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AESTHETIC RESPONSE TO THE TRANSLATION – MODERN INTERPRETATIONS

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Abstract

Nowadays, Translation is the most emerging area of presenting and exposing the ideas of one language to the other. Actually it is not new in Western or Eastern Literature and Languages. It is named differently at different places like translation, transcreation, transference, and co-creation and so on. Translation is not only appreciation and interpretation in a postcolonial situation but a means of empowerment. Post colonial societies accommodate multiple identities. One can express multiple thoughts individually with different tones. At the present juncture, world needs Translation of all the literature into target language and vis-versa. Generally, the theory of Translation proposes that a translated text should be evaluated basing on the independent status it reflects in the target language and also its impact on the target culture. The Post Colonial Translation has two interdependent aspects i.e. translation of world literature into the Regional Literature and translations from Regional Literature to World literature. I would like to present at the beginning of my article titled “**Aesthetic Response to the Translation – Modern Interpretations**” the origin of practice of Translation from the beginning to 20th century in a bird’s eye view. Later I switch on to the various theories of translation practiced by scholars through different ages to the modern times. I conclude certain notions in practice while translation and their modern interpretations with the theory of aesthetic response to the translation.

Key words: Translation, Literature, SL, TL, Post Colonial Translation, World, regional literature, Theory, Practice and Interpretations.

1. Aesthetic Response to the Translation – Modern Interpretations

Translation is the most emerging discipline in the world literature. It is named differently at different places like translation, transcreation, transference, and co-creation and so on. Translation is not only appreciation and interpretation in a postcolonial situation but a means of empowerment. Post colonial societies accommodate multiple identities. Nowadays, a single individual could proclaim different loyalties

and associations. At the present juncture, world needs Translation of all the literature into target language and vis-versa. Generally, the theory of Translation proposes that a translated text should be evaluated basing on the independent status it reflects in the target language and also its impact on the target culture. It is observed by the scholars that the translated text is a success if it is able to produce a strong aesthetic response in the minds of its readers and provides them with a sense of the source culture. The Post Colonial Translation has two interdependent aspects i.e. translation of world literature into the Regional Literature and translations from Regional Literature to World literature. Our article titled “Aesthetic Response to the Translation – Modern Interpretations focuses

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on the origin of practice of Translation from the beginning to 20th century. It also throws light on the various theories of translation practiced by scholars through different ages to the modern times. Finally I conclude certain notions in practice while translation and their modern interpretations with the theory of aesthetic response to the translation.

Encyclopedia Americana States that “this art is as old as written language”¹. Emperor Sargoan of Assyria made proclamations of his adventures in the Assyrian Language were translated into many languages. It was in 2100 B C the rulers of Babylon encouraged translations. After having thorough discussions among scholars the Rossetta stone writing of 200 BC is regarded as the most important model of ancient translation. In this text Egyptian language is translated into Greek using Grecian script. Ancient Romans contributed greatly to translations in the later period. Around 240BC Andronicus translated *the Odyssey* into Latin. It was recorded that he is the first translator in Europe. Most of the Latin authors like Naevias and Ennius, made translations of Greek plays of Euripides. Everyone is quite acquainted with the works of Greek philosopher Plato’s works translated into Latin. After Greek and Romans Arabs promoted translations. Many books on Algebra, Geometry, Medicine, Music Chemistry and Logic from Sanskrit were translated into Arabic Language. At the same time the works of Plato, Aristotle, Galen, Hippocrates and other’s works were also translated to Arab Language. Thus the city of Baghdad became acknowledged as an important site of learning and translation. After Baghdad, Toledo in Spain acquired the greatest place for translators. During the time of 9th century, King Alfred of England encouraged anumber of Latin texts into English. He Himself got translated into the Anglo Saxon Language Bede’s ‘*Ecclesiastical History of the English*. 2

Generally, literary creation is a kind of artistic creation of the writer by means of language. A writer is both a social individual and an artist. Living in a certain historical period and

social environment, he develops his outlook on society and human life through his personal experiences in the social life. In a literary creation he expresses his thoughts and feelings about the society and human life through creation of artistic images. In a literary work, the image is a verbal expression which can evoke a mental picture in the reader's mind. On the one hand, it embodies the thoughts and feelings the writer intends to convey, so it possesses intellectual value. On the other hand, it can appeal to the reader's visual and aural senses and stimulate him to visualize the picture portrayed in the work by giving full play to his imagination and association. As the image can afford the reader the pleasure of aesthetic appreciation, it possesses aesthetic value.

A literary work is a kind of art of imagination. It explains very little to the reader. Its essential charm lies in how the content is expressed rather than what the work tells us. For the literary text, there can be no fixed answers given by the writer. Instead, the reader has a sequence of schemata given by the text, which have the function of stimulating him to establish the images of the text and get the answers. There can be no doubt that the schemata of the text appear to relate to literary images, but they are not given directly by the writer – they must be discovered, or to be more precise, produced by the reader. In this respect, the literary text exploits a basic structure of comprehension but expands it to incorporate the actual production of those images. The scheme of the text give rise to aspects of a hidden, non-verbalized ‘truth’ and these aspects must be synthesized by the reader. In fact, the meaning intended by the author or directly revealed by the language of the text is limited. However, the finite language is ingrained with a sort of openness to all the readers of all ages. The incompleteness of the text brings about indeterminacy, which designates the vacancy in the whole scheme of the text (Wang, 2008, p. 84). Iser proposes the notions of ‘blank’ and ‘concretization’, claiming that the indeterminacy of a text will be concretized by individual readers (1978, pp. 181–185). Of course, in the process of the reader's image-building, he cannot have total



freedom of imagination. Clearly, the reader's activity must be controlled in some way by the text. In fact, the reader's activity is not in the text, but exercised by the text (Iser, 1978, p. 168).

Reading a literary work is not a passive activity, but one that demands both attention and insight-lending participation. The reader participates in it by exercising his imagination. The essential quality of the literary text consists in the reader's creative participation. Literary critics believe that the literary text is like an arena in which writer and reader are to share the game of the imagination, and, indeed, the game will not work if the text sets out to be anything more than a set of governing rules. The reader's enjoyment begins when he himself becomes productive, i.e. when the text allows him to bring his own faculties into play (Iser, 1978, p. 108). Therefore, a successful writer, consciously or unconsciously, often gives the reader a lot of room for contemplation and imagination, which is regarded by Iser as 'gaps' or 'missing links'. In creating his literary works, the writer often employs his intended reader's cultural background knowledge such as culture-specific expressions as gaps in the text so that his artistic creation can be embodied and at the same time he can leave the reader much room for imagination. In fact, what we mean by the TL reader's 'cultural default' constitutes important 'gaps' or 'missing links' in the original text. What is missing from the text is what stimulates the reader to fill in the blanks with projections. He is drawn into events and made to supply what is meant from what is not said. What is said only appears to take on significance as a reference to what is not said. For Iser, the reader, in the process of interpretation of the text, has to fill in the textual gaps, or to concretize the 'blanks'. What is to be filled by the reader is something invisible that exists in the overall system of the text. It is the implications and not the statements that give shape and weight to the meaning. 'Whenever the reader bridges the gaps, communication begins. The gaps function as a kind of pivot on which the whole text-reader relationship revolves' (Iser, 1978, p. 169). By concretizing the 'blanks', the reader relates the

scheme of the text to one another and begins to form 'the imaginary object', and by familiarizing himself with the text, he forms his own understanding. It is in the process of interpretation in which the reader fills in the gaps that he acquires this unique aesthetic pleasure of reading the literary work and appreciates the 'mode of signification' of the text.

Ascertaining the author's intention implied by cultural default in the original is important for the translator to choose the methods of compensation for the TL reader's cultural default. If the author purposely employs certain historical allusions to depict the characters of the text or to elaborate on the topic of the text, it is possible for the translator to use the method of 'literal translation with a footnote or an endnote' to compensate for the TL reader's cultural default so as to preserve the aesthetic value of the original and respect the author's artistic intention because other compensation methods would falsify the implications of the original text and deprive the TL reader of the opportunity for using imagination

In the literary work, the author often employs figurative language to create vivid images. When language is used in a figurative sense, the translator has to carefully ascertain the author's artistic intention. According to Newmark, there are three types of metaphor: dead (cliché), standard (stock) and original (creative) (1981, p. 48). Original metaphors are uniquely used by the author rather than borrowed from conventions to reflect his intention and have predominant or obtrusive impact on the SL reader. Therefore, they are often individual. Because of their high degree of novelty and divorce from conventions, original metaphors are often employed by the author to reflect his attitudes towards life and his peculiar emotions. In this case, the translator should embody the author's artistic creation and keep the image of the original in the version. In general, if the source author spends much time or mental labor on producing artistic elements such as original metaphors, the translator should employ this method to embody the author's artistic creation.



The word 'summer' in the Chinese language often gives one an impression that it is too hot for one to bear. But 'summer' is the most favorable season in England. Therefore, it contains the associative meaning of 'beauty' and 'warmth' for the British. A British poet often compares his love to a summer's day and youth to a summer morn or summer brave. Some translators say that 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day' (Shakespeare's sonnet) should be semantically translated into a language spoken in a country where summers are unpleasant. According to Newmark, such a metaphor should be reproduced by relying on literal translation because the TL reader can get an idea that summer is a beautiful season in England and reading the poem should exercise his imagination as well as introduce him to English culture (1988, pp. 49-50). It is the general consensus of opinion that the readers of any language-culture have sufficient imagination to understand how the readers of another language-culture may rightly differ in their behaviors and values. Because this metaphor is an original metaphor used by Shakespeare to reflect his unique idea and can make the reader acquire aesthetic pleasure by exercising imagination, literal translation is the best method as far as the fact that the image of the original can be kept is concerned. If the translator believes that the literal translation of this metaphor can hardly make sense to the TL reader, he can add a footnote or an endnote to explain the geographical difference between England and China and Shakespeare's peculiar use of this metaphor.

As has been mentioned, the reader has to fill in the blanks designed by the writer in the course of reading the text. During the producing process, the translator should turn his filling of blanks back into a kind of blank-setting which efficiently entails the meaning of the text in the largest sense so that the target language reader may have the opportunity to fill in the blanks of the original text. Therefore, the translator's task, before he begins to do translation, is to detect the schema of the original text and seek what he believes is the most effective way to reschematize in the target language the intention and schema of

the text so that the target language reader can acquire the aesthetic value as the source language reader does. Keeping the aesthetic value of the literary work in the version is closely related to giving full play to the TL reader's imagination in the course of interpretation. Literary translation is an intellectual challenge not only to the translator but also to the TL reader. On the one hand, the translator is required to give full play to his capacity of intellectual comprehension, aesthetic appreciation and linguistic expression so as to reproduce the artistic value of the original work faithfully and expressively in the target language. On the other hand, the TL reader should not be a passive recipient of the translation. For a profound and thorough comprehension of the artistic and aesthetic value of the original work through the translation, he has to bring into full play his capacity of intellectual perception and artistic imagination. Therefore, it is important for the translator to handle properly the relationship between compensating for the TL reader's lack of cultural background knowledge and leaving him the room for imagination and appreciation of gaps and implicatures of the original text. He is never allowed to make his rendition easy for the TL reader to understand at the expense of the aesthetic value of the original work. Instead, he should have a regard for the TL reader's potential capacity for intellectual perception. Of course, the translator, in the process of interpretation of the literary work, can make some discoveries of the aesthetic value of implicatures, symbols, wordplays and other rhetorical devices in the text. In fact, he should be the keenest of readers. He discovers all the author's tricks, notices when he cheats and is aware of absurdities. However, he should leave them out for the TL reader and take pains, by means of his work, to seek to communicate to his readers the aesthetic images the original text provides through his knowledge of the original language.

If meaning still remains what I.A. Richards insisted, the only 'perfect understanding' which involves 'not only an accurate direction of thought, a correct evocation of feeling, an exact apprehension of tone and a precise recognition of



intention' (1929, p. 332), or if the relationship between the elements concerned remains solely author-centered or text-centered, the discussion about recipient contexts is meaningless, for the task of a translator is to reach the only correct, the 'perfect' answer, which is predetermined by the only authority of the author or the text per se. Instead of being a static thing waiting to be discovered, meaning, in the light of reception theory, is rather a kind of interaction between the text and the reader. Iser points out that 'meaning is no longer an object to be defined, but is an effect to be experienced', and that the total potential of meaning 'can never be fulfilled in the reading process', which makes it essential that we should conceive of meaning 'as something that happens' (1978, p. 22). In other words, there can be no prescribed or authorized interpretation of the original text. A reader can interpret a text in his or her own way depending on his or her varying spatio-temporal knowledge, thus attempting to undermine the authority of the author and the original text and at the same time emphasize the interaction between the text and the world. That is to say, a text cannot be interpreted in isolation from the world in which it is embedded. Various situational factors have to be taken into consideration and more emphasis should be attached to the social contextual setting than to textual structure. The translator can no longer confine his interpretation of the text to the question of the author's possible intention, as was the case traditionally, but is urged to pay more attention to factors in the receiving context.

This shift – the emphasis on the role of the reader in investing texts with meaning – is very important to translation theory since a translator is a reader of the original work in the first place, and his or her interpretation of the original is thus both authorized and contextualized. Translation is not done in isolation from its social and cultural context, and it cannot be confined to the text per se. As a result, a reader or a translator is no longer viewed merely as a passive receiver but rather as an active participant and a contributor to constructing the meaning of the text. When translation activities are viewed in isolation from

their receiving context and hardly connected with social phenomena, the translator becomes a mechanic substituting stretches of original texts with equivalent stretches in the target language, rather than a mediator or an active and creative participant in constructing a new culture, including a new ideology and poetics for the target society.

When interpreting the text, the reader has to relate information in the text to his prior background knowledge in his mind by activating the schema concerned and thus acquires a coherent comprehension of the text. Because the author and his intended reader have shared cultural background knowledge, it is unnecessary for the author to include all cultural information in the text, thus greatly improving communication efficiency. This is the communicative value of cultural default. However, in view of the unavoidable existence of the TL reader's cultural default, cultural compensation becomes a must on the part of the translator.

Difficulties in translation are due to precisely the lack of one-to-one correspondence between source message and target language. The translator is constantly obliged to make decisions as to what strategies should be adopted to compensate for the TL reader's cultural default. Since there are many parameters influencing the option of compensation strategies the translator has to carefully weigh all the factors in translation so that he can make the best choice to deal with cultural default elements. Translation is very much like a process of discoveries. Firstly, it is important for the translator to ascertain the author's artistic intention for using cultural default elements, respect his artistic creation and make the TL reader acquire the pleasure of aesthetic value of the source text. Secondly, cultural factors necessitate decision-making on compensation methods, because they decide whether or to what extent or by what methods the translator has to make a good many image adjustments in order to make the target language reader acquire a coherent interpretation of the version and at the same time acquire the pleasure of cultural exploration at a maximum.



Thirdly, receiving contexts in translation necessitate decision-making on compensation because existing factors in the target cultural system and the translator's ideology and poetics act as a filter, determining what strategies are adopted to compensate for the TL reader's cultural default. In short, the author's artistic intention implied by cultural default, cultural factors and receiving contexts in translation are three strategies according to which the compensation methods are determined.

2. References

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