur, as the objects might be either the tall grasses and crotons or the manuscript. It is, finally, the translator's choice to interpret, because one privilege of poetry interpreter is the freedom of interpretation without being judged as true or false. All the fifth verse discussions can be understood clearly in the following table:

Table 5. Fifth Verse Translation

Verse	Original	Translated
5	<i>Bulan sahir membelai properti Melbourne & Sydney di atas pantai menopang pendopo dengan bugenvil alang-alang dan puring, cemas roboh sebelum naskah selesai karena usia diterpa badai</i>	A bewitching moon beckons Melbourne and Sidney-style property on the beach Verandas draped with bougainvillea Tall grasses and crotons will collapse in fear Battered by storms Before this manuscript, this life story Has reached its final age.

The last but not the least, the sixth verse is also interesting to discuss. To start with, there is a suspension of the translated word of *gemerincing*. In English, the word can be simply translated as *tinkle* or *tinkling*. Yet, the author suspends the word into *tinkle of a bell*. It might be assumed that the translator wants to explicitly state the equivalent word. The next is about the fuzziness of the fourth line in the translated text. The sentence is not completely built, especially in structuring the one which has *and* as its conjunction. It is known that the words before and after *and* should be balanced in terms of the word class or linguistic unit. In fact, the implementation is different in the translated version; there are a clause clashed with noun phrase. Moreover, the noun phrase *mimpi turis petualang* is broken down into two different nouns, even separated with full stop instead of comma. This indicates the translator's assumption that both do not have much relation. Still, the translated version keeps the beauty of poetry, bringing the readers to catch the essence of the original poetry thoroughly.

Table 6. Sixth Verse Translation

Verse	Original	Translated
6	<i>Bulan tinggi di langit terang benderang seperti gemerincing</i>	The moon is high Clear as the tinkle of a bell The sound of foreign cash spreads



<i>bunyi mata uang asing, menyebar karang tercemar dan mimpi turis petualang bulan madu, lirik lagu dan sisa melodi dicari dan nyaris ketemu</i>	The corals are desecrated, and the tourist's dream. Wanderer, honey moon, Lyrics of a song, fragments of a tune Searched for and nearly found.
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From all of the above-mentioned analyses, it can be settled that a poetry is not the same as the common text that is easily translated. Many common texts deliver their meanings explicitly. This fact makes the translators only have burdens in literally restructuring and re-expressing the meanings from source language to target language. However, this does not easily happen in translating literary work like poems which tend to have hidden meanings. For a translator, there is huge responsibility to maintain the beauty of the text itself besides merely finding the lexical equivalence. Sometimes, a translator should transform himself to be a poet to dive into the real meaning of the poetry first since many of these art writings are bias in meaning. Additionally, Jakobson in Rahimkhani and Salmani (2013: 781) highlight that poetry cannot be translated to support that this literary work has pros and contras in the translation as it is implicit and not limited to the certain meaning.

In the case of *The Moon is High*, it can be seen that the translator who is also a poet, Carole Satyamurti, has applied several techniques to keep the translation aesthetic-poetic. Sometimes she does literal translation without playing any new words. But, more often she picks her own dictions to keep the beauty of the poetry itself. This finding is related to Brislin's statement via Indriyani (2012: 40) saying that the translator should focus on the emotion, feeling, and beauty of the poetry, without neglecting the importance of the information. It should not be a difficult thing for Satyamurti, who had dedicated herself to poetry for a long time, to transfer the form and meaning of a poetry from Indonesian to English since English is her mother tongue. The mere challenge is the interpretation of the poetry that should be like the original one. However, from her translation writing, it can be clinched that the beauty of the words is kept with the closely translated meanings. In contrast to the findings of this study, Saleh and Weda (2018: 62) describe their research on the appraisal of translation procedures in poetry by students and lecturers from Indonesia's English Department. Despite passing the English semantics and syntax, the subjects could not satisfy the 'soul' of the poetry lexical item formation since they are not poets. Implying Saleh and Weda's research result and recommendation, in conclusion, Satyamurti's literary sensibility has been amplified. Many people can translate text if they have skills in speaking multi languages. Furthermore, translation engines or applications are indeed existing to complete the need of fast translation without much effort. However, those people even engines could not be easily counted on to insert the art sense in translating literary work. Only people who have passion, skill, and experience in literary world who can suffice this, and Satyamurti is one of the examples.

Conclusion

Working with literary writings is always challenging and interesting, especially in the translation. Different with other types of translation, the aesthetic-poetic



translation is highlighted to be the best way in finding the most equivalent form of literary work translation since it deals with not only the information, but also with the poetry delivery framework thereof. Hence, from Toety Heraty's poetry translation, the translator devotes her thought to replicate the poetry without making its poetic breath disappear. However, the translation of literary work sometimes could not be as immersive as the original text for the demand for literary sensitivity. In this case, Satyamurti, who is also a poet as Toety Heraty proves her capacity to render the soul of the poetry in different language. As suggestions, it is preferable for whoever wants to translate the literary work to consult with the writer firstly. The consultation is needed to bring both the writer and the translator under the same perception or interpretation of 'reading' the poetry. Then, for the researchers, it is recommended to conduct similar studies analyzing literary work with other specific translation method point of view.

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