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ABSTRACT

The research paper focuses on chances and challenges in Comparative Literature. Some years ago, a renowned Senior Professor of English at the Central Institute of English and foreign languages in Hyderabad (India), Dr S. Krishnaswami suggested to me, in the course of his discussion with me on J. Krishnamurthi, the possibility of making an innovative exploration into a comparative study of the Eastern ideas as expressed by Nagarjuna of the second century A.D and J. Krishnamurti of the twentieth century on the one hand, and the Western Post-Modern trends as seen in the works of Jacques Derrida. Such a study, not merely serves the purpose of mutual illumination, but also offers fresh insights into the complexities of the field of Translation. This research proposes to give attention to both the problems-the problem of language as an indeterminate and unsuccessful effort at changeless signification and of language as the embodiment of intelligible experience across the ages, involving as much of diachronism as of synchronism. As such, it has an inviting piquancy and challenge but it is also an ultimate compromise.

Key Words: Comparative, Mutual- Illumination, Translation, insights.

The research begins with Derrida from the West. His Post-Modern views are fairly well-known. The works of Derrida talk of the futility of finding a determinate meaning. On the other hand, translation is at once a quest for a determinate meaning Derrida inserts in us an awareness of the impossibility of such determinacy. What a word means is determined not by its own meaning (which is in itself an approximation at best) but by the meaning or meanings of its context and the other words that go along with it. Derrida discusses the presences and absences, the distinction between speech and writing, and the role of culture in consolidating and disrupting meaning. The quest for the equivalent of a word in another language and its significance in itself and in a particular collection of words, a sentence, a paragraph or a stanza or a context in short-is itself problematic. It is problematic enough in a context where the source language and the target language belong to the same large culture and the problems multiply when the source and target languages belong to different cultures.

The research shall now turn to Nagarjuna who lived nearly two thousand years ago in India. He was a Buddhist monk-philosopher. He was the founder of the Madhyamika or Middle Path School of Buddhism. He was responsible for the culmination of Mahayana in the Madhyamika School. The advent of Nagarjuna marks a very important turning point not only in the history of Buddhism, but also in the history of Indian philosophy. Buddhism which was characterizes by the dogmatism of accepting the theory of unique, discrete, momentary particulars and its theory of no-self, was revolutionized by Nagarjuna, who by his dialectics has destroyed the notion of ultimacy of any theory or concept.

Nagarjuna is known for his concept of impediment to experience reality. We think of Derrida and his 'Deconstruction' when we analyze such Eastern ideas. Thought, logic and reason fail in apprehending reality because they contain in themselves seeds of their own destruction. The Western thinker, Hume, holds a position which is similar to that of Buddhism. They agree that reality consists only of impressions and that there is no logical necessity to suppose a self. But Nagarjuna differs from Hume when the latter, being an empiricist, says that all ideas are to be traced to their respective impressions. Hume advocates the ultimacy of impressions. But Nagarjuna is not committed to any dogma. Kant, like Nagarjuna, recognizes the subjectivity of judgments.

Understanding, according to Kant, is conceptual understanding a thing, as it is, is not possible. A thing can be understood according to the 'a priori' structure of mind. Mrs. Hema argues: "If reason tries to transcend itself, i.e. the 'a priori' structure, it ends up in absurdities called antinomies. The world-in-itself is an assumption behind all experience/ though Kant assumes this i.e. the noumenon to be the objective ground of experience, which can never be by its very nature circular. Such awareness leads to a critique of reason. All the views are reflections of one's psychological inclinations which constitute one's past.

It may be said that Nagarjuna's dialectics exposes the inherent conflict in reasoning. He reveals the 'emptiness' of all concepts. He makes an attempt at transcending logic through logic. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that J. Krishnamurti and Ramana Maharishi exhort us to transcend the eternal flow of thoughts using thoughts. Paradoxically, the thought thus used, dwindles and vanishes, like the stick that is used to kindle the fire in a bundle of sticks. Thinking can conceive reality only in four ways: Being, Non-Being, Being and Non-Beings, neither being nor non-being. Nagarjuna dismisses all the four categories. He says that thought and knowledge is incapable of comprehending reality. ["All thought corrupts" said J. Krishnamurti in May 1981 while interviewed by Bernard Levin on the British Broadcasting corporation television. Nagarjuna aims at highest wisdom (prajna) by negating thought, Word is thought. The famous Chinese thinker, Lao-Tao of the sixth century BC says that when one who experiences Tao uses the word Tao to express it, Tao disappears. The word is not the thing. On the other hand, the word acts as 'emptiness' (sunya). He is critical in his approach. He goes to the very end of logic in analyzing its structure in order to prove its emptiness with regard to ultimate questions. He shows the relative nature of concepts. A thesis is dependent on its anti-thesis. Therefore it is incapable of giving any truth about the reality. Reason, trying to transcend itself, gets trapped by its limitations.

Nagarjuna's method is one of negation. He does not deny the things, but the attitude of conceptualizing them. A genuine seeker after truth is not to be lost in the conflicting views about reality, which are mere views and have access to reality. By negation, the unconscious shackles of dogmatis are shattered, where the supreme truth (prajna) is revealed. Here again negation is a method and not the dogmatic denial of all views about reality. It is not another judgment.

Since there is no logical criterion, reality remains untouched by thought. Any statement about reality is dogmatic. Nagarjuna proves the falsity of such a statement by his dialectic method of 'prasanga' or the reduction ad absurdum method. Discursive thinking known, his position is subject precisely because the noumena can never be known. But for a 'sunyavadin' both the subjective and the objective are inter-dependent. The Madhyamika is not concerned with the basic conditions of knowledge as Kant, but is concerned with showing the inherent contradiction in reason. Thus Nagarjuna's dialectics is curative and its implications are psychological in the sense that it does not seek to set up foundation knowledge like Kant or Descartes, but denies the very basis of discursive thinking to be empty. Clinging on to any view is an unhealthy state which is responsible for all our suffering".

Nagarjuna, J. Krishnamurti and Derrida seem to be sailing in the same boat experiencing flashes of tremendous insights into the unknown. They express their experience in their own ways enjoying the freshness and newness of life. Now it is J. Krishnamurti's turn to enlighten us on the complexities of our expressing our experience. Can an experience find itself alive in translation in any form? Is translation a vain or valid effort, on one's part, to communicate 'something' to oneself and to others, (i.e.) at the root level and at the level of the leaves? In other words, translation takes place at the time to creation in the mind. What is thus produced gets translated in various forms to be passed on to the other minds.

J. Krishnamurti is widely known twentieth century thinker, we may say that while retaining the 'core' of what Nagarjuna propounds, he has his own original method of explaining it through his talks, discussions and writings. (In 'The way of Intelligence' (1985), he exclaims, "Is it a theory? The moment we enter into theory, and then it is meaningless". He refuses to give nicely labeled ideas and theories. Since he knows our fixation on words, he uses no technical jargon. The simple words that he uses have their own connotation. They are context-based. Robert Powell in his article "An approach to Krishnamurti" points out: "Many an intellectual has come away from Krishnaji's meeting with one or two isolated sentences firmly fixed in his mind...proceeds to build a whole philosophy upon this false basis. And, of course, these idle thought structures are always closely interwoven with the prejudices and preconceived ideas of the person concerned".

J. Krishnamurti's only concern is "to set man absolutely, unconditionally free". He says that human nature has not changed and that it has remained conditioned for thousands of years. We are reminded of what E.V Rieu says while introducing his translation of Homer's epic *The Iliad*: "My illusions were shattered by a single reading of the sordid quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles in Book I. I soon became convinced that human nature has not materially altered in the three thousand years since Homer wrote". J. Krishnamurti does not authorize anybody to carry on his message because he knows that his message will be lost or twisted in the process of transmission and translation.

Fritjof Capra, a famous physicist, in his uncommon wisdom: conversations with Remarkable people (Flamingo, 1989) says: J. Krishnamurti was a very original thinker who reflected all spiritual authority and traditions. His teachings were quite close to those of Buddhism, but he never used any terms from Buddhism or from any other branch of traditional Eastern thought. The task he set himself was extremely difficult to use language and reasoning in order to lead his audience beyond language and reasoning-and the way in which he went about it was highly impressive. Fritjof Capra gratefully acknowledges that the problem that J. Krishnamurti has solved for him, "Zen-like with one stroke", is the problem of how one can transcend thinking without losing one's commitment to science".

J. Krishnamurti's teachings remained the same throughout, though his expression has changed words such as 'emotion' and 'experience' acquired different meanings. Robert Powell in his "An Approach to Krishnamurti" says:

"...in the early years when his expression was very concise and many things were implied but unspoken, Krishnaji used to say that if you wished liberation you should seek experience. These days when he is more explicit and easier to follow, he says that no amount of experience will lead to liberation. On a strictly verbal level these two sentences taken out of their contexts obviously represent a logical contradiction, but on the level of true meaning they point to the same thing". [Karmayogi, a devotee of Sri Aurobindo, points out that what is left unsaid carries a power that the spoken word lacks. *The New Indian Express*, (Cbe) October 1, 20

J. Krishnamurti deliberately refrains from systematizing his teachings. He does not even consider them teachings. He is against methods, systems, organizations and patterns since he regards them as things which make life routine and mechanical. He is careful to see that his listeners do not fall into a pattern. That is why, quite often, he shocks them out of complacency. He makes them feel the limitations of words, grammar and language. Yet he uses them with artistry. He uses languages in such a way that his listeners transcend the limitations of language and yet a glimpse of the Infinite. Like Nagarjuna and Derrida, Krishnamurti locates the 'flaw' in systems, methods and patterns, 'deconstructs' them and starts reconstructing in a totally new and fresh dimension, retaining paradoxically, the spirit of truth in them. Example, he says that to be religions is not to belong to any religion-movement to moment perception of the Spirit of Life has its own ways of reaching others.

Special words are used by those who have unique spiritual experience. For instance, there are terms such as self, souls, ego, consciousness, over mind, supra-mental consciousness, spirit, cosmic consciousness and unity consciousness. Sir Aurobindo was such words in his writings. Latest advancement in science comes to our rescue in tackling such issues satisfactorily. Empirical proof for the abstract terms has started coming out as a result of the human brain. Dr. Vilayanur S. Ramachandiran, Director of the centre for Brain and cognition and Professor of Neuroscience at the university of California, San Diego and Adjunct Professor at all Salk Institute, La Jolla has made a break through. His widely acclaimed book *Phantoms in the Brain*, translated into eight languages, and also his famous Reith Lectures on 'Phantoms in the Brain', 'Synapses and the Self'. 'The Artful Brain', 'Purple Numbers and Sharp Cheese' and 'Neuroscience-the New Philosophy' indicate that we are now poised for 'the brain revolution' which means 'understanding the nature of understanding'. According to Dr. V.S. Ramachandran, neuroscience will finally enable us to answer the entire lofty philosophical question like "What is the Self?" "Do we have Free Will?" "What is consciousness?" The medical Professor says that what neuroscience will eventually do is to succeed in explaining each of the aspects of self individually in terms of what is going on in the brain. The scientists firmly believe that questions like 'What is Life?' and 'What is Consciousness?' can now be approached empirically.

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