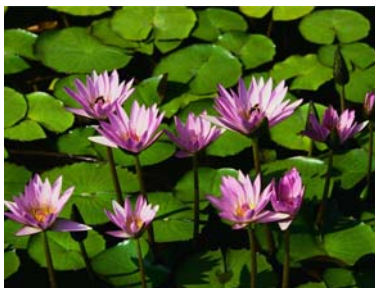


B. R Bapuji

A SHORT HISTORY OF TRANSLATION STUDIES



Introduction

In this lesson we will try to narrate in brief the history of translation across the world. Before we do so, we will clarify to ourselves what is meant by 'history' and what is meant by 'translation'. After specifying our concepts of 'history' and 'translation', we will begin our historical account from the ancient times and continue up to the present century. As we cannot conduct original research into the history of translation for the purpose of one lesson such as this, we will rely upon the historical information given in books on translation. We will mention, within brackets, the second name of the Author/Authoress, the year of first publication of the book/article and page number in which the relevant quotation/information that we refer to is found. The full details of the book / article will be given at the end of the unit under the heading "**References**".

Concept of “history”

The **Random House Dictionary of English Language [RHDEL]** defines the word 'history' as "*a continuous, systematic narrative of past events as relating to a particular people, country, period, person, etc., usually written in chronological order*". Originally, the word 'history' comes from a Greek word meaning 'to weave'. What historians do is to weave a pattern by selecting the significant threads of past events. However, all historians do not weave history in the same manner. They differ in their methodological perspectives. Broadly speaking, there have been two fundamentally different perspectives on 'history': **Idealist and Materialist**. Idealist historians assume that all past events were determined or are explainable in terms of "*Ideas*", the "*Will*" and the "*Consciousness*" of human beings whereas **Materialist** historians assume that all past events were determined or are explainable in terms of material life conditions, namely economy (the understructure) and politics, literature, law, art, philosophy and such other ideological forms (the superstructure).

The materialist conception of history, which we consider as scientific and, is therefore, adopted in this lesson, has two methodological approaches: **the dialectical and the historical approaches**. The dialectical method examines all events, phenomena, etc. not in isolation as dead facts but in their inseparable connection and interaction with each other. The historical method treats all events, phenomena, etc., not as eternal but transitory in their nature and development. The materialist conception of history may therefore also be called "*Dialectical and Historical materialism*".

We will try to narrate the history of Translation Studies from the perspective of Dialectical and Historical Materialism in the following sections of our lesson. But, in the meantime, let us briefly illustrate how Dialectical and Historical Materialism analyses will treat events. Take, for example, the establishment of the *School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)* in London. The British colonial rulers established SOAS in 1917 with the declared aim that such a center would enable the British civil and military administrators to learn the languages, literatures and cultures of their 'Oriental' and African colonies (Newmeyer 1986: 57). This is merely the appearance of the event. The reality is much deeper. The British economy was essentially Capitalist and more especially Imperialist in the sense that it needed 'markets' for its international trade. This economic interest of the British ruling classes promoted the British colonial administrators to consolidate the existing colonial power and extend it further if possible. One of the means to realize this social class objective was to establish centers for the study of colonial languages, literatures and cultures. Such centres enable colonial state functionaries of the British ruling classes to understand and control the oppressed classes of their colonies. However, the oppressed classes too, through their experience, understand and wage struggles against the colonial ruling classes and try to get rid of them. This is what the history has been in the South Asian and a number of other contexts.

Thus, as Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, proponents of scientific Communism, observed in the famous "*Manifesto of the Communist Party*" (1847-8), "*the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle*". Let us recall their observations on the historical social classes and their struggles: "*Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild master and journey-man, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes*". In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we had patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs, and we find, in almost all of these classes, subordinate gradations.

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of the feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: *the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat*." (As cited in Bapuji, ed. 1993: 23-4). Marx and Engels further demonstrated that "*all historical struggles, whether they proceed in the political, religious, philosophical or some other ideological domain, are in fact only the more or less clear expressions of struggles of social classes.*" (Engels as cited in Bapuji ed. 1993: 25). Thus, for example, the so-called Reformation Movement of the sixteenth century, which challenged the authority of the (Catholic-) church, was an expression of the struggles of the then existing social classes/groups in Germany. The (Catholic-) clergy, Saxony - kings and Peasantry constituted three main social classes during the movement. Although it appeared as a religious movement, it was in fact a struggle to occupy the position of the ruling class. The Saxony-kings, led by their ideologist Martin Luther, opposed the dominance of the Catholic Clergy while the Peasantry led by Thomas Munzer struggled against their exploitation and oppression by both the church and the kings. Thus, the Reformation was only an outward, religious expression of a deeper economic and political struggle between those classes in the European context.

The two examples under discussion - i.e., the establishment of the SOAS and the launching of the Reformation Movement-- are given here only as instances of events about which one has to write a history. We have to view the activity of translation as a set of events from a similar historical perspective.

Concept of Translation

The **RHDEL** defines '*translation*' as "*the rendering of some thing into another language*". This definition is very brief when compared with the definitions of other scholars who worked / have been working in the area of Translation. Scholars have defined translation variously as '*reproducing*' (Nida 1949: 76), '*Substituting/replacement*' (Catford 1965: 1 & 20), '*transfer*' (Brislin 1976:1), '*conversion*' (Tweney & Hoemann 1976: 138), '*replacement/transfer*' (Pinchuk 1977: 30 & 35), or '*rendering*' (Newmark 1988: 5) of the '*message*' (Nida), '*text*' (Catford), '*thoughts/ideas*' (Brislin), '*meaningful utterances*' (Tweney & Hoemann), '*words/meanings*' (Pinchuk), '*meaning*' (Newmark) of one language into/ by another language.

The language from which translation is done is called '**Source Language**' (SL) and the language into which translation is done is called '**Target Language**' (TL). Some scholars (e.g. Nida) prefer the term '**Receptor Language**' (RL) to 'target language' since the word 'target' does not always have a pleasant connotation.

Whatever are the definitions and terminologies of the scholars working in the field of Translation, most, if not all, of them devote their attention to the 'principles and procedures of translation'. The study of principles and procedures of translation by various scholars in different periods of history gave rise to a new field of scholarship or research called '**Translation Studies**'. Translation Studies includes three interrelated and mutually

interacting aspects of translation: *theory, practice and evaluation*. In the sections that follow, we will try to know in brief the history of Translation Studies. But before we go into the brief history of Translation Studies, we need to broaden the scope of the term 'Translation'.

The meaning and scope of the term 'translation' becomes very narrow, restricted, incomplete and even misleading if we perceive and define 'translation' as an autonomous scholarly activity of rendering a text from one language into another. No doubt translation does involve "rendering of something into another language" but it is essentially a social activity whose 'meaning' is perceived either consciously or unconsciously by the participants of that activity (i.e. actual translators, patrons /sponsors of translation etc.). Here it is necessary to clarify the specific meanings of the two words we used viz. '*social*' and '*meaning*'.

By '*social*', we mean everything and anything related to society which, metaphorically speaking, consists of a 'Base/Real Foundation' (economic structure) and a corresponding and interacting 'Superstructure' (politics, culture, religion, ideology, etc).

Now let us turn to the other word viz. '*meaning*' in relation to translation. By 'meaning', we understand the purpose or the goal aimed at or pursued consciously or unconsciously by those performing an action.

We may conclude this section by giving our definition of translation based on the above observations: Translation is a socially meaningful activity - of rendering a text from SL to TL / RL - carried out by its practitioners to achieve the goals set by the respective social classes / groups in a given historical period.

We will exemplify this definition in the following section.

Brief History of Translation Studies

Before we start narrating the history of Translation Studies even briefly, we have to caution ourselves that the history of translation is so vast that it is practically impossible to cover it adequately or compress it in a single book, let alone in a single lesson. It is "by no means a record of easily distinguishable, orderly progression. It shows an odd lack of continuity". It will, therefore, be possible in this lesson merely to refer to some known *landmarks in the long history of translation* (Amos 1920: x, Finlay 1971:18, Steiner 1975: 236, Bassnett-McGuire 1980: 39). Further, we face problems in making clear-cut divisions of the historical periods by following a loose chronological structure as well as the commonly known / identified approximate historical epochs, namely, Antiquity, Middle Ages and Modern Times. However, our narration will be guided by the above-discussed concepts of '*history*' and '*translation*' on the one hand, and the dialectical and historical method of analysis on the other.

Translation in Antiquity

Antiquity or Ancient times for our purposes, approximately begins from about fourth millennium B.C., and ends by the fifth century A.D. However, there may be differences between Asiatic Antiquity and classical/ European Antiquity in their social organizations.

Third Millennium B.C.: As per available evidence, the first traces of translation appeared in the inscriptions written in two languages in the Egyptian Old Kingdom in about *Third Millennium B.C.* (Newmark 1981:3).

During the days of King Hammurabi in about 2100 B.C., *the City of Babylon* (roughly the present day Baghdad City of Iraq) was inhabited by people speaking different languages. The official communication of the Kingdom was conducted by translating official proclamations into various languages spoken by the subjects.

Fifth Century B.C.: In the Ancient times, the Jewish community was mainly engaged in international trade more, particularly money-lending (or usury). Jewish traders used to speak a variety of the Arabic language in the fifth century B.C. Arabic was a wide spread trade language of the Eastern Mediterranean region. Arabic-speaking Jewish people who returned to their native region were unable to understand the classical Hebrew of the scriptures. Therefore, Nehemiah, a Jewish leader, got classical/scriptural Hebrew translated into the Arabic language for the sake of Jews who were no longer able to understand *Classical Hebrew* (Nida 1964: 11).

Third Century B.C.: In the third century B.C., Dargon, *the King of Assyria* (a region now largely co-extensive with Iraq) used to proclaim his conquests and accomplishments in the many languages of his empire (Nida 1964: 11).

Alexandria (of Egypt) was the intellectual and commercial center of the ancient Mediterranean region. As there was a large Greek-speaking Jewish community in Alexandria, *the Old Testament* (the first part of the Bible) was translated from Hebrew into Greek. This translation had been called *Septuagint* (=seventy) because seventy scholars did it. Scholars were sent to Alexandria by Eleazar, the High Jewish priest at Jerusalem, at the request of the then ruler of Egypt, *Ptolemy II* (309-247 B.C.)

About 240 B.C., a number of Greek classics were translated into Latin. Livius Andronicus had translated Homer's *Odyssey* into Latin verse. Other scholars like Naevius and Ennius translated a number of Greek plays into *Latin* (Finlay 1971: 18). Since then, Romans began to take over many elements of Greek culture via translation (Newmark 1981:3).

Secondary Century B.C.: One of the most famous translations in the ancient world around second century B.C., is Rosetta Stone which contained translations from Egyptian languages into Greek. This stone was found by French soldiers through a shepherd in 1799 near Rosetta, on the western mouth of the river Nile in Africa.

First Century B.C.: *Cicero* (106-43 B.C.), Roman statesman, orator and writer translated Plato's (427-347 B.C.) *Protagoras* and other Greek works into Latin.

Cicero's approach to translation was 'sense for sense' and not 'word for word'. That means a translator should bear in mind the intended meaning of the SL author and render it by means of RL words or word-order which does not sound strange to the RL readers. Let us see what Cicero himself said about his approach to translation: "if I render word for word, the result will sound uncouth (strange), and if compelled by necessity I alter anything in the order or wording, I shall seem to have departed from the function of a translator" (As cited in Basnett-McGuire 1980: 43).

Another contemporary of Cicero was *Catullus* (84-54 B.C.), a Roman poet, who translated several Greek works into Latin. Translations from Greek into Latin were made under the influence of Greek, the then center of western civilization. However, there occurred a reversal in this situation because Rome rose in importance as the center of a great empire around 27 B.C. (Finlay 1971: 18).

First Century A.D.: *Pliny the Younger* (AD 62-113), a Roman writer, statesman and orator, practised and propagated translating as a literary technique. Let us see what he said on the importance and usefulness of translations:

"You ask me what course of study I think you should follow during your present prolonged holiday. The most useful thing, which is always being suggested, is to translate Greek into Latin and Latin into Greek. This kind of exercise develops in one a precision and richness of vocabulary, a wide range of metaphor and power of exposition, and moreover, imitation of the best models leads to a like aptitude for original composition. At the same time, any point which might have been overlooked by a reader cannot escape the eye of a translator. All this cultivates perception and critical sense" (As cited in Copeland 1991:31).

Though Pliny the Younger emphasized the importance of translation, he tended towards "*word for word*" translation rather than "sense for sense" translation unlike Cicero.

Fourth Century A.D.: *Pope Damasus* (366-384 A.D.) commissioned *Saint Jerome* (340-420 A.D.), a Christian ascetic and Biblical scholar, to translate the New Testament (=the second part of the Bible) from Hebrew into the popular, non-literary Latin (=Vulgate). Jerome's line of approach was "sense for sense" and not "word for word" (Nida 1964:12 & 13; *Basnett-McGuire* 1980: 46).

Summary: Translation in the Antiquity, on the whole, was utilised as a means to realise the political and religious goals of the ruling classes as represented by Kings and religious leaders respectively. Two different orientations towards translation, namely '*sense for sense*' and '*word for word*', existed in the antiquity.

Translation in the Middle Ages

Middle Ages roughly represent the time between late fifth century and fifteenth century A.D. in Europe. Middle Ages, however, continue till the advent of European Colonialism (about eighteenth century) in the 'Oriental' and African countries.

Eighth and Ninth Century A.D.: A rise in the development of Arabian learning led to a number of translations from Greek into Arabic. Scholars from Syria, a part of the *Roman Empire* (during 64 B.C. - 636 A.D.) came to Baghdad and translated Greek works of Physician *Hippocrates* (460-360 B.C.), philosophers *Plato* (427-327 B.C.) and *Aristotle* (384-322 B.C.) into Arabic during the eighth and ninth century A.D. (Finlay 1971: 19). Baghdad continued to be a center of translations of Greek classics into Arabic even in the twentieth century A.D.

King Alfred, who ruled West Saxons (=Britain) during 871-99 A.D. made/sponsored translations of those books which everyone should know, into the language that every one could understand. However, his orientation towards the translation process was "*sometimes word-for-word, sometimes sense-by-sense*" (Bassnett McGuire 1980: 50-51).

Eighth to Twelfth Century A.D.: Moorish in the eighth century A.D. enables many Arabic texts to find their way to Toledo, a city in Spain which was formally the capital of Spain under the Romans. This Moorish invasion of Spain resulted in the invasion of translations from Arabic and Syriac into Latin. This trend continued through the eleventh and twelfth century A.D. as Latin still occupied the place of lingua franca in the world of learning. At the end of the twelfth century A.D. when the Moorish supremacy collapsed in Spain, the Toledo school of translators translated Arabic versions of Greek scientific and philosophical classics into *Latin* (Nida 1964: 14, Finlay 1971:19).

Eleventh to Thirteenth Century A.D.: From the eleventh century there began translations into Telugu from Sanskrit. It was around the same time that works of translation and 'transcreation' were begun in a number of other Indian languages, too. The first work of translation in the Telugu speech community was the Telugu version of the Sanskrit epic Mahabharata by Nannaya, the first Telugu poet in the written tradition. Tikkana and Errana followed Nannaya in completing the translation of Mahabharata into Telugu. Nannaya's translation is characterized by an excessive use of Sanskrit vocabulary and Tikkana's translation is oriented more toward native vocabulary.

Fourteenth century A.D.: *John Wycliffe* (1330-84 A.D.), the noted Oxford theologian, translated the complete Bible into English during 1380-84. He argued that each man should be granted access to the Bible in a language that he could understand because man is immediately responsible to God and because God's law is nothing but guidance of the *Bible* (Bassnett-McGuire 1980:47). By implication Wycliffe was '*protesting*' the authoritative mediation of the Pope, Archbishop, Bishops, etc. between the masses and God.

Fifteenth Century A.D.: John Purvey, a disciple of Wycliffe revised the first edition of the New Testament and prepared an "intelligible, idiomatic version" so that even lay persons could understand it without difficulty (Bassnett-McGuire 1980: 47).

Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century A.D.: At the time of the Renaissance there was a flood of translations largely from Greek. The spirit of Renaissance inspired and gave rise to numerous translations of scientific and religious texts in England and elsewhere (Amos 1920: 81; Nida 1963: 14; Finlay 1971: 18). A major force behind these translations was aristocratic interest and patronage. These translations into vernaculars legitimized vernacular writings because they promised access to Latin culture. However, the translations from Latin to vernaculars reproduced the systems of containment and control that sustain the Latin academic tradition (Copeland 1991: 224-8).

In the Indian context, during the early middle Bengali period, i.e. 1300-1500 A.D., the *Mohammedan emperors* who ruled Bengal realized the "wonderful influence" which Ramayana and Mahabharata exerted in "moulding" the religious and family life of the Hindu subject-population and therefore employed Sanskrit knowing Bengali scholars to translate them into Bengali (Sengupta, S. 1993 - Ch.1.). Such translations enabled the rulers to understand and control their subjects.

Sixteenth Century A.D.: Sixteenth century witnessed an ideological movement known as "*Protestantism*". Protestantism was a movement of protest against the domination of the church authorities over all other social classes. It is also referred to as "Reformation" because it demanded reforms in the hegemonic functioning of the church in matters of state administration, economy, religion, etc. It was mainly a movement of / by the kings and princes against the pope, bishops and such other authorities. Though the reformation movement spread itself throughout Europe, its overwhelming presence was felt in Germany. In the field of religion, church authorities (Pope and Diet, the legislative body of the church) forbade the lay people to read the Bible in their native languages. *Martin Luther* (1483-1546), the German theologian, author and the leader of the reformation translated Bible into High German and used it as an ideological weapon of the Protestant movement against the Roman clergy. Luther translated the *New Testament* in 1522 and finished translation of the entire Bible by 1534. *Erasmus* (1466-1536), a Dutch theologian, scholar and writer, published the first Greek New Testament in 1516 and this version served subsequently as the basis for Luther's 1522 German version. Luther argued that people could understand the "holy scriptures", only through their native language. In the sixteenth century, the translation activity especially the history of Bible translation tied up with Protestantism in *Europe* (Nida 1964: 14, Bassnett-McGuire 1980: 48-9). We may cite a few more examples.

Thomas Munzer, the Revolutionary leader of the German Peasantry during the Reformation movement, had sponsored a translation, free from Latin vocabulary that must be read in its entirety to the peasants. Munzer used the New Testament as one of the ideological weapons not simply against the catholic clergy but also against the Saxony-kings who were oppressing the peasantry. The Saxony kings who were ideologically supported by Luther hanged Munzer along with peasants after brutally suppressing them

(Engels 1850: 60 & 62). The Bible translations of Luther and Munzer reveal to us how translation is used by conflicting social classes as an ideological weapon.

Further, let us consider a few examples from other European countries. In England, *William Tyndale* (1492-1536), a religious reformer published the English translation of the New Testament in 1525. But this translation was publicly burnt by the catholic church authorities in 1526. Tyndale translated the New Testament from Greek and the Old Testament from Hebrew. As the church authorities did not like the "way" Tyndale translated the Bible, the authorities burnt Tyndale alive at the stake in 1536. Similarly *Etienne Dolet* (1509-46) a French humanist was tried for translating one of Plato's "Dialogues" in such a way as to imply disbelief in immortality. He was condemned as an atheist, tortured and strangled at the age of thirty-seven and his body was burned with the copies of his books (Nida 1964: 15, Bassnett-McGuire 1980: 48 & 54).

The episodes of Tyndale, Dolet and such other translators and sponsors like Munzer amply demonstrate that translation is not simply an autonomous scholarly activity but also an ideological weapon in the historical struggle between social classes/groups. In this context, it is interesting to read an explanation offered by Lefevere, an important scholar in Translation Studies. *Lefevere* (1990:16) observes: "Translators do not get burnt at the stake because they do not know Greek when translating the Bible. They got burnt at the stake because the way they translated the Bible could be said to be a threat to those in authority".

Whatever be the severity of the persecution of translators like Dolet, the succeeding scholars upheld certain views of their predecessors. In the late sixteenth century, George Chapman(1559-1634), English poet, dramatist and the translator of 'Homer' reiterated Dolet's views on "how to translate well from one language into another". Dolet gave five guidelines to translate well. The translator, according to Dolet,

- (1) Must fully understand the the sense and meaning of the original author.
- (2) Should have a perfect knowledge of both Source language and Target / Receptor language.
- (3) Should avoid word-for-word renderings.
- (4) Should use forms of speech in common use.
- (5) Should choose and order words appropriately to produce the correct tone (Bassnett-McGuire 1980: 54).

In India, during the sixteenth century, many Sanskrit classics--Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavata, Bhagavadgita and such other religious works-- were translated into other Indian languages like Assamese, Bengali, Malayalam, Marathi and Oriya (Chopra 1984: 64-78).

These translations were sponsored either by Hindu kings for self-consolidation or Mughal rulers for understanding and thereby controlling their Hindu subjects.

Seventeenth Century: In the early seventeenth century (1611) King James I of England commissioned scholars to translate a text of Bible that could be authorized for reading in the Churches (Nida 1964:17, Newmark 1981:3). The King James version of the Bible had a great influence on the English language and literature.

Seventeenth century witnessed a spurt in translations of classics into English from Greek, Latin and French. The introductions written to the translations of the classics discussed various translation techniques (Findlay 1971: 22). *Abraham Cowley* (1618-67), the English poet and a translator advocated freedom in translation. He treated word-for-word translation as one mad man translating another. *John Dryden* (1631-1700) another well known seventeenth century poet, identified three types of translation: (1) *Metaphrase* involving 'word by word' and 'line by line' translation; (2) *Paraphrase* involving 'sense for sense' translation and (3) *Imitation* involving variance from words and sense by abandoning the text of the original as the translator sees fit. Subsequent poets like *Alexander Pope* (1688-1744) too adopted the same line of approach as that of *Dryden* (Nida 1964: 17-18; *Bassnett-McGuire* 1980: 60-61).

Eighteenth Century: An important work relating to Translation Studies in the Eighteenth century was Alexander Fraser Tytler's "*The Principles of Translation*"(1791). Tytler emphasized on the exact (a) the idea (b) the style and manner of writing and (c) the case of the original work (*Bassnett-McGuire* 1980; 63). *Battcux*, a French translator was more inclined to reproduce the form of the original (Nida 1964: 18).

Translation in Modern Times

At the end of the eighteenth century, the British East India Colonial administrators began to show much interest in the languages, literatures and cultures of their Indian subjects. The British scholars, for example, advised their State to encourage discovering and translating the ancient works of the Indian people. Some of the East India Company officials, who were also scholars themselves, translated some Sanskrit works into English. In 1776, one N.B. Halhed translated the Hindu Laws written in Sanskrit into English under the title 'The Code of Gentoo Laws'. In 1785 Charles Wilkins translated Gita into English. William Jones translated poet, Kalidasa's Sanskrit drama *Sakuntalam* into English in 1789. Jones perceived translation as a tool that can serve to "domesticate" the 'Orient' and impose Capitalist ideology on it (*Das* 1991:Passim; *Niranjana.T.* 1992: 12).

NINETEENTH CENTURY: In the nineteenth century, many translations were done from other languages into English. *Thomas Carlyle* (1795-1881), the English essayist translated Goethe's work while English poets *Byron* (1788-1824) and *Shelley* (1792-1822) and others translated verses from other languages into English. *Edward Fitzgerald* (1809-83), the English poet, translated 'Rubaiyat' of Omar Khayyam from Persian into English. *Mathew Arnold* (1822-88), English essayist, poet and literary critic wrote an essay *On Translating Homer* (1861) in which he argued that a translation must produce the same effect as of the original (Nida 1964: 20, *Finlay* 1971: 24).

The nineteenth century is often called the century of missionaries because they translated Bible into some hundreds of languages in various parts of the world (Finlay 1971:23). To achieve this goal, the Christian missionaries firstly prepared word lists and grammatical descriptions of the languages of the conquered people in the colonial empires of European powers. These grammatical and lexicographical descriptions greatly facilitated the creation or crystallization of orthographies, which eventually led to the translation of Bible.

Coming to the South Asian scene, the Indian intellectuals like Rammohan Roy and Iswarchandra Vidyasagar translated and/ or adopted works from English and Sanskrit (Chopra ed. 1980; Passim).

Ram Mohan Roy (1774-1834) translated the Vedanta treatises, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita to resist the Dutch Missionaries in Bengal who were critical of Hinduism (Sengupta, S. 1993; Ch.1).

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the American Baptist missionaries in India brought out translations of many well-known English books, textbooks, etc., in various Indian languages (Chopra ed. 1980:Passim).

Twentieth Century: in the twentieth century, religious and political forces have consciously pursued translation as a social action. In the religious and academic context we have the example of '*Summer Institute of Linguistics*' (SIL). Though there are several organizations, which practice linguistic research as a preliminary step to Bible translation, the SIL is the largest influential and visible organization with 3,700 members working on 675 languages in 29 countries. Each member of this organization is led by the belief that he or she should be able to have the New Testament translated in his or her own language. That is why this organization is also called as '*Wycliffe Bible Translation*'.

The SIL produced an "*impressive*" number of publications on Linguistic structures as well as numerous translations of the religious texts in languages whose speakers still live in primitive or tribal societies. The SIL has been organizing summer training programmes open to both missionaries and language teacher throughout the world. It uses modern linguistic approaches to the problem of translation.

There is another important organization, which is concerned with the theory, practice and evaluation of Bible translating. It is known as "*United Bible Societies*" and it consists of organizations like the '*American Bible Society*', '*Netherlands Bible Society*', '*British and Foreign Bible Society*'. Eugene Nida, an eminent linguist and an expert in translation theory, practice and evaluation, served United Bible Societies as Secretary and produced, apart from several articles, three important books on translation: (1) Bible Translating (1949) (2) Towards a Science of Translation (1964) and (3) Theory and Practice of Translating (1969). The United Bible Societies started a quarterly journal '*The Bible Translator*' in 1950. Since 1955, International Federation of Translators has published another quarterly journal '*Babel*' under the auspices of UNESCO. '*Babel*' is devoted to the publication of research that contributes to a better understanding of the

'Contemporary theory, principles and procedures' in the field of translation (Nida 1964: 21-22; Newmeyer 1986: 59-60).

In the political context, China considered translation as a political mission during fifties and early sixties (Baner 1964:70). Similarly, Soviet translations of works of Asian origin were thought to have a special appeal among the non-European groups and presented a major challenge to America and the challenge was considered by America as more subtle than that offered by armaments and economic aid (Winter 1961: 176). In Canada, writings with a high political content have been translated from Canadian English into Canadian French and vice versa (Shouldice 1982: 76 &82). In China, due to the changed political atmosphere, the writings on sex and religion, which were discouraged during Cultural Revolution, began to be translated and received favorably since eighties (Liu 1991: 43; Jin 1991:48).

An interesting aspect of translation studies in the twentieth century is that certain kinds of translation research have been patronized/sponsored by certain interest groups. Thus, for example, Machine Translation or Computer-aided translation receives abundant financial support from the Defense Industry, IBM Research Center and such other agencies in *America* (Nida 194:22).

It was only during the modern times that translation became the most conscious and overt communicative activity aimed at realizing the social - i.e., economic, political, cultural, religious, etc., - goals of contending social classes/ groups.

Summary

At the end of the lesson, it will be useful if we make some observations and draw conclusions on the history of translation (Bapuji 1993: CH. 4). For the sake of clarity, and to present the events in a methodical manner which will enable you to remember the points easily, we present our observations and conclusions as well as examples by way of a table as follows:

Observations/Conclusions	Examples
1. Translations do not simply arise of the personal inspiration of individual intellectuals or scholars but are largely inspired by social conditions/movements.	Translations during Renaissance, Reformation, etc.
2. Translation is pursued by social forces (State, Religious groups, etc.) as a social action aimed at opposing social forces and/or self-consolidation.	'Raja' Rammohan Roy's translation of Hindu texts as opposed to the Dutch Missionaries of Serampore; Soviet translations of works of Asian origin; Activities of Summer Institute of

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| | Linguistics or Wycliffe Bible Translators. |
| 3. Translation enables the dominant social classes/groups to understand and control the dominated social classes/groups. | the Bengali translations of 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharata' sponsored by the Mohemmedan emperors during the early middle Bengali period; Translations from Quebecan French to Canadian English. |
| 4. Translations from and into the socially dominated Source Language enable social dominant groups to known, respond and control the dominated social groups. | Translations from the into 'Oriental' and African languages during the colonial period. |
| 5. Translation can change/influence the perceptions and values of the socially dominated social groups. | Translations from the west into modern Indian languages relating to literature, politics and since the eighties. |
| 6. Selection and/or Acceptance of material (to be) translated is/are dependent on the dominant social life of the Receptor language community at a given point of time. | Translations of DH Lawrence and other Western writings into Chinese since the eighties. |
| 7. Source Language writings with a high social (e.g. political, religious, etc.) content over those with little or no obvious social translation. | Translation as a political mission in China during fifties and early sixties; Translations of writings with a high political content in Canada from English Quebecan French. |
| 8. Certain kinds of translations are sponsored by certain interest groups. | Machine translation projects/programmes funded by defence industry. or by the IBM Research Center in the USA. |

Questions

1. Explain the materialist conception of 'history' with suitable examples.
2. Describe the social nature of the translation acitivity. Illustrate with examples.
3. Give a brief outline of translation activity in the Antiquity.
4. What were the principle source languages from which translations were made during the Middle Ages? Explain why certain languages occupied a prestigious position.
5. Write an account of translation as a conscious and overt communicative activity aimed at realizing certain social - i.e. economic, political, religious - goals in the Modern times.

6. What observations may be made and what conclusions may be drawn based on the historical examples of translations from Antiquity to the Modern times?

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