

Translation as Refraction: An Analysis of Freud's On Narcissism

Punit Pathak
Assistant Professor,
Parul Institute of Arts
Parul University, Vadodara India

Abstract: The definition and scope of translation has new and emerging implications in terms of the new emerging areas of cultural studies, The idea of translation nowadays is not just limited to the areas of literal or word to word translation. It now also looks at the idea of cultural transmission, recodification and transliteration. The present paper is an attempt to have a glance at the new emerging idea of Translation as Refraction given by Andre Lefevere keeping in mind the politics of poetics and translation. The text being examined for the same is Sigmund Freud's On Narcissism.

Objective, Scope and Research question:

André Alphons Lefevere (1945 in Belgium – March 27, 1996 in United States) was a translation theorist. He had studied at the University of Ghent (1964–1968) and then obtained his PhD at the University of Essex in 1972. His most important contribution is in comparative literary studies and translation studies in particular. Drawing upon the notions of polysystem theorists like Itamar Even-Zohar, he theorized translation as a form of rewriting produced and read with a set of ideological and political constraints within the target language cultural system. Lefevere developed the idea of translation as a form of rewriting, which means that any text produced on the basis of another has the intention of adapting that other text to a certain ideology or to a certain poetics, and usually to both. Lefevere, along with Gideon Toury, James Holmes and Jose Lambert, can be considered among the foremost scholars who have made translation studies an autonomous discipline. Together with Susan Bassnett he envisaged that "neither the word, nor the text, but the culture becomes the operational 'unit' of translation".

Sigmund Freud born **Sigismund Schlomo Freud**; 6 May 1856 – 23 September 1939) was an Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis, a clinical method for treating psychopathology through dialogue between a patient and a psychoanalyst. In creating psychoanalysis, Freud developed therapeutic techniques such as the use of free association and discovered transference, establishing its central role in the analytic process. Freud's redefinition of sexuality to include its infantile forms led him to formulate the Oedipus complex as the central tenet of psychoanalytical theory. His analysis of dreams as wish-fulfillments provided him with models for the clinical analysis of symptom formation and the underlying mechanisms of repression. On this basis Freud elaborated his theory of the unconscious and went on to develop a model of psychic structure comprising id, ego and super-ego. Freud postulated the existence of libido, an energy with which mental processes and structures are invested and which generates erotic attachments, and a death drive, the source of compulsive repetition, hate, aggression and neurotic guilt. In his later work Freud developed a wide-ranging interpretation and critique of religion and culture.

The aim of this paper is to examine my own translation of Freud's essay "On Narcissism" into Gujarati as a cultural refraction and to study in brief the issues and strategies which can be used for translating literary and critical theory into Gujarati considering the constraints which operate in the systems of translation in source and target language texts.

Methodology:

The method of investigation of this paper is through the framework provided by the study of my own translation of Freud's essay "On Narcissism" as a cultural refraction or rewriting theory by Andre Lefevre into Gujarati. The paper will attempt a Poly systemic study of the text as a cultural refraction in the light of issues and strategies used for translation.

Refraction Theory: - A Glance:

Refraction Theory of Andre Lefevre shows how translation studies make a significant contribution to literary theory as a whole and how translation or refractions play a very important part in the evolution of literatures. It shows how translations can have a beginning and can be used in constructive ways. A writer's work gains exposure and achieves influence mainly through "misunderstandings and misconceptions" or as Lefevre calls it in a more neutral term 'refraction.' Writers and their work are always understood and conceived against a certain background that is they are refracted through a certain spectrum just as their work itself can refract previous works through a certain spectrum.

According to Lefevre "bad" translations are rejected because of the assumptions of the genius and originality of author and the sacred character of the text which should not be tempered with. Another assumption which tends to reject translations as bad is the possibility of recovering the author's true intentions and the concomitant belief that the works of literature should be judged on their intrinsic merit only. He points out that however the systemic approach to literature as seen in refractions does not suffer from such assumptions. Translations thus are texts produced on the border-line between two systems and provide an ideal introduction to a systems approach of literature.

Refractions can be defined as the adaptation of a work of literature to a different audience with the intention of influencing the way in which that audience reads the work. Refractions can be found in the form of translations, criticism, commentary, historiography, teaching, collection of works in anthologies and the production of plays. These refractions are extremely influential in establishing the reputation of a writer and his or her works. Refractions are often ignored or lamented according to Lefevre in the poetics of Romanticism based approaches to literature and they play an immense part in dissemination of an author and in development of a certain literature. He contends that refractions should be analysed on the basis of a framework which can exist only if they are thought as a part of a system and if the spectrum that refracts them is described.

The heuristic model of a systems approach to literature has following assumptions: literature is a system embedded in the environment of a culture or a society. It is a contrived system that is it consists of both objects(texts) and the people who write, refract, distribute and read those texts. It is a stochastic system that is one that is relatively indeterminate and only admits of predictions that have a certain degree of probability without being absolute. It is possible to present systems like literature in a formalized and an abstract manner but it gains very little in present study of literature since romanticism based approaches rejects any kind of notation that ignores natural language too much.

The literary system possesses a regulatory body: the person, persons, institutions who or which extend patronage to it. Patronage consists of at least three components: Firstly, an ideological component stating that literature should not be allowed to get too far out of step with the other systems in a given society. Secondly an economic or financial component that is the patron assures the writer's livelihood. Lastly a status component that is the writer achieves a certain position in society. Patrons rarely affect the literary systems directly. This task for them is carried out by critics who are writers of essays, teachers, members of academies etc. Patronage is undifferentiated in a situation in which it is extended by a single person, group,

institution characterized by the same ideology or differentiated in a situation in which different patrons represent different conflicting ideologies. Differentiation of patronage occurs in the type of society in which the ideological and the economic component of patronage are no longer necessarily linked. In societies with differentiated patronage economic factors such as the profit motive are liable to achieve the status of an ideology themselves dominating all other considerations.

The literary system also possesses a kind of code of behaviour, a poetics. This poetics consists of two components. Firstly, an inventory component that is genre, certain symbols, characters, prototypical situations. Secondly a functional component that is an idea of how literature has to or may be allowed to function in society. In systems with undifferentiated patronage the critical establishment will be able to enforce the poetics. In systems with differentiated patronage various poetics will compete each trying to dominate the system as a whole and each will have its own critical establishment applauding the work that has been produced on the basis of its own poetics while denouncing what the competitive poetics offers relegating it to the limbo of “low” literature and claiming its own as “high”. The gap between high and low widens as commercialization increases. Literature produced for obviously commercial reasons will tend to be as conservative in terms of poetics as literature produced for obviously ideological reasons. Yet economic success does not bring status too. one can be a successful commercial writer and yet be held in contempt by highbrows at the same time.

The final constraint operating within the system is that of the natural language in which a work of literature is written both the formal side of that language that is in its grammar and its pragmatic side that is the way in which the language (target language) reflects the culture (target culture). This latter aspect is often most troublesome to translators. Since different languages reflect different cultures, translations will nearly always contain attempts to naturalize the different(target) culture to make it conform more to what the reader of translation is used to. Such changes while translation occurs as a process has nothing to do with the translator’s knowledge of the language that he is translating. These changes point directly to the existence of another kind of constraint and translations are produced under such constraints which go far beyond those of natural language and are more influential in shaping of translation than semantic or linguistic ones which Lefevre points out by the way of refractions.

A refraction whether translation, criticism, historiography tries to carry a work of literature from one system to another and represents a compromise between the two systems and as such is the perfect indicator of the dominant constraints in both systems. The gap between two hierarchies of constraints explains why certain works do not enjoy or take an ambiguous position in the system they are imported into.

The degree of compromise in a refraction will depend on the reputation of the writer being translated within the system from which the translation is made that is from parent system or culture. The degree to which the foreign writer is accepted into the native system will on the other hand be determined by the need that the native system has of him in a certain phase of its evolution. Where the need for the foreign writer is felt, the critical establishment will split easily that is part of the establishment will become receptive of the foreign model or will champion it. It points out to the very real existence of ideological constraints in the production and dissemination of refractions. Its illustration is: formal education perpetuates the canonization of certain works of literature and school and college anthologies play an important part in this essentially conservative movement within the literary system because students and educated laymen will tend to accept these selection of anthologies as classics without questioning the ideological, economic and aesthetic constraints which affect these selections and they achieve a position of relative hegemony.

Lefevre points out certain strategies to deal with the constraints of poetics while adapting a refraction in a native system. First is to recognize the value of the work in itself while dismissing the poetics out of hand which is not very much favoured as it creates conflict in the hierarchy of literary systems under consideration. Second is to go in for a psychological copout that is to dismiss the poetics as a rationalization

of essentially irrational factors. A third strategy is to integrate the new poetics into the old one by translating its concepts into the more familiar terminology of the old poetics. The final and most favoured strategy is to explain the new poetics and to show that the system can in fact accommodate it and can allow it to enter into the inventory and functional components of its poetics without going to pieces. Lefevre while dealing with the ideological constraints treats it in the same way as he does with poetics for critical refractions in receiving system.

Lefevre while prescribing such practical solutions for dealing with constraints does not at all suggest that there is some kind of necessary progression ranging from the less acceptable to the definitive translation. He does not adhere to the idea that after the production of a well-known and well balanced translation of any work its further translation should be stopped. On the contrary he contends that both the natural language and the politics of the receiving system keep changing; the spectrum through which refractions are made changes in the course of time. Thus, it is good to remember that literary systems are stochastic and not mechanistic. Producers of both original and refracted literature do not operate as automatons under the constraints of their time and location. They devise various strategies to live with these constraints ranging hypothetically from full acceptance to full defiance. The categories that a systems approach like refraction theory makes use of are formulated in some kind of “inertial frame” similar to the ideal world physicists postulate (Einstein’s Quantum dimension) in which all experiments take place under optimal conditions and in which all laws operate unflinchingly. The categories of the systems approach such as refractions thus have to be applied to individual cases in a flexible manner like the laws of physics.

It is through critical refractions that a text establishes itself inside a given system ranging from articles in magazines to commercial criticism like blurb. It is through translations combined with critical refractions (introductions, notes, commentary accompanying translations, articles written on it) that a work of literature produced outside a given system takes its place in that “new (target) system”. It is through refractions in the social system’s educational setup that canonization is achieved and maintained. Thus, for Lefevre refractions are what keeps a literary system going.

New poetics can be defined against the dominant poetics of anytime and can gain acceptance by a combination of original work and refractions with emphasis on the functional component of poetics. Thus, all the “new” in fact is a combination of various elements from the old, the non-canonized, imports from other systems all rearranged to suit alternative functional views of literature. This holds true for both the implicit and explicit concepts of poetics and for individual works of literature which are a recombination of generic elements, plots, motifs, symbols etc. essentially that is piecing together of other people’s ideas in a way as to give them a novel impact.

Literature in general and individual works can in the final analysis be contemplated, commented on, identified with, applied to life, in a number of essentially subjective ways; and these activities are all refractions designed to influence the way in which the reader receives the work, concretizes it. Present day refractions usually operate on underlying principles essentially alien to literature and imported into it, such as psychoanalysis and philosophy. In other words, the natural framework of investigation for literary studies has to be replaced by frameworks imported from other disciplines as glaringly obvious in the very way in which the works of literature are presented to students: syllabi, reading lists, anthologies offering disparate texts and pieces brought together in an arbitrary manner to serve the demands of the imposed framework.

A systems approach to literature emphasizing the role of refractions and integrating them revalidates the concept of literature as something made not in the vacuum of genius but out of the movement between the genius and the constraints under which it operates. This approach does not try to influence the evolution of a given literary system or the reader’s concretization of a given text in a certain direction. Instead it aims at giving the reader the most complete set of materials to concretize the text which he or she can accept or reject. It aims at making literary texts accessible to the reader by means of description, analysis,

historiography, translation, produced not on the basis of a given transient poetics but on the basis of the choice of reader which in turn is subject to constraints.

Translating Literary and Critical Theory into Gujarati:

Considering the spectrum of refraction and the various constraints seen above which operate within any language system and in particular here within the SL English and TL Gujarati systems the question of the translation of literary and critical theory becomes a prominent one; so, does the question of translating literary and critical terms from English to Gujarati. These questions are of such abundance because of mainly two reasons. Firstly, Literary theory and its study forms the basis not only of the study and analysis of literature, but the various perspectives and worldviews presented within these approaches quite often shape the ideology, worldview and sometimes the whole way of life of the reader themselves (like Radical Marxists or Fanatics?). Secondly this question of translating theory in Gujarati becomes very much important because of the apparent lack of access, to these texts to native readers of Gujarati especially that of Gujarati medium in India, and the less amount of translation of critical and literary theory texts in Gujarati from English as compared to the high amount of translation of Gujarati literary criticism of critics like Suresh Joshi, Narmad etc. into English.

While attempting to translate Freud into Gujarati these two questions formed the backbone and the base upon which the attempt to render the text in Gujarati was made by me. The translated text has been tried to be rendered in such a way that it can become easily accessible to the native Gujarati readers, so that they can associate themselves quite easily with the ideas of Freud ideologically and culturally and familiarize themselves with the terminologies and concepts of Freud. Before going to the discussion of strategies and methods which I have utilized while attempting to translate Freud it is necessary to understand the basic distinctions between the activities of translating literary and non-literary texts as the first step to theorize the strategies of translating critical theory. Prof Sachin Ketkar in his article “Translating Creative and Critical Texts: Theorizing the difference” has shown this distinction quite eloquently. For the purposes of this discussion it is quite relevant to discuss these perspectives. He says in the article:

“Creative writing involves critical labour, as Eliot pointed out. Critical writings involve creativity of reading and creativity of presentation. Both these activities have intercultural dimensions. Translation involves a high degree of creativity, critical sense and intercultural awareness, probably more than the other two activities. However, this does not mean that they are indistinct or homogenous activities. I think of them, in Wittgensteinian way, as being different ‘language games’ with only a faint ‘family resemblance’ to one another.”

Thus, for him Translation, Creative Writings and Critical Writings all are to be studied and practised as interdisciplinary and intercultural disciplines. The way of nomenclature using Wittgenstein’s analogy of language games to show this multiculturalness and interdisciplinarity with intersecting and bisecting strands at various points like in terms of poetics, discourses, narrative devices and strategies, is an excellent way of doing it. He contends that whether the difference of translating creative texts is different from critical texts depends on whether the translator considers them as different disciplines or not. He then points out the distinctions between creative and critical texts which he says are theoretically contentious but useful empirically:

“The formalist view of literary text as self-referential and autonomous, and the poststructuralist view texts as essentially intertextual seem theoretically irreconcilable. However, I believe that this paradoxical and self-contradictory nature of the literary texts *sets it apart from the non-literary ones*. This means though the literary texts are intertextual, they are primarily self-referential and self-sufficient. They are primarily about themselves. On the other hand, critical texts are primarily about other texts. This is other way of saying what is traditionally believed of the difference between literature and criticism: literature is ‘autotelic’ and autonomous, criticism is parasitic, depending on literary texts for sustenance.”

In the concluding remarks of the article he shows how creative and critical texts are essentially distinctive and how the translator of both these kinds of texts needs to be aware of such nuances and translate accordingly and gives his own idea of how the translator should operate with questions of translatability in such situations:

“One notices that the literary and the critical are two distinctive discourses, differing in the form, content and function from each other and can be marked by distinct rhetorical strategies. The translator has to be aware of the distinct nature of rhetoricity of two kinds of discourses. The literary texts are far more artistically complex and self-sufficient than the critical ones. Having said this let me add that there are many kinds of creative texts and there are many kinds of critical texts and translator has to be aware of these differences within the categories.”

“My personal belief is that the translators of literary texts have to be creative writers in the first place. This means a literary translator ought to have literary competence, that is, not just the knowledge of literary devices, their function and significance in the totality of a text but also the knowledge of how to use them in an appropriate way. After all, he is writing a new short story, novel or a poem. It implies that the literary translator ought to be much more than a critic. The non-literary translator may not need to know how narrative techniques function in fictional work or what is the significance of such devices in the totality of the literary text. However, such a knowledge is prerequisite for the literary translators. The theoretical question whether literary and the non-literary translation are essentially different can be conceived of in a Wittgensteinian way. If literary and non-literary translations are two different language games, it means that there is an element of dexterity and skill involved in playing those games and some players are more skilled than others. “

Issues and Strategies:

Selection of The Text:

Now I will discuss in brief the issues, strategies and methods which I encountered while translating a critical text of Freud. The first question that arose was of selecting the text. With the selection process, itself the constraints operating within SL and TL started influencing the choices for translation. The text of Freud was

selected for reasons which may appear natural and obvious but had the ideological, economic and status components operating well within the process of selection because Freud is a quite well-known name in literary theory and outside it hence readers would connect easily with his status as a writer, ideologically his findings still resonate true and have far reaching implications not just in theory but empirically as well and translating Freud thus would be economically sustainable too as he is quite prominent and would have a far reaching readership even in Gujarati readership.

Translating Title of The Text:

The next step was of deciding upon the translation of the title and that of the major critical terms of the psychoanalytic scientific register. The issue with title though appears quite simplistic and mundane which usually is relegated a backseat in the translation process of the overall grand narrative of the essay, in actuality is one of the founding stones in my attempt to translate Freud. The reason I have placed such importance on the translation of title is primarily because for a layman, readers of literary theory and that too of Freud for the first time; the translation of the title needs to be such that it can convey the core identity and the ideas of the narrative to which it is titled. One observation which I have found and utilized empirically in my attempts of translating critical theory is the adherence to the literal meaning that is the closeness to the matrix code of SL in such way that its translation in the target code TL (Gujarati here) was such that the reader can grasp not only its semantic and literary meaning, but cultural impetus and identity also; It is a better strategy to make the translation more reader friendly. Hence the translation can be classified according to what Frawley has called 'moderate innovation' and a 'closed translation'. Pooja Mehta in her article "Translation of Literary and Critical Terms from Gujarati into English: A Case Study of Rachana and Samrachana by Dr. Harivallabh Bhayani" is of the same opinion:

"Title completes the work. It's an identity. In case of literary works, lots of importance is attached with the title. War and Peace might not have been successful with a different title. It happens sometimes in translation the titles are altered beyond recognition or they are out rightly mistranslated. In case of this text, I am of the opinion to keep the title as it is. I don't feel the need to change the title in case of critical text or literary criticism which sometimes needed in case of literary work. Looking at the complexities of translating meaning, Dr. Bhayani emphasizes that if well-known signs and words are used in the creation of terms and definitions; it will lessen the trouble of communication and would control a bit the boundless world of terminology. Needless to say, it is to be done without losing the precision and correctness. Moreover, the ability to influence the choice of the title of a work places heavy responsibility on the translator. The purpose should be to offer TL reader an easy access into the work off putting 'otherness' of writings without tempering the original." Hence I too have translated the title "On Narcissism" as "Atmarati Vishe".

Translating Literary and Critical Terms from English to Gujarati:

This step forms the main part of the translation process. The goal in translating literary and critical terms from English to Gujarati was also to render the translation in such a way that the essay could be easily understood at all systemic levels that is semantically, literally and culturally, in other words the translated piece should be able to imprint and embed itself to the maximum possible extent in the native culture and language of the reader (Gujarati here) so that the reader can feel one with the text and the traditional questions of good or bad translations, loss and gain etc. become secondary and how much the translated text is shaped by the target culture, how much it shapes and what is the function of the text in target culture etc. questions merit more study. The procedure for translating the terms specifically the terms pertaining to the psychoanalytic register was as the first step I selected all such terms and looked up their corresponding meanings in Gujarati and listed them. The two machine tools which I preferred were “Google Translate” and “ShabdKosh”. Machine translation as the first step was a deliberate action on my part to get a general idea of how the terms would be rendered in Gujarati by a set of specific pre-given commands by their developers; Google having developers and analysts whose L₁ is English and ShabdKosh by Maneesh Soni whose L₁ is Hindi. This tool was earlier an English-Hindi dictionary in 2003 and Gujarati was added to the interface later. As it is clear the more accurate rendering of terms both literary and of psychoanalytic register into Gujarati was by ShabdKosh as the set of commands given reflected the more clearer exchange of codes between SL and TL. Another important tool which aided this process of translating was a collection of literary terms by Shalini Topiwala in “Sanskritik Vivechan Kosh” which has a separate section on Psychoanalytic criticism. The term for title “Atmarati” was borrowed from here. The next step for this procedure was to render these translated terms in their proper tense, gender etc. that is the correct corresponding grammatical, syntactic and semantic form in Gujarati so that they would suit the register of both literary theory and psychoanalytic criticism for the TL reader; This is the step from where the physical translation by translator begins. One of the strategies which I have employed here is that compounding the words in their SL form than translating them into TL by use of hyphen. As the final step of this procedure I listed the words and the division which I did was on the basis of form of register; In this manner, the terms were divided into three subtypes: Literary and Critical Theory Register, Psychoanalytic Freudian Register and General Register. Finally, I translated the terms into Gujarati. Some of the major terms translated are given in the table below with division as per the register.

Literary and Critical Register	Psychoanalytic Register	General Register
Critical Judgement: -જટિલનિર્ણય	Ego-libido: - અહમ્-કામવસના	Genesis: - ઉત્પત્તિ
Exalted - ઉન્નિ	Ego-Ideal: - અહમ્-આદર્શ	Foreground: - અગ્રભુમી
Repression: - દમન	Neurotics: - ન્યુરોટિક્સ	Causation: - કારણો

Evolution: - ઉત્ક્રાંતિ	Sublimation: - વિશુદ્ધિકરણ	Subject: - સબ્જેક્ટ
-------------------------	----------------------------	---------------------

Translating the Essay:

All the description and information until now was a precursor to this most exhaustive step in the whole process of translation that is translating the main body (theory) of the essay. The aim behind the whole process as already discussed above yet which needs mention was twofold, first to try and render an eminent author like Freud in Gujarati to encourage the interest of Gujarati readers in reading literary theory and secondly to theorize the procedure of translating theory and encourage translation of literary theory from English to Gujarati, from this first attempt to make available access of the whole treasure house of literary theory to Gujarati readers.

The tools used for this part of the process were essentially the same i.e. Google Translate, ShabdKosh, Shalini Topiwala's "Sanskritik Vivechan Kosh" and one more addition was Gala's English-Gujarati-English Dictionary. For the purposes of understanding the empirical process I have theorized the procedure and divided it into two parts. The first part I have titled as "machine translation" in which the whole of the essay was attempted to be translated through tools like Google Translate.

Before going further, I would like to digress here and mention that the smallest unit of translation which I took was not 'register based term by term' like above but a 'sentence by sentence' translation. Here the unit of one sentence is a set of words in a phrase between two periods, which proved to be both a boon and a curse essentially a necessary evil. It was a boon because both in the machine translation phase and the second stage this unit wise division made the translation process quite simplified and regularized. It was also a curse not literally but in essence especially in the machine translation phase. In this phase the differences in the sentence structures of SL and TL were the root cause of errors. This difficulty is in my opinion perhaps one of the major hurdles in the fluidity and accuracy of machine translation where the very logical set of commands which govern the codes of translation cannot distinguish between the two different sentence structures and will give the translated target code in the sentence structure of SL only. This is one of the major flaws and a bane of translators who use Google Translate. Here the sentence structure was SVO of SL English and that of TL Gujarati was SOV while the translated target code was in Gujarati but in SVO! Another major issue while utilizing machine translation was that the tool was unable to translate those terms from SL into TL whose corresponding meaning was absent in the required semantic form as a part of a sentence or in isolation. The result was that the translated target code consisted some untranslated terms in SL which either had to be translated physically in the next stage or some were those which were kept as it is. This I will discuss further below. An illustration of such machine translation from the essay itself is:

SL: - "Observation of normal adults shows that their former megalomania has been damped

down and that the psychical characteristics from which we inferred their infantile narcissism have been effaced. What has become of their ego-libido? Are we to suppose that the whole amount of it has passed into object-cathexes? Such a possibility is plainly contrary to the whole trend of our argument; but we may find a hint at another answer to the question in the psychology of repression.”

TL: “સામાન્યપુખ્તઅવલોકનદર્શાવેછેકેતેમનાભૂતપૂર્વ megalomania ભીનાશવાળુંકરવામાંઆવીછેનીચેઅનેતે
psychical લક્ષણોજેનાપરથીઆપણેતેમનાશિશુઅનુમાનલગાવીલીદું
આત્મરતિeffaced કરવામાંઆવીછેકામવાસનાબનીછે-શુંતેમનાઇજીઓ .?અમેધારીછે
તેસમગ્રરકમપદાર્થ cathexes પસારછે?આવાશક્યતાશુદ્ધચારિત્ર્યનાવખાણકર્તાછે
અમારાદલીલસમગ્રવલણવિપરીત;પરંતુઅમેઅન્યજવાબપરએકહિંટશોધવાશકેછે
દમનમનોવિજ્ઞાનપ્રશ્ન “

As a translator, I do not mean at all to conclude from the above discussion that machine translation is an incorrect way of translating. We are all well aware that this process is now being researched and studied into great detail and has become an invaluable part of the research of translation theory. I am merely trying here to point out the pros and cons which I encountered while utilizing it. On the contrary this phase formed an inseparable part of my translation process as it gave me immense information about the correspondences and deficiencies in the code transfer between SL and TL while translating.

The second part of this procedure I have termed as ‘physical translation.’ Here the logistics and methodology are essentially similar yet not same. The unit for translation here was also sentence by sentence translation. The method which I implemented was to translate and rewrite the code sentence by sentence but not using machine tools but actual physical translation. But the machine translation phase played a very important role for this phase. As an amateur translator attempting the translation of literary and critical theory for the first time the theorization of this aspect may seem as a very bold move but I would request the readers to grasp it objectively without any such biases, as filtering of meanings and interpretations especially in case of critical theory through such biases can lead to creation of negative functional bias and redundant understanding of critical theory. The role which machine translation phase played in this part of translation process was that it gave a clearer idea to what linguists call LAD (language acquisition device) during the physical translation phase, about the correspondences and differences in the matrix code of SL and target code of TL during the translation process and rewriting of the new code. Thus, the translation process was divided into these two stages which produced a new code and Freud was rendered in Gujarati.

The newly generated code was more closely adhered to both matrix and target code of SL and TL respectively hence it was what Frawley has called a ‘moderate innovation’ and in that the newly generated code in its derivative nature has been closely adhered to the matrix code of SL because of the ideological constraints and the dominance of poetics of SL over those of TL hence it is what Frawley has called a ‘closed translation’. But this was done in such way that its translation in the target code TL (Gujarati here) was such that the reader can grasp not only its semantic and literary meaning, but cultural impetus and identity also; It is a better strategy to make the translation more reader friendly. Hence translation of the essay itself became writing of a new code in all of its stages i.e. recodification of Frawley, right from the selection of the text to translating the title, the essay and lastly the cultural integration of the text with the target culture and language itself thus establishing itself firmly in the minds of Gujarati readers. An illustration of such a whole process of translation from the essay itself after the physical translation phase is:

SL: - “The formation of an ego ideal is often confused with the sublimation of instinct, to the detriment of our understanding of the facts. A man who has exchanged his narcissism for

homage to a high ego ideal has not necessarily on that account succeeded in sublimating his libidinal instincts. It is true that the ego ideal demands such sublimation, but it cannot enforce it; sublimation remains a special process which may be prompted by the ideal but the execution of which is entirely independent of any such prompting. It is precisely in neurotics that we find the highest differences of potential between the development of their ego ideal and the amount of sublimation of their primitive libidinal instincts; and in general it is far harder to convince an idealist of the inexpedient location of his libido than a plain man whose pretensions have remained more moderate. Further, the formation of an ego ideal and sublimation are quite differently related to the causation of neurosis. As we have learnt, the formation of an ideal heightens the demands of the ego and is the most powerful factor favouring repression; sublimation is a way out, a way by which those demands can be met without involving repression.”

TL: - “ઘણી વાર અહમ-આદર્શ ની રચના નું સંભ્રાંત વૃત્તિ-ઉદ્ધવીકરણ સાથે થતું હોય છે જેના કારણે અમારી હકીકત ની તોટ માં ઘટાડો થાય છે. એક માણસ જે પોતાના આત્મરતિ ની અદલાબદલી ઉચ્ચ અહમ-આદર્શ ની રચનાઓ સાથે કરે છે, જરૂરી નથી કે તે પોતાના કામવાસના ની વૃત્તિ ના ઉદ્ધવીકરણ માં પણ સફળ થાય .તે વાત સાચી છે કે અહમ-આદર્શો ની રચના ની આ પ્રક્રિયા આવા ઉદ્ધવીકરણ ની માંગણી કરે છે, પરંતુ જરૂરી નથી કે તે તેનું ફરજિયાત અમલ પણ કરાવે. માટે ઉદ્ધવીકરણ એક ખાસ પ્રક્રિયા બની છે જેનું પ્રત્યુત્તપત્ર આદર્શ દ્વારા થઈ શકે છે પરંતુ જેની ક્રિયા તેના થી સંપૂર્ણપણે સ્વતંત્ર હોય છે. ચોક્કસપણે આપણને ન્યુરોટિક્સ ની અંદર જ તેમના અહમ-આદર્શ ના વિકાસ અને તેમન આદિમ કામવાસના ની વૃત્તિ ના વિશુદ્ધીકરણ ના પરિમાણ ના વચે તફાવત ની જાણ થાય છે. સામાન્ય પણે એક આદર્શવાદી ને તેના કામવાસના ના આનુચિત સ્થાન ની સંમતિ અપાવવી, એક સામાન્ય માણસ જેની વ્યપક્તાઓ વધુ મધ્યમ રહી હોય, તેના કરતા વધુ જટિલ હોય છે. વધુમાં અહમ-આદર્શ અને ઉદ્ધવીકરણ ની રચનાઓ ઉન્માદ ના કારણો સાથે તદન અલગ-અલગ રીતે સંબંધિત હોય છે. આપણે શીખ્યા તેમ, એક આદર્શ ની રચના, અહમ ની માંગણીઓ ની તીવ્રતા ને વધારે છે અને દમન નું સૌથી શક્તિશાળી પરિબલ બને છે. ઉદ્ધવીકરણ એક એવો અન્ય માર્ગ છે જેના દ્વારા આવી માંગણીઓ દમન ને સંડોવ્યા વિના પુરી કરી શકાય છે.”

The above description points slightly towards another major issue which both translators of literary and non-literary texts from English to Indian languages face, which I too faced while translating Freud. The major issue which translators face is the major dominance of English and its poetics over other languages of the world especially in India over our own native languages which results in English being the Lingua Franca and the majority of critical discourse being written in English. Translation plays an extraordinary role in allowing the dissemination of these critical writings and discourses into other languages like Gujarati where there is a dearth of seminal literary and critical theory. The main strategy which can be adopted to deal with the dominance of English is not to reduce the usage of the language because it has gained its place as the global language of communication and dissemination but to encourage translation of the key literary and critical texts into native languages so that the dearth of literary resources in these languages and cultures can be reduced and the richness of these languages and cultures can be increased.

Cultural Refraction and Recodification:

As a translator, I have experienced that in translating critical theory that like literary translation too this process is not just a creation of a new code or rewriting and recodification in the TL but creation of a new and unique discourse in itself with an identity, cultural significance and semantic-literary meanings of its own both in SL and TL languages and cultures respectively.

It is quite clear from the above discussion surrounding the translation of literary and critical theory that when any set of codes is translated from matrix code of SL into the target code of TL than whether it is a moderate innovation or a radical, a closed translation or open translation there is a generation of a new third code from which new information can be gathered, and its adherence ratio to the SL and TL codes determines its translation type according to Frawley in his “Prolegomenon to a theory of translation”; however despite all this the code still undergoes a recodification process and new code is generated which I would agree with general consensus that is similar to writing a new creative text despite being literary or critical in nature, with its own unique set of signs and respective signified concepts too, especially is the case of literary and critical theory. Thus, the translation can be rightly termed as recodification. This is the first observation which I have drawn from my attempts of translation.

Andre Lefevre in his “Mother Courage Cucumber” outlined his view of translation as refraction as we saw above. Refraction simply is nothing but the process by which the adaptation of a work of literature is done to a different audience with the intention of influencing the way in which that audience reads the work. In case of translation too we saw how especially while translating both literary and critical texts the process was influenced at all stages right from the selection of text till the actual procedure of translation by the constraints which have been outlined by Lefevre in his essay i.e. patronage, poetics of SL and TL, ideological, status and economic components respectively. In my experience of translating Freud, I found that the poetics of SL English were highly dominant over the TL poetics of Gujarati; this is the primary reason because of which the translated text even if it is able to establish itself in the target culture and language will in its essential form the code will be closely adhered to the SL code. The translated text will be closer to the readers of Gujarati after being rendered into it but the newly established sign systems whose signified concepts are well within the TL culture as they ought to be, which was the aim of translating the text along with the study of how the constraints of TL and its cultures will affect the translation process and how in turn will the text function in the TL culture and imbibe itself in there. However, the rewritten code will be closer to the matrix code of SL poetics because of the dominance of English.

David Graddol in “The Decline of The Native Speaker” talks about the place of English language as L₂ in the world demographics and here in a section “English Speakers in India” talks about the demographics of English language speakers in India. He begins by stating that India has a significant number of world’s English speaking population but estimating the number of L₂ speakers is difficult. Citing Agnihotri and Khanna he says:

“The overwhelming importance of English in several important domains of Indian society and the vested interests of the English Language Industry have understandably produced considerable amount of confusion in the description and interpretation of Data on English Bilingualism.”

He then goes on to cite the various surveys which show that there is a considerable increase in the English-speaking population of India since 1990’s. Braj Kachru (1984) suggests a conservative 4% of the total population speaks English. Most linguists according to him agree that around 4% of Indian population speaks English as L₂. This suggests that there were a little more than 37 million users in 1995. He then cites a 1997 survey of ‘India Today’ which concluded that “Almost one in every three Indian claims to understand English, although less than 20% are confident in speaking it”. If this is believed to be true than the English-speaking population in India would have increased to around 186 million in 1997.

These demographics show that there has been a steady increase in the L₂ English speaking population in India which is a clear indicator of the increasing dominance of English poetics and language over that of Native Indian languages. The second observation which I have concluded during my experience as a translator of critical theory is that the translated text in Gujarati is indeed influenced by and influences the poetics, culture and language of target culture and thus is a cultural refraction through the spectrum of TL constraints, however the relative dominance of SL poetics is more than TL. Hence it is a cultural refraction but with Derridean traces of the SL poetics and constraints.

Conclusion:

I have attempted in this paper to theorize the process of translating literary and critical theory by the means of experiences which I have gained while translating Freud. The main aims of this attempt have been stated above several times, however what needs to be mentioned is that this was a small effort to encourage more activity of literary translation from English to native Indian languages like Gujarati, and to make it a starting point for making possible the accessibility of the whole treasure house of literary and critical theory to the readers of these languages and enrich the resources of the same.

I do not mean to conclude at all that the pathways which I have outlined here are by any means the sole authority on translation theory of critical texts because translation is itself a discipline which allows creation of new texts and the translated texts are by no means mere copies of the original. Rather they have individual cultural identities of their own with their own codes, sign-systems, meanings and interpretations. Translation theory is thus too in my opinion a discipline which can have new and individualized perspectives with changing socio-political and cultural scenarios of the societies in which the translated texts are rendered. Thus, translation theory and practical translations are both dynamic disciplines which have no single and steady reference frame or theorized explanations; Nowadays the older questions of good or bad translations, issues like untranslatability have taken a back seat and this dynamic discipline has its implications at all the systemic levels of social, political, economic, cultural, ideological etc. The translation as recodification and cultural refraction is an attempt to address and bring out such questions only

References

- 1] Ketkar Sachin, "Translating Creative and Critical Texts: Theorizing the Difference".
- 2] Mehta, Pooja." Translation of Literary and Critical Terms from Gujarati into English: A Case Study of Rachana ane Samrachana by Dr. Harivallabh Bhayani". Golden Vibes: International E-Journal of English Literature and Translation Studies. Vol, 1. No2.2016. pp 1-9.
- 3] Freud Sigmund, "On Narcissism". Literary Theory: An Anthology, Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, 2nd ed, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2004.
- 4] Lefevre Andre, "Mother Courage Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in A Theory of Literature".
- 5] Frawley William, "Prolegomenon to A Theory of Translation".
- 6] Topiwala Shalini, Sanskrutik Vivechan-Kosh, Pashva Publications, 2003.