

DOUBLE-SIDED TRANSFORMATIONS OF CULTURE-BOUND CONSTITUENTS IN WILLIAM SAROYAN'S CROSS-CULTURAL DOMAIN

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Abstract: The article focuses on the transformations, which occur in Russian and Armenian translations of culture-bound constituents in W. Saroyan's fiction with special reference to the analysis of their pragmatic value and both cross-cultural and cross-language identification. The aim of the analysis is to reveal the so-called Saroyanesque identity and the translation perspectives of his specific manner of reproducing the actual reality, his personal vision of the world he lived in and created in, the world which combined the environment, circumstances, conditions, characters, cultures, ethnicity of two different communities – his native Armenian and no less native American. The so-called double-sided transformations of culture-bound constituents occur in W. Saroyan's fiction at basically two levels: the cognitive level of ethnic and mental indicators transformations and the linguistic level of culture-bound elements translation (words, phrases, exclamations etc.). To keep Saroyanesque identity the translators should primarily transform the ideas, the concepts, the ethnic mentality of the characters, then the language media should undergo certain pragmatic modification to be correctly interpreted by the target audience.

Key words: Saroyanesque identity, culture-bound element, pragmatic modification, cross-cultural environment, ethnic mentality

1. Introduction

The primary task for any literary text translator is the identification of pragmatic value of the source text (ST) author's message to achieve an extremely equal comprehension of the target language (TL) readers with the readers of the original. In this regard, the translator needs to make certain changes to the target text so that the reader can adequately interpret the original message. The famous American linguist and translation theorist Eugene A. Nida wrote: "A minimal requirement for adequacy of a translation would be that the readers would be able to comprehend and appreciate how the original readers of the text understood and possibly responded to it. The maximal requirement for translational adequacy would mean that the readers of the translation would respond to the text both emotively and cognitively in a manner essentially similar to the ways in which the original readers responded." (Nida 1991: 26). Thus,

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the translator's considerable mission in this type of cross-cultural communication is to keep the pragmatic potential of the ST and make it visible for his/her audience.

The pragmatic transformation of the ST becomes especially significant when translating a text with a profound cultural substance, though Peter Newmark supports the view that there is a cultural value in any translation, as language is partly the reflection of a culture, and translators like linguists tend to define culture as the sum of people's customs and ways of thinking (Newmark 1991). Possessing absolutely the same view, I would like to pay special attention towards the completely cultural components in the ST and the translation modifications of certain culture-bound elements. It is definitely specified by A. Schweitzer, who defines translation as a process of cross-language and cross-cultural communication in which a secondary text is created based on the primary text to replace the primary one in a different language and cultural environment (Schweitzer 1988: 47). No doubt, any translation becomes a secondary text influenced by the translator's domestic environment, culture-based world vision and mentality. This is why the new world created by the translator in the target text (TT) in fact reproduces the ST message by means of his/her native cultural elements and translation modifications.

2. William Saroyan's Identity in Cross-Cultural Environment

The famous American novelist, playwright and short story writer William Saroyan occupies the primary position among the US immigrant writers who strived for the prosperous development of the XX century American literature. However, today few Americans know that he was of Armenian descent and his literary heritage may be characterized as a cross-cultural cluster of both American and Armenian cognition and genetic memory. Once he said: "I do not write in Armenian, but I look at the world in Armenian. The words I use are in English, the surroundings I write about are American, but the soul, which makes me write, is Armenian" (<http://williamsaroyanfoundation.org> › biography). Two languages, two cultures, two varieties of world vision – this is however the so-called Saroyan identity, the identity that was adopted and imitated by a number of American immigrant writers, who borrowed his simple manner, his vision of the world and his symbolic images.

The phenomenon of W. Saroyan's cross-cultural environment is displayed in its various manifestations. First, it is the cognitive area in which two cultures merge – his native Armenian and no less native American. Then in his fiction the conceptual system as a "system of opinions and knowledge about the world reflecting human experience" (Maslova 2005: 15) is subdivided into several subsystems that combine knowledge and experience of the two mentioned mental and psychological levels together with the information and emotional space of the so-called 'melting pot', the type of such a cultural community that has historically developed in the United States for several centuries, when people of different nationalities with their own traditions, languages, ethnic mentality migrated to the USA. Although all these people belong to various cultural and ethnic communities and bear corresponding codes in their minds, they are unified by one important element of consciousness and world vision – the

concept of surviving and protecting their native against a different and non-native one. Otherwise, another, certain category of the world conceptualization occurs.

In the situation with the 'melting pot' one can see that people of different nationalities with a certain set of cognitive primitives that are purely specific to one particular culture united into a single community and having basically common universal cognitive primitives created a new type of culture with new derivative configurations and corresponding modifications (Wierzbicka 1997: 296-297). These universal cultural concepts in the new conditions have been transformed into a different category of cognitive primitives, which basically formed a new type of thinking and world cognition, as well as conceptual structuring of the actual reality according to the schema self/native – different/non-native. This schema identifies W. Saroyan's communicative criterion both in his mind and in his fiction, where two cultures, two conceptual spheres, two complementary worldviews coexist, reflecting the experience and spirit of the two peoples, which become basically the determinants of his cross-cultural discourse.

3. How Saroyanesque Manner is Transferred into a Different Cultural Environment

The term Saroyanesque is widely used to identify W. Saroyan's style and specific manner of reproducing the actual reality, his personal vision of the world he lived in, the world he created in, the world which combined the environment, circumstances, conditions, characters, cultures, ethnicity. W. Saroyan's texts at first glance seem to be easy to translate as there is no vividly manifested stylistic coloring, the vocabulary is rather simple, the characters' portrayal is absolutely visible. But a deeper view will display historically, culturally and socially conditioned background forms, which will create a secondary text in the readers' minds due to their personal interpretations of the subtext information hidden thoroughly in between the words, in behind the lines.

Very much depends on the translator's critical approach and creative skills, the desire to see more, than is put into words, to grasp the author's intention and to decode properly the message targeted at the reader. Sometimes the author's message is differently interpreted by different translators. It means that the pragmatic aspect of the ST may be specified so that the text becomes comprehensible for a different community with its cultural values and traditions.

In W. Saroyan's story "Old Country Advice to the American Traveler" the integrity core, where the coherence of the text is achieved, is located in the central part of the narration, where the elderly Armenian clarifies why he can definitely advice his nephew what to do and how to behave in any situation while traveling:

I have seven children. My life has been a full and righteous one. Let's not give it another thought. I have land, vines, trees, cattle, and money. One cannot have everything – except for a day or two at a time. (Saroyan 1973: 136)

A person of any nationality can be the author of these words. They might be uttered by any representative of the so-called ‘melting pot’ in the USA. Nonetheless, there is something special about the utterance, that takes the reader back to the title of the story “Old Country Advice to the American Traveler.” This is a purely Armenian element ‘old country’ (this element will be analyzed later in double-sided translation of culture-bound components in W. Saroyan’s fiction). This is an exclusively cultural element specifying only Armenian cognition and condition-based comprehension of domestic realia, which is structured within the schema self/native – different/non-native. It is something that generally belongs only to the native, self-Armenian cognition. ‘Old country’ is directly related to “Let’s not give it another thought”, which is the conceptual dominant of the utterance. He believes that his life in his native country (old country) was righteous one, and there is no doubt about it, therefore it should not be necessarily misread. But the fact is that in the Russian translation it has not been “read” at all.

У меня семеро детей. Я жил в достатке и праведно. У меня была земля, виноградники, много скота и деньги. Нельзя иметь все сразу. (Saroyan 1980: 92)

Only five very short and simple sentences of the ST are arranged within four equally short, simple sentences in the Russian version. However, in the latter one the sentence “Let’s not give it another thought” is missing. Why? The translator is supposed to exclude this sentence because a non-Armenian reader, who does not have a relevant background information about the author and his people, would not be able to decode properly the subtext content of the utterance. Though it should be noted, that in the Russian version the sentence “Нельзя иметь все сразу” (one cannot have everything at once) seems to accumulate the entire scope of the character’s experience and emotions embodied in the utterance. Only the peak of the iceberg is seen on the surface of the narration, whereas a deeper analysis reveals the holistic value of content. The information encoded in both ST and TT leads to a certain type of worldview, where the concept of ‘survival’ existing in our people’s mentality is clearly visualized and, accordingly, what is truly important for a righteous lifestyle: the family, its well-being and the ability to be absolutely pleased with whatever you have at the moment. But the most notable is the fact that both sentences are missing in the Armenian translation.

Ես կյանք եմ ապրել ու գիտեմ, ես հացի կարոտ չեմ քաշել ու աչքս ուրիշի ունեցածին չեմ գցել: Ես յոթ ժառանգ եմ մեծացրել: Ես հող ունեմ, այգի, ծառեր, փող ու անասուն: Ամեն ինչ աշխատանքով ու կամաց-կամաց է լինում, չի կարելի հանկարծ գտնել ու ստել՝ գտա: (Saroyan 1988: 299)

Here quite a free interpretation of the translator occurs, and the lower part of the iceberg, that is all the subtext information of the original, is absolutely explicated. In the Armenian translation a rearrangement of sentences appears if compared with the ST

and a shift in semantic and conceptual accents if compared with the Russian translation. In the original and in the Russian translation at the beginning of this paragraph the old man talks about his seven children and thereafter about his righteous and prosperous life, while in the Armenian translation the information about the life he lived occupies the initial position. Special attention should be paid here to what the old Armenian says about his former life: "I have lived my life and therefore I know (meaning I can give advice), I had no lack of bread, and I did not envy anyone." This is whatever he says in the Armenian translation and whatever does not exist in the ST. However, this is exactly the basic extratextual information that is explicated by the translator to specify one of the most important components of the Armenian ethnic mentality and to illustrate that for an Armenian to live a righteous life means to feel pleased with whatever he has and not to envy other people. The last sentence of the paragraph comes to confirm this idea: "You achieve everything gradually, thanks to your work, you cannot suddenly find and say, "I have found." By the way this sentence does not exist in the original either.

Another very important element here deserves attention. The noun 'children' in the Armenian translation has been replaced by its semantic synonym 'heir.' It is also a significant component of the Armenian identity: for people who have lost their homeland, homes, relatives the continuation of their clan becomes vital.

The use of tense-forms here is also of considerable importance. In the ST the author uses Simple Present in the sentence "I have land, vines, trees, cattle, and money", though in fact the old Armenian had all these in his past life when he lived in his homeland. He seems to live in the past and to believe that his previous life which was a righteous one continues despite of the fact that everything has been lost. In the Russian translation a shift of the tense-form to the Past occurs "У меня была земля, виноградники, много скота и деньги" (I had land, vines, a lot of cattle and money), as if the translator wishes to emphasize the fact that everything, the old man is speaking about refers to the past, for the Russian reader to grasp correctly that nothing of the mentioned exists at the moment of his speech. A pragmatic restructuring of narration appears here to ensure a correct comprehension of the facts described.

In the Armenian translation the tense-forms remain the same (as in the ST), as if the translator is absolutely sure that his audience will grasp correctly the author's intention.

Both translations seem to keep the pragmatic value of the ST. The message targeted at the reader is transferred into both target texts. Nonetheless, the Armenian translation due to its rather free interpretation of the ST becomes even more comprehensible for the Armenian audience as it seems to reveal Saroyan's subtext, the way any Armenian wishes to decode and to specify it. Nobody can say now whether W. Saroyan really presupposed whatever is transmitted by the Armenian translator into the TT, which can actually be regarded as a secondary text within the frames of both cross-cultural and intracultural environment. The elements of cross-cultural environment are traced in W. Saroyan's manner to represent the Armenian reality and way of thinking by means of American simple and laconic style of narration, whereas the elements of intracultural environment are marked in the Armenian translation by means of native manner to regenerate the existing content in a special way making it vivid and true to life.

A similar cross-cultural situation may be seen in the translations (Armenian and Russian) of the story "The Armenian and the Armenian." There is a paragraph in the

story where the author, speaking about the gestures characteristic of Armenians, gradually turns to the description of the people's destiny, able to survive in any circumstances:

And the Armenian gestures, meaning so much. The slapping of the knee and roaring with laughter. The cursing. The subtle mockery of the world and its big ideas. The word in Armenian, the glance, the gesture, the smile, and through these things the swift rebirth of the race, timeless and again strong, though years have passed, though cities have been destroyed, fathers and brothers and sons killed, places forgotten, dreams violated, living hearts blackened with hate. (Saroyan 1984: 7)

What is so characteristic of the Armenians? Slapping of the knee in mournful and sad situations (which is typical of many oriental peoples), roaring with laughter in curious and cheerful situations, cursing in stressful situations, subtle mockery of the world and its big ideas. The spirit of the people seems to be conveyed by very simple means – by stating facts that, according to the author, do not need to be confirmed: such are the Armenians in sorrow and in joy. However, the enumeration of the features peculiar to the Armenian people is accompanied by the allocation of each of them into a separate sentence, most likely in order to more clearly convey the sense of the separate components in order to transfer the information layer to the emotional level, to intensify the expressive manifestation of the national substance in the narration.

Due to its pragmatic potential, the second part of the paragraph becomes an exact link in the cognitive dimension that ensures the essence of the Armenian people's spirit: because of one word, one glance, one gesture, one smile the people achieve a rapid recovery. W. Saroyan uses the noun 'race' to specify his people. It should be noted that in this context the noun 'race' accumulates almost all of its dictionary meanings. This is primarily a 'race' as a separate subtype of mankind, and the cognitive basis here is the Armenian language as a separate branch of Indo-European languages and the Armenian Church as a separate group of Christian faith (Gregorian), hence the Armenians as a separate 'unique race.' Another meaning directly develops from the previous one: 'grade', 'category.' The Armenian people are a certain kind of humanity, it is such a 'category' of people who cannot be confused with any other. Both meanings bring to the third one: 'descendant', 'genus'; regardless of any circumstances, descendants are born and the Armenian genus continues. Simultaneously the semantics of the noun 'race' includes the meaning of 'fast running', 'fast movement' confirmed by the adjective swift (fast) in combination 'swift rebirth' – people recover very quickly and get back to their previous life. And finally, the last meaning is 'course of life.' This is the fate of the Armenian people: to be destroyed, to perish, but to survive and recover rapidly. W. Saroyan – a maître of short story genre – succeeded highly in transmitting such significant information about the spirit of the people and their life path with the help of a single word. The continuation of the sentence comes to confirm it: the race is characterized by the author as something endless, timeless, but always powerful and again remarkable. The use of the adjective 'timeless' in the meaning of 'infinite' and the adverb 'again' in the meaning of

‘always’ enhance the emotional intensity of the narrative precisely by the simplicity of its external manifestation and the depth of its semantics: the revival of the people has become something timeless and multiple. And yet, although years have passed, cities have been destroyed, fathers, brothers and sons have been killed, dreams have been brutally violated, and hearts blackened with hate, the people still live – thanks to their traditions, thanks to their spirit.

This part of the text is rather accurately translated into Russian. Only a few Russian culture-bound elements appear to reproduce the Armenian substance shaped in American manner.

*А чего стоили армянские жесты, такие многозначительные.
Хлопанье по колену и взрывы хохота, и мат-перемат.
Изощренное издевательство над всем миром, что носится со
своими дутыми ценностями. Армянское слово, взгляд, жест,
улыбка — и через них быстрое возрождение народа,
неподвластного времени, вновь обретшего силу, несмотря на
минувшие годы, назло разрушенным городам, убийству отцов,
братьев и сыновей, вопреки преданным забвению родным
местам, поруганным чаяниям и сердцам, почерневшим от
ненависти. (Saroyan 1994: <https://armeniangc.com › biblioteka>)*

One can easily find the pure Russian elements ‘мат-перемат’ instead of English ‘cursing.’ It is missing in the Armenian version, maybe because the translator did not define the boundary in between ‘swearing’ or ‘damning’, as the author does not determine it himself. The translator into Russian believes that it should be ‘swearing’ and that the Armenian people likewise the Russians use swearing obscenities very often. Another culture-bound constituent in the Russian translation is ‘носится со своими дутыми ценностями.’ If in the ST it is only “mockery of the world and its big ideas”, in Russian translation it becomes somewhat like “running around with his inflated values”, whereas in the Armenian version “կյանքի ու մեծ-մեծ գաղափար-ների ծաղրը” the noun ‘world’ has been transformed into ‘life’, the adjective ‘big’ has become even more intensive ‘big-big.’ Is it because the translator into Armenian and his audience are of the same cognitive and conceptual sphere with the author of the ST? It is supposed to be so and W. Saroyan could really mean the life of his native people while speaking about the mockery of the world and its big ideas, as Armenians always used to tease each other and joke about different situations they appear in.

A certain emphatic reload occurs in both translations in the continuation of the narration. The adjective ‘timeless’ is accurately transferred into Russian ‘неподвластного времени’, whereas in the Armenian version it sounds ‘նուսցած’ (late). The Armenian translator emphasizes the fact that though late, the rebirth of the race happens even stronger, even more powerful. Again, an indicator of an Armenian ethnic mentality and lifestyle occurs in the translation as if the author of the ST kept to the Armenian version of the well-known proverb “նուշ լինի՛ նուշ լինի՛” (the later – the sweeter). Another transformation shift occurs in the Armenian translation of “living hearts blackened with hate.” The Russian translation absolutely corresponds the ST

“сердцам, почерневшим от ненависти”, while in the Armenian translation “հոգիները դիպչ սևացել են” (souls turned black with anger) the noun ‘hearts’ becomes ‘souls’ and the noun ‘hate’ is transferred into ‘anger.’ In both cases emotional and spiritual intensification of the situation described is designated, but in both translations the adjective ‘living’ is missing. The fact is that the author of the ST combines in it both souls and fury.

The integrity core of this story is located in the final part of the text where the author speaks about his people and challenges all those who wish to destroy his race.

Go ahead, destroy this race. Let us say that it is again 1915. There is war in the world. Destroy Armenia. See if you can do it. Send them from their homes into the desert. Let them have neither bread nor water. Burn their houses and their churches. See if they will not live again. See if they will not laugh again. See if the race will not live again when two of them meet in a beer parlor, twenty years after, and laugh, and speak in their tongue. Go ahead, see if you can do anything about it. See if you can stop them from mocking the big ideas of the world, you sons of bitches, a couple of Armenians talking in the world, go ahead and try to destroy them. (Saroyan 1984: 7)

In order to understand and comprehend this segment of the text, the reader needs to have background information about the events the author refers to and information about cognitive presuppositions. Information about the events is modified by mentioning a specific date – 1915, when the mass deportation of the Armenian population from all provinces of the Ottoman Empire took place, while information about the cognitive presuppositions is specified by the noun ‘desert.’ It is supposed that the reader is aware of the historical facts according to which, in order to completely exterminate the Armenians, they were displaced to the deserts of Syria and Mesopotamia, in particular the Deir el-Zor, the author does not explain to the reader what he means when he says: “Send them from their homes into the desert. Let them have neither bread nor water.” However, being aware of the fact, that in a multi-million audience lots of readers can nohow grasp the essence of the utterance because of the lack of this information, the author names his target audience, addressing directly the people who attempted to destroy his people, but did not succeed in. And the story about two Armenians who, twenty years later, meet far from their homeland in a small, dirty Russian parlor comes to prove it. The author appeals to the people who attempted to destroy his people by “you sons of bitches.” This is how W. Saroyan characterizes all those who attempted to destroy this small tribe of insignificant people, this small tribe of unimportant people, and all those who did not prevent it.

At first glance this paragraph, which has an imperative construction referring to an extra-textual but rather definite addressee, falls out of the general narration. It performs the function of the modifier of the author's conceptual world representation and due to its auto-semantic quality can exist even separately apart the text. It is exactly because of this quality the extract occupies a strong position in the text, as on the one hand, it contributes to a deeper understanding of the narrative itself, on the other hand, it

withdraws the facts described in the text to the level of extra-textual generalization of purely Armenian worldview linking the ideas and happening inside the text and real events outside it. In this section of the text, the concept of the 'future' is partially implemented. The method of its actualization is of particular interest: the central syntactic construction, including the imperative 'See' and the conjunction 'if' in the meaning of 'whether', is repeated six times, creating the effect of an increase in expressive intensity, which culminates in the last sentence of the text.

Another imperative construction 'Go ahead' repeated thrice and the verb 'destroy' repeated four times, become the key to the semantics of affirmation. Appealing to his direct addressee, the author seems to encourage him to continue whatever he did twenty years ago, and then he will see if he can finally exterminate the people, who will rise from the ruins and continue their existence and even speak their native language even far from their homeland.

The translation (Russian and Armenian) of this extract also needs a thorough examination, as there are a number of deviations in both of them. Thus, in the Russian translation a few units of colloquial speech occur. The imperative construction 'Go ahead' is twice replaced by 'попробуйте' (try to), which does not transmit the expressive value of the original, though once it appears in its colloquial sense in the situation where 'Go ahead' is missing in the TT: "Destroy Armenia. See if you can do it." In the Russian version the two sentences are combined into one and the colloquial unit 'валяйте' appears: "Валяйте, уничтожайте Армению." Another colloquial element appears in the translation of "and laugh, and speak in their tongue" – "балагурим и говорим на родном языке", where 'балагурим' combines both 'joke' and 'chat' in its meaning. In the end "you sons of bitches" in the final sentence of the ST is replaced by 'Вашу мать' (a curse not so much specific for western people) located in a separate sentence. So much energy, so much expressiveness, so much fury! This is how the Russian version sounds, while the Armenian one seems to purify and refine the linguistic 'exterior' of the speech. Highly bookish style is used by the translator, words and structures which are not so often used in everyday life.

*Փորձէ՛ք կործանել այս գեղը, սասցէ՛ք՝ դարձյալ 1915 է, ու
աշխարհի այքը՝ պատերազմի ծիտվ բռնված:*

*Կործանեցէ՛ք Հայաստանը, տեսէ՛ք՝ կկարողանա՞ք: Իրենց
տներից քշեցէ՛ք անապատ, մի՛ մոռացէք ձեռքներից խլել
ճամփի հացն ու ջրի վերջին ումպը, կրակի՛ տվեք իրենց ու
իրենց Աստծու տները: Տեսէ՛ք՝ նրանք դարձյալ պիտի չապ-
րէ՞ն: Տեսէ՛ք՝ գեղը դարձյալ պիտի չհառնի՞, երբ նրանցից
երկուք քսան տարի հետո հանդիպեն ու ծիծաղեն իրենց
մայրենի լեզվով: Ջանացեք, տեսէ՛ք՝ կարողանա՞ք պիտի,
չունշանորդինէ՛ր, նրանց արգելել, որ չծաղրեն ձեր մեծ-մեծ
զաղափարները, որ աշխարհում երկու հայ չխոսեն իրար
հետ, փորձէ՛ք ջնջել նրանց: (Saroyan 2021:*

<https://www.grakantert.am> › archives)

While reading this part of the text, one can easily see that together with colorful, very specific Armenian vocabulary the translator again uses the method of addition, as new elements missing in the original text appear in the TT. The very first item worth mentioning is the merging of three sentences into one at the beginning of the paragraph. The simple sentence in the ST “There is war in the world” is replaced in the translation by “աշխարհի աչքը՝ պատերազմի ծխով բռնված” (the eye of the world caught in the smoke of war), as if the translator wishes to make more vivid, more visualized the horror of war for all world, for all peoples. Then three more sentences are combined into one, where again new elements missing in the ST occur: “Let them have neither bread nor water” is replaced by “մի՛ սոռացեք ձեռքերից խլել ճամփի հացն ու ջրի վերջին ունայր” (do not forget to take away from their hands the bread and the last drop of water for the relocation). Here a question arises whether again the method of addition is used by the translator or maybe a new method of conceptualization occurs, when the ST subtext information is explicated and visualized for the Armenian audience.

So, both translations seem to retain the pragmatic potential of the ST and are absolutely comprehensible for their target recipients. They differ in their emotional coloring and the use of culture based linguistic means. Nonetheless, each of them transfers the conceptual schema of the ST and the author’s message targeted at the reader.

Thus, in the both texts analyzed above a sort of double-sided transformation of the cultural component is observed, when the author of the ST transmits the Armenian concepts, notions, ethnic principles into English, then the translators into other languages reinterpret and reconstruct them for a different audience due to its world vision and world conceptualization. This type of double-sided translation may be termed as cognitive level of ethnic and mental indicators transformations.

4. Culture-bound Constituents in W. Saroyan’s Fiction from the Perspective of Double-Sided Translation

William Saroyan used a great deal of culture-bound elements in his narrative. Very often he translated Armenian expressions, phrases, terms and words into English, and he did not seem to care whether the English-speaking reader would grasp the meaning and the content of such elements. Sometimes he seemed to be writing though in English but for the Armenian reader, yet very often even the Armenian reader could not realize whatever the author’s intent was by using those language means. This is why Saroyan’s translators have to search for themselves what the author actually meant and then find the relevant equivalent in their native language. So, a sort of double-sided translation occurs in case of Armenian culture-bound elements in W. Saroyan’s fiction.

Thus, in the title of the story “Old Country Advice to the American Traveller” there is a culture-based element, which was literally translated by W. Saroyan from Armenian, moreover from Western Armenian, as the population of Eastern Armenia does not use this linguistic unit. This culture-bound element is ‘old country’, which was not reflected in either Russian or Armenian translations. Old country advice is not

merely advice to an American traveller, it is advice of a person who is limited by the same conceptual framework with both the characters of the story and the author himself. 'Country' does not at all mean 'state' or 'village.' It is used in W. Saroyan's narrative rather often and conveys several meanings, such 'province', 'land', 'homeland.' That was how the Western Armenians, especially the old people, called the places they came from 'երկիր' or 'երգիր.' The combination 'old country' becomes a text-constructing element that determines the cultural domain and indicates one of the most important concepts, the core of our ethnic mentality, the concept of "home." Old country advice is the advice of an old Armenian from native land, who will never give harmful advice to his countryman. Unfortunately, this cultural element which determines the behaviour and influences definitely the world perception psychology of a certain group of people, is missing in both translations: "Советы американскому туристу" and "Խորհուրդներ ամերիկացի ճանապարհորդին" (in both versions - advice to an American traveller).

The same element appears in another story "My Cousin Dikran, the Orator." However, in this case the combination 'old country' has not found a proper translation into the target languages. It is translated into Russian as 'его родина' (his homeland), and into Armenian – a word-for-word translation occurs 'հին երկիր' (old country or land). None of them conveys the meaning implemented by the author, though it may be explained. Neither for the Russian nor for the Eastern Armenian reader the noun 'երգիր' in the meaning it is used in the ST has the expressiveness and the emotional significance that it has for Western Armenians. This element is missing in both Russian and Eastern Armenian linguistic and mental domains. Therefore, it should have been subjected to a certain pragmatic modification to be adequately perceived by the target audience. This is why in the Russian translation the concept "home" is actualized by means of possessive pronoun 'его' (his) in combination with 'родина' (motherland), while in the Armenian translation it is actualized by adjective 'հին' (old) in combination with 'երկիր' (land).

Another culture-bound element of Western Armenian, which is missing in both Russian and Armenian translations, is the combination 'Old Man.' It may be explained by the absence of relevant information of basically cultural issues of Western Armenia. It was adapted by W. Saroyan himself for the non-Armenian reader. This part of Western Armenians called grandfather 'մեծ հայրիկ' (Big Daddy).

If W. Saroyan used in English 'big father' or 'elder father', or even 'Grand Father', where both elements of the compound noun 'grandfather' are introduced separately and with capital letters, the reader would not understand that he meant age seniority, and not size, or another dad who is older than the main one. Therefore, the pragmatic modification occurred primarily in the original text, where 'Old Man' is used for the Armenian 'մեծ հայրիկ' (Big Daddy) and means one specific person (grandfather). In the Russian translation the combination 'Old Man' is transformed by means of noun 'старик' (old man), though it is not used in the meaning of elderly or old man, it is used in the meaning of ancestor, a representative of the older generation of the family. The corresponding pragmatic modification of the cultural unit is rather unsuccessfully done in the Armenian translation, where the word 'ծերունի' (old man) is used. In the

mental scope of the Eastern Armenian reader the combination ‘մեծ հայրիկ’, which could be used in the Armenian version, would work according to the cognitive schema “do not know, but guess”, while for the American and non-American reader, it would be placed within the frames of the schema “do not know and do not guess.” This is why in all versions, including the SL, this combination ‘մեծ հայրիկ’ (Big Daddy) has undergone a certain pragmatic modification. Although, it should be noted that none of the languages, including the original, has determined its deeper semantic layer, because none of them conveys its main meaning – “head of the family”, but not a representative of the older generation of the family.

A number of culture-bound elements, which have undergone the so-called double-sided translation, occur in the story “The Armenian and the Armenian.” Thus, the exclamation ‘Vy’ is implemented by the author in its purely Armenian (in some oriental countries it is also used) phonation. It could not be replaced by ‘wow’, as the Armenian ‘Vy’ occurs in different situations with different intonations to express surprise, delight, admiration, joy, trouble, sorrow, pity, sympathy etc. As seen, there is no need to transmit the exclamation into Armenian as it is of Armenian origin. In the Russian translation the same ‘Вай’ (Vy) is used, though for Russian speaking audience it may sound odd, as it is unfamiliar to these people.

Another Armenian culture-based element is the exclamation ‘thief.’ It sounds as ‘սլազուկ’ and in a certain context does not absolutely mean a robber or a raider. People use it often to express delight, admiration or joy. This is one of the culture-bound elements which W. Saroyan used without any care whether the English-speaking reader would understand or even guess its meaning. In the Russian translation it has undergone pragmatic modification and ‘сукин сын’ (son of a bitch) occurs instead of ‘thief’, while in the Armenian version another culture-based element appears although very close in meaning ‘զաղտուկ’ (dodger), which likewise ‘thief’ is often used to express delight or joy. This is whatever may be viewed as double-sided translation: from Armenian into English by W. Saroyan, then from English into Russian and Armenian respectively.

Finally, the expression “God destroy your house” sounds in English with negative connotation, though for the Armenian culture it may have both negative and positive connotations: ‘տնաքանդ’ or ‘տնազեր’ (literally a house crusher or ruiner) in certain situations meaning curse or damnation, in other definite situations it may be used as somewhat meaning wishes for welfare, prosperity ‘տնաշեն, տունդ չքանդվի’ (literally let your house be not ruined). In the context it is used by W. Saroyan it acquires the second meaning denoting delight and joy for meeting a countryman far away in a different country. Thus, the pragmatic potential of the expression is reduced for a non-Armenian reader, as nobody except the Armenians could realize whatever the author really means. In the Russian translation the phrase has undergone a pragmatic modification and acquired a Russian denotation ‘черт тебя возьми’ (meaning damn you), which conveys approximately the significance of the expression and becomes comprehensible for a Russian reader. Meanwhile, into Armenian it is translated as ‘տնազեր’ (in its second meaning) denoting in this certain context delight and joy. Thus, the Armenian version keeps absolutely the pragmatic value of the ST emotional sense.

5. Conclusion

To conclude the results of the analysis above, it should be noted that when translating a text with a profound cultural substance, the so-called pragmatic modification of the ST becomes especially significant. No doubt, any translation becomes a secondary text influenced by the translator's domestic environment, culture-based world vision and mentality. This is why the new world created by the translator in the TT in fact reproduces the ST message by means of his/her native cultural elements and pragmatic modifications.

W. Saroyan is ranked among the US immigrant writers whose literary heritage may be characterized as a cross-cultural cluster of both American and Armenian cognition and genetic memory. The term Saroyanesque is widely used to identify W. Saroyan's style and specific manner of reproducing the actual reality, his personal vision of the world he lived in, the world he created in, the world which combined the environment, circumstances, conditions, characters, cultures, ethnicity. When translating his fiction where the Armenian substance is dominating, the translator's target goal is further complicated by the fact that the nationally determined elements have already undergone a certain pragmatic modification by the author himself for the English-speaking reader. Very often W. Saroyan translated Armenian expressions, phrases, terms and words into English literally, and he did not seem to care whether the English-speaking reader would grasp the meaning and the content of such elements.

The so-called double-sided transformations occur in W. Saroyan's fiction at basically two levels: the cognitive level of ethnic and mental indicators transformations and the linguistic level of culture-bound elements translation (words, phrases, exclamations etc.). In any case, for both levels W. Saroyan's translators have to search for themselves what the author actually meant and then find the relevant equivalent in their native language. The greatest value of the translation will be the retaining of the ST emotional colouring and expressiveness, pragmatic potential, the author's intention and the message targeted at the reader. To keep Saroyanesque identity in the translation means to transform primarily the ideas, the concepts, the nature and ethnic mentality of the characters, creating the cognitive structures of the community described. Furthermore, the cultural colours of the language media should undergo certain pragmatic modification to be correctly perceived and interpreted by the target audience.

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