

DRAMA IN TRANSLATION : A DISCOURSE ON THE CULTURAL TRANSFER FROM GERMAN INTO MARATHI – BASED ON MARATHI TRANSLATIONS OF PLAYS BY BRECHT AND DÜRRENMATT



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To discuss the literary translations with reference to the translation of drama in specific, John Dryden's thoughts on *Translation* are very much initiating, when he wants to reduce all translation to three heads.¹ *Dryden calls a word-to-word and line by line translation as very first head of metaphor, while the second one is that of paraphrase, or translation with latitude, where the author is kept in view by the translator, so as never to be lost, but his words are not so strictly followed as his sense; and that too is admitted to be amplified, but not altered. The third way, according to Dryden is that of imitation, where the translator assumes the liberty, not only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion; and taking only some general hints from the original, to run division on the groundwork, as he pleases.*²

The main concern here is to see, how a translator overcomes the cultural barriers, when she / he translates a literary or a dramatic work from one to another language. To speak in Talgeri's words, *a cultural divide between the two languages necessitates the process of communication through translation in the intercultural context.*³ I would like to refer here to my own essay on *cultural transfer in translating a literary work.*⁴ – The Marathi translation of the tragicomedy *The Visit of the Old Lady* by Friedrich Dürrenmatt fascinates me here. - While Zahanassian in the original play by Dürrenmatt brings a coffin with her, to carry the dead body of Ill, demands Anuradha in the Marathi translation the ashes of Anandrao. This was just an example of cultural transfer.

Toradmal makes a transfer of the cultural milieu from the imaginary Swiss city called Gullen in the Marathi cultural milieu. As Jasbir Jain says:

*He is thus caught between the need to capture the local colour and the need to be understood by an audience outside the cultural and lingual situation...*⁵

We will try to focus our attention on how the cultural milieu in German plays gets recontextualization in Marathi milieu. The essay *The Problem of cultural recontextualization in Literary Translation* by Pramod Talgeri⁶ requires attention here:

*... In that the translator translates a literary work, he decodes the intention of the SL-text and re-encodes it in his translation. While doing this, he recontextualizes the literary experience of the SL-text in a new cultural and lingual environment.*⁷

As Talgeri looks at it, author's intention of the source language text is decoded during a literary translation into a target language, whereby recontextualization from source to target language text takes place invariably. Even Thrivenis article in the Internet journal calls our attention, when he writes:

*One language cannot express the meanings of another; instead, there is a distinction between the meanings built in and the meanings that must be captured and expressed. In this sense, different languages predispose their speakers to think differently, i.e., direct their attention to different aspects of the environment.*⁸

Let us take a review of Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle* and its Marathi adaptation by Late C T Khanolkar as *Ajab Nyaya Vartulacha* अजब न्याय

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वर्तुळाचा Gruscha in Caucasian Chalk Circle is called Hamsie हंसी in Khanolkar's Marathi version. When Gruscha takes the child of the Governor, she undergoes a long march to reach the village of her brother – Hamsie in Khanolkar's Marathi version reaches her brother's house after a long march. The wife of her brother asks her >Whose child are you carrying with you? If it were yours, where is your Mangalsutra?< By making her sister-in-law ask her about the mangalsutra, the plot is transferred into the milieu of Maharashtra by Khanolkar. The dramatist, doing translation, is in search of equivalence. Thrivenis below cited quotation coincides with Talgeri's idea of equivalent translation:

Translation is therefore not simply a matter of seeking other words with similar meaning but of finding appropriate ways of saying things in another language. Different languages, then, may use different linguistic forms. But these forms are only one of the aspects of the difference between the two language systems. Even with all the apparent cultural hurdles, a translator can create equivalence by the judicious use of resources. Cultural meanings are intricately woven into the texture of the language. The creative writer's ability to capture and project them is of primary importance for, and should be reflected in, the translated work. Caught between the need to capture the local color and the need to be understood by an audience outside the original cultural and linguistic situation, a translator must be aware of both cultures. One of the main goals of literary translation is to initiate the target-language reader into the sensibilities of the source-language culture.⁹

In order to make the recipient of the target language accept the experience through the work, the translator has to take care to make the experience in the work sound it to be his own. For this, a lot of recontextualization has to be done by the translator. The reality in the translated text has to sound familiar to the recipient of the target language text. The text in the target language would sound translated, if a word-to-word translation is done. Claire in Dürrenmatt's *The Visit* is called Anuradha in Toradmal's विकत घेतला न्याय. Thus, by giving Marathi names to the characters, Toradmal causes here recontextualization of the plot. The text does not sound merely translated through

such equivalences. A close view of the Marathi versions of *Die Panne* and *Der Besuch der alten Dame* as intercultural events, where Themes from the Source Language (German) Texts have been transferred into the Target Language (Marathi) confirms Patrick Bowlers comments in the foreword to his English translation of *Besuch der alten Dame*.

A translator's task is to render another person's ideas into acceptable language, and his aim is to find some equivalence to the original unity of thought and speech.¹⁰

A Marathi reader does feel during his encounter with the texts of Toradmal's विकत घेतला न्याय or अजब न्याय वर्तुळाचा by Khanolkar that the characters, the story are born on his Marathi soil, and there lies the success of the transfer of the plots and themes from German into Marathi. What this idea of making the reader accept the characters and the plot having originated from his soil is concerned, I am here fascinated to quote C Thriveni again:

If the reality being represented is not familiar to the audience, the translation stumbles and becomes difficult to read. The translator would have to consider whether similar or parallel language resources exist in the literary subculture of the target language. In translations of a culture rich in literature, the question of relevance to the projected audience is more significant to the translator than to the original author. A translator has to look for equivalents in terms of relevance in the target language and exercise discretion by substituting rather than translating certain elements in a work. Even with all the apparent cultural hurdles, a translator can create equivalence by the judicious use of resources.¹¹ In the second scene of the first act of Toradmal's विकत घेतला न्याय uses Anuradha the expression होरपळून निघालेला हात, when Anandrao holds her hand in grief over the wounded hand. Hugo Friedrich's opinion best suits in this context.

Translation is seen as a contest with the original text (...). The goal is to surpass the original and, in doing so, to consider the original as a source of inspiration for the creation of new expression in one's own language – yet, never to the degree of exaggerated deviation from common usage that might occur in the original text.¹² The old lady says to her friend of youth, who also has become old now

(One should take a note here that Anand had condemned Anuradha forty five years ago and denied to have slept with her, when she got pregnant.) In the German original text, she talks of a severe injury during an accident; however Toradmal's strategy to make the text sound Marathi, he lets Anuradha use this Marathi expression, that has different connotation. If we look back to what Jasbir Jain has said, *Toradmal is here using the local colour giving consideration to the need to be understood by an audience outside the cultural and lingual situation.*¹³ Indicating several negativities, she must have undergone after he left her. Friedrich Hugo's Essay *On the Art of Translation*¹⁴ is again relevant here to be referred to, when he speaks of enrichment of language by surpassing the original.

He suggests that *the purpose of translation is to go beyond the appropriation of content (...)*¹⁵ It would be further necessary to see what he says in the same context.... *Its effort to enrich ... one does not move toward the original in this case. The original is brought over in order to reveal the latent stylistic possibilities in one's own language that are different from the original.*¹⁶

The sister-in-law of Khanolkar's Hamsie in his adaptation of Brecht's Caucasian Chalk Circle asks her about the child and about her mangalsutra. This is the perfect example of revealing the latent stylistic possibilities in one's own language that are different from the original¹⁷, as Hugo Friedrich says in the above quotation.

REFERENCE

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