

REFLECTIONS ON TRANSLATION: THE CASE OF MALAGASY TALES

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ABSTRACT

This work is part of a quest for the image of the Other and the different aspects of otherness in Malagasy tales. The studies carried out have highlighted a strong presence of the Other in the meshes of the tales. Our hypothesis holds that this presence of the Other is also manifested in the translated tales. The study of a tsimihety tale, written and translated by Rabearison, and a ntandroy tale, written and translated by Reverend Father, Professor Benolo François, confirmed our hypothesis. In fact, the translator leaves his imprint in the tale that he translates that is now carrying his own representations vis-à-vis the Other. This gap between the original and the translation becomes a "significant infidelity" that makes it reach the rank of literary creation. The results we present in this paper are a starting point for the studies to be undertaken in the vast work of literary translation. They also include malagasy literature in the "world literature".

Keyword: *Literary translation - story - representations - image - Other.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The practice of translation dates back to ancient times from antiquity to the present day, as illustrated by textbooks and comparative literary works (Van HOOFF 1991). But this seniority has not yet defined exactly what literary translation is, and this is one of the questions that led us to devote this paper to the translation of stories as a literary translation. Like any literary work, the tale conveys representations of the Other, as seen by its author / storyteller. In this work, we will analyze the translations of some tales of our corpus. This analysis will make it possible to establish the links between the storyteller, the tale and the translator to answer the following question: could the translation into the target language reproduce the representations of the Other conveyed by the written tale in the source dialect? To answer this question, we looked at two tales that were translated by the collectors. The first is the ntandroy¹ tale entitled "Saroy", written and translated by Reverend Father, Professor Benolo François. The second is the tsimihety² tale titled "The Marriage," collected and translated by Rabearison. These two tales are based on the theme of marriage. In this paper, we will search in the translations, the different demonstration of the translator's representations in connection with the Other.

To carry out our analysis, we have adopted a comparatist mindset and we will share this paper in three parts: In a first part, we will start from Todorov's schema, and adapt it to the translation of the imagotype tales. In a second part, we will propose the different stages of the act of translating, for the translation of imagotype tales. In a third part, we will analyze a translation according to the different stages that we have proposed and deduce from it the specificities of the translation of the imagotype tale.

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2. THE TODOROV SCHEME AND THE TRANSLATION OF IMAGOTYPE TALES

To address this part, which deals with the translation of tales, we have chosen the diagram below, which is inspired by Todorov's (1980: 180), to explain the course of the meaning of text. The journey we have followed so far leads us to believe that the tales translated into French bear the image of the Other as seen by the storyteller, and those seen by the translator, who is the reader before the final recipient of the tale translated. Indeed, before arriving in the hands of real listeners, the tales are first passed by a first reader: the translator.

2.1. The schema of the translation of a tale

The study that we are trying to lead in the following lines tries to prove that the translation could be influenced by the representations that the translator has of the ethnic origin of the story, especially if he comes from a different ethnic group. This suggests that: between the tale in local dialect and its translation into official Malagasy language, there is already a difference because changes influenced by the image that the translator has of the ethnic origin of the tale have already left traces in the translated tale. It is a question of seeing to this effect, how this modification of the representations operates carried out often unconsciously by the translator. For this purpose, we think of the choice of the lexicon and the metaphorical processes.

It has been found that the understanding of the literary text is difficult, it remains that its translation will still bring its probable difficulties. Concerning the tales submitted to our reflection, the difficulties lie not only in the translations of the dialects, but also the culture that is reflected in each tale. Indeed, the story is given by the storyteller to the reader-translator. This tale is a statement imbued with different visions of the world, and it is up to the reader-translator to find a statement in the language of arrival, equivalent to these different points of view.

From the starting tale, it is possible to borrow the feelings, the impressions, the perceptions, the sensibilities, the thoughts, the images ... Only there is no rule, nor restriction that the equivalents of these elements found in both languages, that is both in the source and target languages. For more details on this passage from the source-language tale to the target language, we propose the following schema, which attempts to explain the meaning of the original story, produced in its original dialect, to its translation in another language.

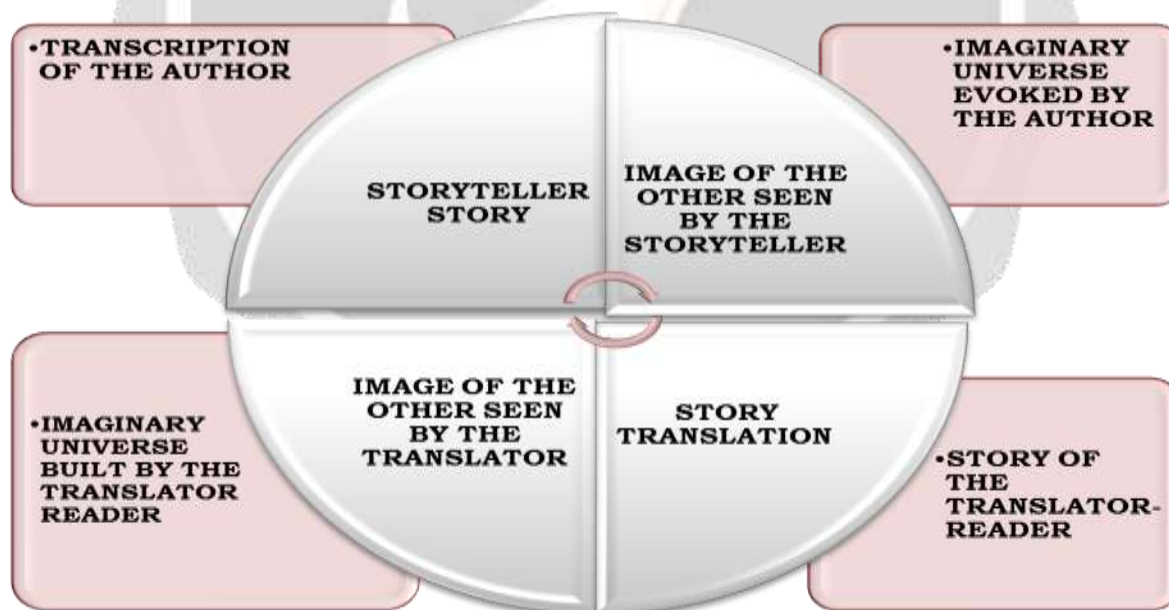


Chart -1: The course of the meaning of the text, applied to the translated tale

In the tale, as in any literary text, there is a mutual relationship between the storyteller and his audience. And this diagram provides more details on the multiplicity of relationships between a story and its reader, especially in the case of a translated tale, where the relationship will be multiplied. For more details, we must talk about a relationship between the storyteller and the translator (as audience and reader of the tale in the source language) on the one hand, and between the translator (as a sham writer of the tale) in the target language, or the storyteller's spokesperson in another language unknown most often by the storyteller) and the audience / reader of the other.

2.2 Two authors for the tale translated

According to KÝRAN, in the translated text, we see two authors at the same time: "We can simultaneously hear the voice of the writer and the translator in the translated text. In translation, it is the translator who always explains the value and the orientation of the translation" (KÝRAN, 1992: 205). By analogy, according to this statement, we can argue that in the translated tale, we can simultaneously hear the voice of the storyteller and the translator, perceive their representations, that is to say, the image of the Other (similar or different). In the translated tale, it is the voice of the translator that dominates most often, because it is the one that influences the orientation of the translation.

It can be deduced that there is no relationship between the storyteller (from the source language or the dialect of departure) and the audience / reader (in this sense, we are talking about the reader who reads the tale in the target language). As confirmed by Umberto ECO's statement: "Textual co-operation is a phenomenon that is realized between two discursive strategies and not between two individual subjects" (quoted by RYNGAERT 1991: 125). Following this statement, we can claim that there is no relation between the storyteller and the translator-reader on the one hand, and between the simulacrum translator-author and the virtual audience-reader in the target language on the other hand. These are discursive strategies that belong to two different peoples.

This reflection requires the highlighting of the difference and / or the similarity between:

- * the imaginary universe of the storyteller
- * the canvas of the imaginary universe of the reader-translator,
- * the imaginary universe, recreated in another language, of the simulacrum translator-author, and
- * the imaginary universe of the real public-reader.

To demonstrate what has just been explained, we rely on Rabearison's collection of tales, written entirely in french. For our analysis, we chose the tale entitled "Marriage" (Rabearison, 1994).

3. THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE TRANSLATION OF AN IMAGINARY TALE

Our choice fell on this tale because it bears the representations of two different ethnic groups: Tsimihety and Betsirebaka³. Through this tale, we confronted two ethnic groups and we were able to understand the images that each ethnic group has of each other. We took into account the fact that between the tsimihety tale told by a storyteller on television for all Malagasy children, and the transcription and translation of this same tale into french by a person from an ethnic group other than Tsimihety there is no essential difference. Neither represents the original tale tsimihety, as it was narrated in its dialect and culture of origin. In both cases, we are dealing with the translation of a linguistic, ideological and an esthetic system in intelligible terms, in order to enter into an "other", "foreign" or even "strange" universe, and to commune with it. All literature is therefore interpretation and in interpretation there is an interpreter. It first translates the real, the life, the nature as the other arts do, then, the public translates it in turn, indefinitely. The story, our object of study, fits perfectly with this schema, since it has crossed the spatio-temporal barriers to reach us through oral and written. It is this mode of transmission of tales which positions the translator, before becoming one, to occupy first the place of the public.

To return to the tsimihety tale titled "Marriage," the starting point of our analysis is the french version written by Rabearison. This tale was given in translation to a person from the tsimihety ethnic group. The results of the analysis of this translated version are very eloquent: changes have been made by the translator tsimihety. Indeed, in the french version written by Rabearison, we find the following passage: "The enriched Betsirebaka have only one idea," (Rabearison, 1994) that the translator tsimihety translated in the passage that follows: "Ny tegna tanjon'ny Betsirebaka, raiky fôagna ". The translation of the word "idea" particularly caught our attention. Indeed, the word "an idea" is translated into tsimihety by a series of expressions: "Ny tegna tanjon'ny" which means "the true objective", "goal" which connotes a calculating spirit on the part of Betsirebaka, so rather pejorative. But in Rabearison's text, the word "a single idea" could refer to an obsession born of the desire to return to his native country, which is rather ameliorative.

A similar case was found in the translation of another passage of the same tale. This is the word translation "our" in the passage "a son of our Farafangana⁴" by translator Tsimihety.

Comparing the french version with the tsimihety translation, we find that there is a gap between the french version and its translation into malagasy, more precisely into local dialect. Instead of becoming "tsika or nay", which are the

³ Denomination of the natives of the South east of Madagascar.

⁴ Town of the south east coast of Madagascar, fief des Betirebaka.

equivalents of "our" in malagasy or dialect tsimihety, the translator chose the word "zareo" which means "them, their" to translate the possessive "our" in the passage "ny zanaka zareo Farafangana ". These choices have caused some changes in the starting tale. These choices were guided by representations that the tsimihety translator has to members of the betsirebaka ethnic group. We can say that these representations act on the unconscious and constitute the imaginary of the members of each malagasy ethnic group. They act unconsciously on the translator, during the acts of translation. So they have an influence on the act of literary production. Choices of pejorative terms to translate a positive idea can be interpreted as a refusal to accept the Other. Similarly, when the tsimihety translator has chosen the possessive "zareo" instead of "tsika", this choice may reflect a refusal to recognize and integrate the Other (the Betsirebaka) into his universe. And it is the translation that has revealed this case of indirect rejection. What can be said about the translated tale resulting from such an influence? Can one say that such a translation alters the written tale in the source language?

3.1. Translation: an act of literary creation

Considering that the act of translation is an act of literary creation, the translated tale that has undergone modifications because of the representations of the translator, is all the more enriched. Moreover, in his book entitled "What is comparative literature?", Pierre Brunel did not fail to stress the importance of the act of translating by evoking the case of translation which can become a masterpiece in another language. He puts forward "significant infidelity" as a criterion that guarantees the esthetics of translation (Brunel, 2009: 43-47). The world of literary translation is an autonomous world where the translator renews ideas, images, characters or words. A translation that is too faithful and mechanical, born of the sickly respect of the original text, is doomed to failure or semi-sterility. This is how it can be said that translations can be enriching for the receiving culture. It is also in this sense that one can affirm that reading and studying tales translated into different Malagasy dialects, marked by different images of the Other from different ethnic groups, allow Malagasy to construct their imaginary, and to get to know each other better in order to build a national identity.

In short, the act of translating is based on the peculiarities (visions of the world) and the qualities (faculties, ability, knowledge, knowledge ...) of the translator. We know he is the spokesman for the storyteller. He never passes for the storyteller. Even if the story is translated by the storyteller himself, he is not the author in this case, but still remains the translator of the tale.

3.2. The four stages of the act of translating

This study which we have just carried out has revealed to us summarily the main stages of a translation of imagotype tales.

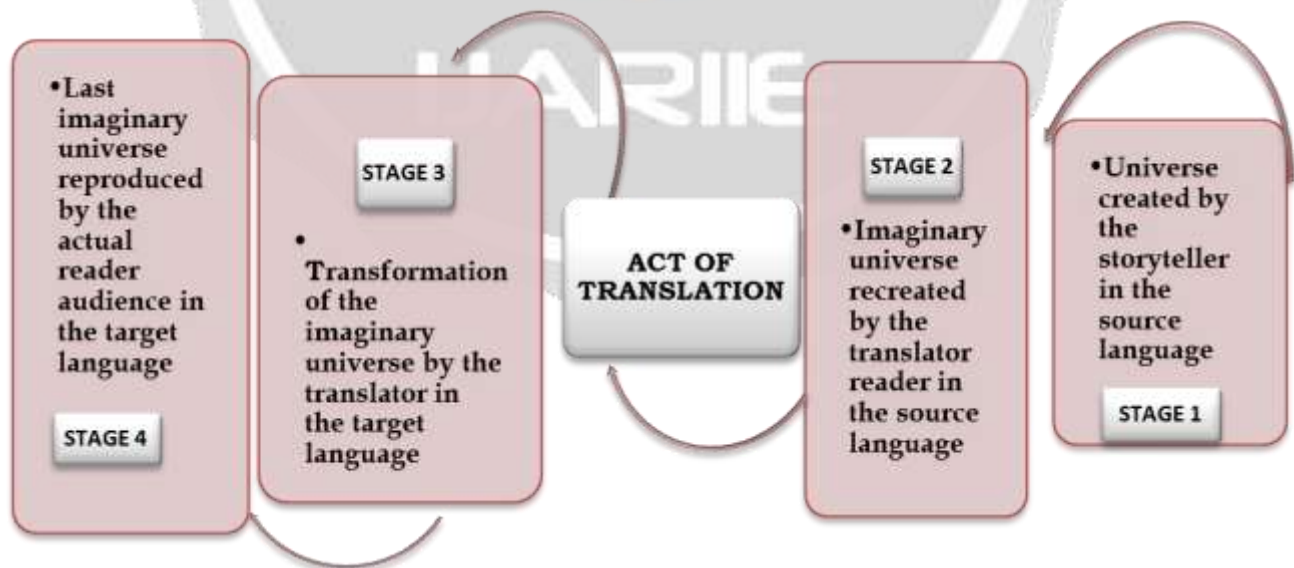


Chart – 2: The four stages of the act of translating

In this diagram, we distinguish the four main stages of a literary translation. For each language, it is necessary to go through at least two phases. There is a clear resemblance between the first and the third stage on the one hand; and

between the second and the fourth stage on the other hand. However, there is a difference between these two groups. For example, in stage 2, the reader-translator tries to analyze and interpret the text to translate it into another language, while in the fourth stage; the reader does not have such a concern: his goal is to interpret and understand what is happening.

We have mentioned that our goal is to highlight the possibility of translating not only the semantic universe of the tale of the source language into the target language, but also its cultural universe through the analysis of the representations of the Other who sketch in the tales. This is what analyses below will reveal.

4. ANALYZE THE TRANSLATION OF AN IMAGINARY TALE

The tale ntandroy entitled "Saroy", (Benolo, 1989: 65-67) from the collection of tales written by Reverend Father, Professor Benolo François is imagotypical by excellence. This tale is written in the vernacular and has been translated by the author himself who is a native of the Androy⁵ region. In the lines that follow, we will analyze a translation made by the author himself, and from the region of origin of the tale. We will try to see if the difference between the translated text and the original is considerable. We will see if the translator has made changes and if so, we will see which ones.

4-1. Sociocultural analysis

This is the story of a proud young woman who refuses all her suitors to finally accept the worst husbands. At the beginning of the tale, a pretender introduces himself and asks for his hand. His mother tells him so: "Nao Saroy, ty lahilahy mandranto azo." And the french translation: "Do you hear Saroy? This man comes to ask you in marriage. " What draw attention in this short passage are the word "mandranto" and his French translation "to propose in marriage". Indeed, this verb is polysemic according to the regions. Among the Vezo⁶ for example, the verb "mandranto" is pejorative because it does not imply in any case the marriage, but rather an extramarital relationship, or a relationship between a couple who is not united by the bonds of marriage. So, if we refer to the vezo culture to translate this passage, we could say for example: "Do you hear Saroy? Someone come to court you or seduce you." However, as it is clearly expressed in this tale, in Androy, the verb "mandranto" can be ameliorative, and often refers to a marriage proposal. Indeed, in the traditional ntandroy culture, the parents of a young man can talk to a young woman's parents to ask for her hand: "mandranto ampelatovo".

What has just been explained makes us recognize this affirmation of Maurice Schrive: "any translation is a betrayal [...]. So we must betray as little as possible" (Schrive, 1990: 6). To this end, the translator must necessarily have in-depth knowledge of the culture of each region.

4-2. Creation of new terms

The study of the translation of the same tale revealed a case similar to the one just mentioned. In this tale, the proud young woman who refused all her human suitors ended up accepting a "lolo" without realizing it. Indeed, like the majority of Malagasy words, the word "lolo" is polysemic according to the regions: in the highlands, "lolo" means "butterfly", it can also mean in malagasy "angatra, avelo ..." which means "ghost, returning" in French. In some areas of southern Madagascar, such as the Vezo for example, this word may have the meaning "a cemetery, a tomb, a vault ...".

But for his translation, Reverend Father, Professor Benolo François did not take any of these terms, and chose the word "reviviscent". In biology, the word "reviviscent" means, according to the Internet user's dictionary⁷, some organisms that have the property of returning to life in contact with water after having dried up. The reverso dictionary⁸ offers the synonyms that can have this word to help the translator in his choice: rebirth, resurrection

⁵ Region of the extreme south of Madagascar.

⁶ Ethnic group of South West of Madagascar.

⁷ <http://www.linternaute.com/dictionnaire/fr/definition/reviviscent/>. Viewed: 20/04/2016.

⁸ <http://dictionnaire.reverso.net/francais-definition/r%C3%A9viviscence>. Viewed: 20/04/2016

(figurative sense), reincarnation, regeneration, revitalization, awakening, ... None of these definitions correspond to the definition of "lolo" according to the Ntandroy⁹. Usually we talk about ghost. But this comes out mainly from the realm of the mind, whereas the term "lolo" that the author translated by "reviviscent", at least according to the accepted conception in Androy, refers to the dead who come back to life by being of the order of the flesh and the bone, in spite of their rather special state as it was described in the thesis (Benolo, 1992) of Reverend Father, Professor Benolo François. Finally, "lolo" or "reviviscent" are dead who come back to life in flesh and bone because of a very special phenomenon caused by a curse. There are several stages (still at home, already in the tomb, after burial). But it is always a "lolo", despite the degree of deformation: "lolo mbe ndaty" that is to say, still recoverable, and who can continue to live like a normal human, like the husband of Saroy; or "lolo 'fa biby" irretrievable, good for nothing that can no longer live with humans. We recognize here the influence of the language of arrival in the translation of the word "lolo", the choice of the translator was focused on a scientific term (biology). This choice is justified by the inexistence of an appropriate term in the current language, and shows us the peculiarity of the translating practice of Reverend Father, Professor Benolo François, and allows us to approach literary translation from a wider angle.

In short, this analysis of translation by an author-translator from the region of origin of the tale revealed nothing in terms of representations. On the other hand, it demonstrates the importance of the extensive knowledge that the translator must have for the translation of imaginary tales. This knowledge must extend in all areas: linguistic, socio-cultural, scientific, literary ... All this fits perfectly in the field of comparatism.

5. CONCLUSION

The tales, like any malagasy literary work, needs to be analyzed in depth, as Andriamampianina Sylvia said in her dissertation on Malgacheity (Andriamampianina, 2011). It is in this perspective that we have focused on the translation of the tales of our corpus, in order to detect any form of presence of the Other.

Thus we chose to analyze the translations made by two great storytellers: Rabearison and his tsimihety tale translated into french language entitled "marriage"; and the Reverend Father, Professor Benolo François and his ntandroy tale entitled "Saroy". The purpose of our analysis is to determine if there is a gap between the story in french and vernacular. And if there is a gap, highlight the origins and stakes of this gap in the field of literary translation. As a starting point, we were inspired by Todorov's translation scheme, and adapted it to the analysis of the translations of the tales of our corpus. We have identified the four stages of the act of translation that starts from the storyteller's imagination in his source language, through the universe imagined by the reader-translator, who will do the act of translation before to be recreated in the imaginary of the target reader. To carry out our investigation, we gave the tsimihety tale translated into french by Rabearison, to a member of the tsimihety ethnic group to retranslate it into tsimihety dialect. We took the ntandroy tale written in the ntandroy dialect by the collector, and translated into french by the same person, who comes from the ntandroy ethnic group.

The results we have obtained are very eloquent. The translation done by the translator tsimihety revealed that there is a gap between the original and the version translated into dialect tsimihety. The possessive adjective used by the translator is different from the one used by Rabearison. This chosen possessive adjective betrays a form of indirect rejection of the Other, engendered by the image that members of the tsimihety ethnic group have for members of the betsirebaka ethnic group. The use of derogatory terms to translate expressions with ameliorative connotations goes in the same direction. As for the translation of the tale by the same author and from the same ethnic group as the original dialect of the tale, it provided us with relevant information that corroborated our hypotheses on translation. Indeed, the analysis of the choice of terms for the french translation carried out by the translator required sociological surveys because the meaning of the same term changes according to the regions. Some terms have no equivalent in french. For translation, the translator had to invent a new term, which is inspired by the scientific specificities of the term to be translated.

In the end, the analysis of the translations revealed very important elements in the field of translation and imagology. A translated tale conveys the representations of the translator. Even if the gap between the source text and the translated text widens, the translated tale is only further enriched. Unfaithfulness to the original is considered here as a "significant infidelity," which places the translator in the rank of creator and its translation, a literary work.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

⁹ Said natives of the region Androy

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BIOGRAPHIE

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