Translation Today

N T M

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**NATIONAL TRANSLATION MISSION
CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF INDIAN LANGUAGES**

Editor
TARIQ KHAN

About

Translation Today (TT) is a double-blind, peer-reviewed, indexed and refereed journal of the National Translation Mission (NTM). The journal has been working to provide translation and its academic allies a place in the history and development of ideas. This has been listed in the UGC approved list of journals.

Objectives

- To seek a spurt in translation activities
- To seek excellence in the translated word
- To further the frontiers of Translation Studies
- To raise a strong awareness about translation, its possibilities and potentialities
- To catalyse a groundswell of well-founded ideas about translation among people

Publication Policy

It follows the standard publishing norms. All submissions go through the double-blind peer-review in addition to an in-house review. If the editors find the paper suitable for the journal qualitatively, then the paper is sent to the experts who review the paper based on the guidelines of the Translation Today. The decision of accepting a paper for publication depends on the review report. Please see the Review Response Sheet in the NTM website.

Though all submissions are put on rigorous plagiarism check, the responsibility of originality of content rests with the concerned authors. A submission found with plagiarized content (major or minor) will not be considered for reviewing or publication. If any material published in this journal is reported to have plagiarized contents, it would be withdrawn instantly.

For the wider dissemination of knowledge, all published articles of the Translation Today are freely accessible online. The back volumes of the print edition are also available on payment.
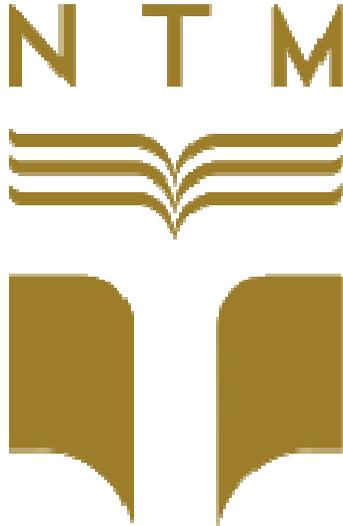
Submission

The Translation Today invites original and unpublished contributions in the following categories:

- Research articles
- Disciplinary dialogues
- Academic interviews
- Book reviews
- Translations
- Annotated bibliography

Articles submitted for consideration of the Board will have to be in English. Translation Today will seriously consider the possibility of publishing material in Indian languages, or a multilingual edition of the journal in future.

Translation Today

Editor

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Contents

Interview

Translation

Editorial

Translation as a dynamic process operates in the translator's mind that has an immense potential to reflect upon the social developments and changing lifestyles. The dynamicity of the translation process and the translator's mind produce interactions of local as well as international relevance. This dynamicity also produces scope for reading & re-reading and interpretation & re-interpretation of texts. Consequently, the ideas concerning translation have been undergoing serious and continuous modifications.

The state-of-the-art communication technology has been trying to ensure a seamless flow of human-human interaction. In this venture, there has been a tremendous progress considering languages individually. However, the growth has been slow on the fronts such as technology-mediated human-human interactions across languages and human-machine communications within and across languages. Such varied developments in the fields of translation and communication have definite bearings on the development of Translation Studies as an intellectual pursuit.

In a fascinating development, Translation Today, through quality and diversity in its publications, is attracting more and more scholars committed to Translation Studies. It is my pleasure to present the first issue of the volume number twelve comprising seven papers, an interview, and a translation. In what follows, I try to get the readers acquainted with the contents of this issue.

The first article titled *Construction of Mother-tongue: Translation, Culture and Power* is authored by Ashok K. Mohapatra. This paper discusses the cultural process of translation in the emergence of Odia as a mother-tongue in the colonial times. The next paper titled *Politics and Poetics in the*

Translation of the Classics by Shaheen Saba tries to explore how translation has been a very subjective manipulative enterprise in the context of the translation of classical masterpieces. *Translation of Diasporic Conflict as Represented in Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss* by Preethamol M. K., examines the cultural encounter in the context of globalization and its after-effects by giving a new reading to diaspora work like Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*. Sarani Roy, in her paper, *Mothering Nations and Nationalizing Mothers: Reading the Fairy Tales of Colonial Bengal,* studies Bengali folktales in the discourse of pregnancy and childbirth and how their sociocultural meanings play a vital role in the understanding of the stories. The next paper, *Translating Poeticity: A Case Study of Tirukkural Translations into French* by Pugazhendhi Kumarasamy, presents a comparative analysis of French translations of the monumental poetic work of Tamil literature Tirukkural by two translators belonging to two different centuries. *In Translating 'Pure', 'Clean' and Woman's Body: A Case Study of Memory and Experience from within and outside the Fishing Community,* Renu Elza Varkey focuses on the layers of translation interconnecting the concepts of purity and woman's body based on conversations with the fisher folk, and their representation or misrepresentation in other media. Priyada Shridhar Padhye, in her paper, *Rewriting of Children's Literature: Do We have a Universal Norm?,* inquires into the universality of the norm of rewriting in the genre of Children's Literature and its translation by investigating how scheming forces shape the latter.

Following the scientific articles, this issue presents an academic interview of Mary Snell-Hornby, an eminent scholar of Translation Studies and a founding member of the European Society for Translation Studies (EST) and its first President. In

this interview, Geethakumary discusses with Mary Snell-Hornby the impact of Rewriting - Culture school on Translation Studies and objectives of European Society for Translation Studies. The interview also contains questions related to her writings and adaptation studies.

The Translation section of this issue includes Hari Priya Pathak's English translation of the Hindi short story *Seepyan*.

Hope the readers find this issue as engaging as the earlier ones.

Tariq Khan

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Corrigendum

The article with following details is no more part of the Translation Today:

Title: The Legend of Santa Evita in Translation

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Construction of Mother-tongue: Translation, Culture and Power

ASHOK K. MOHAPATRA

Abstract

Mother-tongue is a construct of translational consciousness that is mediated through colonial culture. It is commodified as a cultural and symbolic capital on which literacy and literariness are predicated, and these constitute cultural nationalism. All this is illustrated in the case of the Odia language as explored by this paper. The paper also discusses the cultural process of the emergence of Odia mother tongue, focusing on the shift from desaja and tadbhava register to Sanskritic tatsama register with regard to the word 'kokila' that eventually replaced 'koili' in a changing poetic context.

Keywords: Translation, literacy, orality, vernacular, mother tongue, literacy.

Introduction

Any study of the history of translation from Indian languages into English or vice versa necessitates unpacking the term 'Indian languages' into Indian vernaculars and Indian mother tongues. This is because both concepts point towards a process of cultural shift not only from orality to literacy, but also from pre-print to print literacy, which was made possible as a colonial capitalist economy came to replace an earlier pre-capitalist subsistence economy. As a consequence of this the native's tongue or vernacular became standardized to become mother tongue through the agency of translation. Mother tongue, despite its originary overtones, is a cultural product of standardization and translation, predicated upon literary modernity and literacy. Its intent and effect are building its own hegemonic notions of literacy, purity and refinement and

structures of domination over the non-standard varieties (regional dialects and sociolects).

The relation of English and Indian languages is extremely fraught as the former exercises its cultural authority over the latter ones and influences them. This power relation is best understood through the prism of translation. In her story 'Translator Translated' in the anthology *The Artist of Disappearance* (2011), Anita Desai has explored very well the relation of power between English and Odia. At a superficial level the story illustrates how Prema, the translator of Suvarna Devi's Odia stories into English, feels that her discovery of this writer is part of her search for her mother's tongue that was lost to her after the mother died when she was a child. But this search is motivated not simply to compensate the cultural and psychic loss Prema has suffered on account of her mother's death, but also to carve out a niche for herself within the academia as an English teacher. English is evidently far richer an institutionalized cultural capital than Odia in the field of literary production, from which much greater benefits of power and privileges are accrued to those who master it. It is metropolitan, and a mediator among tongues unintelligible to each other in the postcolonial Babel that India is, and has the highest market value for literary production. Prema affirms all this through her unconscious imitation of the elegance, suavity and smartness of Tara, the head of the publishing firm of English translations in Delhi. This way she plays out her role as a mimic woman, someone already translated as the colonized, and ontologically, as Robert Young would say, someone "in the condition of being a translated man or woman" (140). Once she has translated the stories into English with some success, she begins to assume power over Suvarna Devi. However, towards the end of the story she admits that the mother tongue has greater power over her, and in trying to

be a short story writer herself in Odia, she discovers that she has written all these months "under the influence" of Suvarna Devi, "with her voice" (91).

On the face of it, Desai seems to credit creative writing in the mother tongue with originality and primacy that translation can never claim to have, since the translator is already translated. Being translated, Prema comes to realize the untranslatability of many parts of her proposed writing and acknowledges that she is helplessly caught between English and the mother tongue. And yet, at a deeper level, the story offers to us insights into the power structure of the cultural economy of translation of Odia into English, through which Prema claims Suvarna Devi as her protégée, her trophy (70), and "the camouflaged speckled bird"(73) she has 'discovered'. So, the mother tongue embodied by Suvarna Devi is seemingly retrieved, albeit steeped in the sentiments of nostalgia, and even exoticized. But in the story, which is a postcolonial fable, the moment of defining the need for the mother tongue is coeval with the moment when the English-educated native discovers that s/he has been colonized and translated. The moment in question is far more complex than it is first thought, for the mother tongue actually does not exist *a priori*, waiting to be salvaged and restituted after a spell of linguistic and cultural amnesia; it is not a moment of return to one's roots either. Rather the mother tongue is constructed through cultural shifts resulting from academic commoditization of vernacular in the colonial power structure and market economy.

As for the shifts from orality to literacy and transformation of vernacular into the mother tongue, Walter Ong (1982) has written with great erudition the formal and cultural aspects of such shifts. But my essay is not so much concerned with Ong's study as with the ideological implication of the shifts as

correlates of larger changes in the political and cultural economy of the modern nation state that Ivan Ilich's essay 'Vernacular Values' (1980) deals with. Illich makes a perceptive study of the changes that came about in linguistic ideology within the context of the rise of the modern nation state. He analyses the cultural economy of vernacular and charts the semantic inflections the term acquired over the years. According to him, the term 'vernacular', with Indo-Germanic root, signified "rootedness" and "abode". *Vernaculum*, a Latin word, was used for whatever was homebred, homespun, homegrown and homemade in a pre-modern subsistence economy as opposed to what was obtained in formal exchange in a relatively modern commodity-intensive economy. In the pre-modern subsistence economy the child of one's slave and of one's wife, the donkey born of one's own beast, were known as 'vernacular' beings. It was the Roman scholar Marcus Terentius Varro (116 BC – 27 BC), who applied the term to language, redefined the same conceptual distinction between the 'homegrown' and the 'bought-from-the-market' categories linguistically so that vernacular speech was to be regarded as one made up of the words and patterns grown on the speaker's own ground, as opposed to what is grown elsewhere and then mediated through market.

With the rise of the early forms of capitalist market economy, commoditization of goods and professionalization of services took place alongside the production and marketing of various forms of specialized knowledge as cultural capital. Coterminous with these developments were rise of the modern capitalist state such as Spain in the late 15th century, from where Columbus set out in search of sea-routes, initiating a saga of overseas trade routes and colonial conquest. Around that time within the State, Antonio Martinez de Nebrija was,

with the sanction of the Queen Isabella, standardizing the Castilian variety of Old Spanish through the codification of its grammar and dictionary. This attempt on the part of Nebrija led to the building up of a regime of what is popularly known in Spanish as *armas y letras* consisting in an exercise of authority of the Queen over cultural diversity in the Empire and political consolidation of her secular power in the modern Spain. Indeed, Spain was getting modernized with the rise of the letrados, the bureaucrats, in various governing councils, who were replacing the traditional nobles and grandees. Castilian emerged as the standard language to be taught as the mother tongue to students besides Latin. It came to be regarded as the Queen's language, the tongue of the Supreme Mother. Besides assuming power, the 'mother tongue' also acquired the valence of nutrition and cultural authority, which had been derived from the classical concept *educatio prolis* that ascribed to the mother the duties of the feeding and nurturing the baby. It was only later that in an extended metaphorical sense the church and school came to be regarded as performing such duties. This somewhat simplified historical account helps us understand how the term mother-tongue, notwithstanding its biological naturalism, was deeply imbricated with the process of its teaching in the academia in the colonial state and its market economy in the Indian context.

In the context of colonial India we know all too well how a certain strand of the Utilitarian philosophy underpinning Macaulay's project of English education in the early 19th century was instrumental in the formation of a colonial bourgeoisie that brought about a movement of revival and reforms within indigenous society and culture. Thus, what is popularly known as the conflict between the Anglicists versus the Vernacularists within the field of education in 19th century was a dialectical process within the self-same utilitarian logic,

and leading eventually the win of Vernacularists, with the Wood's Despatch (1854) becoming the cornerstone of education policy.

Mention may be made here that vis-à-vis the English language in the colonial context, the term vernacular did not exactly signify the idea of any homegrown product in the sense Ivan Illich meant it. Rather it simply meant the language of the natives or the colonial subjects in the official usage. But the native, or the colonial bourgeoisie, redefined it as the mother-tongue within the relations of colonial power, adjusting them carefully, so that a distinctive and exclusive cultural identity could be claimed on the basis of the mother-tongue, and the material benefits of colonial government jobs could be secured for them. The cultural adjustment on the part of the colonial elite had to serve the purpose of claiming cultural respectability for itself, and distancing itself from the uneducated masses of natives. Such distancing was reflected in the discursive strategies of the shift of registers in Odia poetry. I shall focus very narrowly on the shift from '*koili*' to '*kokila*' in Odia poetic usage as an explanation of the ideological configurations of the mother tongue and the cultural politics of the Odia colonial elite. To understand the cultural discourse of that period, a few views of Odia intellectuals on mother tongue and Odia literary usages from Odia newspapers and journals in the late 19th and early 20th centuries are worth discussing. I shall present them in my English translation.

The rise of Odia mother-tongue in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the context of Odia linguistic and cultural nationalism is a well-documented cultural narrative. What underlies it is the formation of the English-educated colonial Odia elite that invoked the notion of linguistic purity for Odia not only to mark it off from Bengali and Telugu, but also was to be differentiated from the non-standard, rustic, colloquial

varieties of Odia. This was a strategy worked out for cultural empowerment: to be educated, credited with literary and intellectual values and invested with colonial administrative power. Education being a privilege, in his impassioned editorial 'Bibidha Prasanga' (Miscellany of Topics), Bishwanath Kara wrote in *Utkal Sahitya*:

> People in this region harbour a wrong notion that one should not labour to teach Odia, which is after all our mother tongue. This is preposterous. If learning to read and write Odia were enough, all native speakers of Odia would be considered experts in the language (…). However, the way Odia is being abused in the cutcherry or zamindar's office, as if it is free for all, the aforesaid notion seems quite natural (…). In our opinion primary education should be imparted in Odia, and mother tongue learning should never be dispensed with till the upper classes (39-40).

Kara emphasized that Odia as mother tongue was a teachable concept within the colonial cultural economy at the primary level, and insisted that its impurities be cleansed away, given the high stakes it had in the colonial administrative setup.

In an essay titled "Jatiya Sahitya" (National Literature), published three years earlier than Kara's in the same journal, Sadashib Vidyabhushan had opined:

> Only when poets and authors of Utkal themselves embody moral values and write books of learning in a cultivated, tasteful style, and draw upon Sanskrit and English tomes of leaning through translation, then only will they enrich their mother-tongue, and the literature of Utkal acquire a *celestial aura* of its own (Italics for emphasis 163).

A highly Sanskritized and ornate Odia diction of this essay testifies to the agency of translation from English and Sanskrit, the languages of scientific knowledge and literary values, by which Odia 'mother-tongue' could be empowered. The celestial-ness, predicated upon the Sankritized idiom, was played off against the rustic, non-standard Odia. This, however, does not mean that the non-standard varieties of Odia were dismissed right away. On the contrary, the literate class conceded to these the values of naturalness and purity, even as considering them culturally inferior. In the cultural economy of colonial education, untutored varieties of Odia had low prestige value. The remark made by the lexicographer Mrityunjaya Ratha at Cuttack Debating Society in 1904 is case in point:

> The pieties, customs, manners and language of the village people are looked down upon as inferior. Although pure and pristine, these distinctly lack in the ideals mediated by education (…), the language of the townsmen may be confronted and contaminated on all fronts, but the tongue of the villager faces no opposition and has it natural modes and sentiments intact. Although the villager's tongue is inferior, certain aspects of it have nevertheless their own merit (…) (59-60).

The remark of Ratha uncannily brings into play the nature-culture dichotomy and cultural anxiety of early European modernity, which was the *raison d'être* for culture to cleanse away nature's grossness and impurities while, at the same time, it has to struggle to get rid of its artificialities. Although for entirely different reason, this dynamics also profoundly informed the cultural politics of Odia modernity that was becoming self-conscious as to its translatedness under the cultural authority of Bengali. G. N. Dash cites an interesting instance of even Fakir Mohan Senapati, the foremost among

the cultural leaders of the movement for the distinctiveness of the Odia language, drawing flaks from Gauri Shankar Ray for the Bengali inflections in the prose he used in his *The History of India*, the first volume of which was published in 1869 (4802). Many educated Odias feared for a long time that they were losing out on their linguistic and cultural identity for being territorially scattered and subsumed under the Bengal and Madras Presidencies and later being clubbed with Bihar within the administrative setup of Bihar-Odisha Province. The committee for Orissa Language Agitation (1868-1870) and the Utkal Sammilani that was founded in 1903 by Madhusudan Das were important agencies to fight for Odia political and linguistic distinctiveness.

The mother tongue issue was embedded in the Odia cultural distinctiveness vis-à-vis Bengali, and the discourses relating to it emphasized purity as the key concept. In this context, Gopal Chandra Praharaj, the most important Odia lexicographer, defined the 'purity' of language in the sense of the propriety of usage: "Whatever is in usage is in fact pure" (Pure Language 51) in a speech at Utkal Sahitya Samaj in 1904. He believed that literary language could encompass many registers, and said that language of the book and the language spoken at home are both integral to literary idiom (Pure Language 49). However, we still find Praharaj saying on 25 July, 1936, at the same forum that the Odia language should be governed by rules of spelling, orthography and grammar as well as proper usages. To this end, he had already worked since 1929 on his dictionary that was completed in 1940; four years after a politically unified Odisha state came into existence.

The dictionary *Purnachanda Odia Bhashakosha* in seven volumes, charged with the ideology of Odia nationalism, was a mammoth effort on Praharaj's part to standardize Odia as a mother tongue. Since the unification of the Odia speaking

tracts on the strength of linguistic commonness and distinctiveness of the Odia language were the main ideological thrust of the dictionary, the notion of linguistic purity underpinning it was both inclusive and exclusive. Inclusive in the sense it accommodated a great number of *tadbhava* and *desaja* words and those of various regional dialects, informed by the linguistic theory of John Beames, as the markers of Odia distinctiveness and its prevalence in various regions. Exclusive because it marked itself off as different from Bengali and Hindi by listing Hindi and Bengali synonyms of the Odia words it defined. Thus Praharaj's dictionary served the purpose of justifying the distinctiveness of Odia as the mother tongue on the one hand, while standardizing it on the other hand.

It is universally true that standardization through lexicography inevitably entails regulation of orthography, and it is a normative process through which a language is academicized to become a mother tongue. Evidently, the norms Praharaj was prescribing were literary, academic and well suited for polite circles as well as public domains of use, and these were to be entrenched through the teaching of the Odia language and literature. Encyclopedic information provided by many educated people to illustrate the dictionary entries served to amplify Odia print literacy as an academic depository as well as repository of various fields of knowledge. The educated usages of a fairly large numbers of authors of poetry and prose had been invoked to define and stabilize the literariness of the language. Also, a large number of meta-lexical markers that usually emerge through philological study of a language at a sufficiently advanced stage of print literacy were used by Praharaj to specify the provenance, registers and stylistic implications of the Odia vocabulary. Above all, the occasionally offered English versions of the semantic

definitions of Odia words, together with the English, Hindi and Bengali synonyms of the entries in the dictionary, gesture towards the translatability and translational propensities of Odia to ensure that it is qualified as a mother tongue. It would not be, therefore, unreasonable to state that Odia was mapping itself as a mother tongue along the horizontal axis as distinct from other mother tongues such as Bengali, Hindi and English, the colonial master's tongue. Along the vertical axis, it acted as supra-regional variety, subsuming the non-standard varieties and dialects, and placed above them. This mapping could not have been possible within the translational matrix formalized within the dictionary, given its multilingual scheme. To enter the zone of epistemic visibility as mother tongue, Odia was negotiating the coordinates of linguistic difference with other languages in a translational mode.

One can ill afford to ignore that the dictionary project as part of a larger pedagogic project of Odia cultural nationalism was mediated and supported by colonial power structure. In the introduction to the first volume of his dictionary, Praharaj mentioned that the idea of it had been suggested to him by W. W. Henderson, Principal of Cuttack Training College in 1913-14 (Introduction viii), and the Vernacular Development Committee of the Department of Education of the Government of Bihar and Orissa resolved in 1927 that the dictionary was to be published. The project took off with the patronage of the government in terms of the reviewing, partial funding for the printing and selling of the copies.

The emergence of the *Bhashakosha* is only the crystallization of a culture of academic literariness that had already begun from the late 19th century through the mediation of colonial education. The English-educated colonial Odias invoked nationalist sentiments and discursively constructed the Odia mother-tongue as a cultural capital while redefining Odia

literariness in terms of the constructs of purity, propriety and genuineness. The transnational impulse embodied by the *Bhashaokosha* also came from a secular and literary tradition formed since the late 19th century, if one chooses to ignore the English translation of the *Bible* and the religious writings by the missionaries during the early 19th century. It is important to note that Madhusudan Rao and many great Odia poets like Radhanath Ray and Nadakishore Bal had also been translating many English lyrical poems into their mother-tongues with a view to enriching it. As I have stated elsewhere, "Given its slender base of print literacy, fledgling educational institutions in the late nineteenth century and lack of adequate number of academic texts, the Odia language often needed to draw on the exotic literary resources of themes, imagery, forms, sentiments to energize itself and stand on equal footing with Bengali, its main cultural and political rival. The urgency of the moment of Odia colonial modernity was to assimilate and domesticate as much of English poetry through translation as was possible (…)" (Mohapatra 38). So, the context of the mother tongue was, to a large extent, a context of cultural translation in which the negotiation with the resources of another language and its culture entailed two things: firstly, Odia appropriated the external resources as its own, and secondly, it found new ways to use its own indigenous experiential and expressive resources in consonance with those appropriated. This is how modern literary idiom of Odia was shaped out of the negotiation between the foreign and indigenous resources. In fact, era of Odia poetic modernity, inaugurated by Radhanath Ray, owes much to his adaptation of European literary resources. One could cite any number of examples from Ray's celebrated poems such as *Kedaragouri*, *Chandrabhaga*, *Usha* and *Parvati*, or prose pieces like 'Bibbeki' or Italia Juba' to notice an accomplished deployment

of Sanskrit for developing the Odia mother tongue with high literariness.

Now I shall make a few observations about a shift of poetic idiom from distinctly oral and colloquial to written and Sanskritized register with regard to the changes in the genre of the Cuckoo poems. Priyadrashi Patnaik (2009) has made an insightful study of these poems as Dutakavya or Messenger poems, which were popular between the 15th to the 17th century AD in Odia poetry, in imitation of Kalidasa's *Meghaduta.* The messenger in question was the cuckoo, who served to carry to the addressee a message of longings and sorrow.

In Markanda Dasa's 'Keshaba Koili' (15th -16th century AD) the cuckoo is addressed by a tearful Yashoda, who asks her to carry the message of her sorrowful state to Keshaba, who left for Mathura but never returned. Some other Cuckoo poems, namely Jagannatha Dasa's 'Artha Kolili' (Meaning of 'Koili' as revealed), and two other poems like Lokanatha Dasa's 'Gyanodaya Kolili' and Vairagi Dasa's 'Sisu Veda Koili' in the subsequent period (16th-17th century AD) also belong to the tradition of Dutakavya. My purpose in making reference to these poems is not to discuss their themes individually, but to focus on the very word 'koili' which variously meant the messenger, 'jiva' or prana (life-force), or the ignorant, unenlightened self, searching for supreme knowledge. Anchored upon the indigenous traditions of Vaishnava and Buddhist philosophy and adopting the forms of Chautisha, Charyachhaya, Sandhyabhasa etc., these poems were diffusive in their cultural presence in a largely oral medium of recitals that encompassed the rustic and illiterate as well as the literate and urbane audience. Combining wonderfully the demotic *desaja* and *tadbhava* with the urbane, Sanskritized *tatsama*

diction, these poems created a literary idiom that had wide acceptability and appeal.

But 'koili' was eventually replaced by 'kokila', and its synonym 'pika' when the western (mostly English) poetic forms of ballad, lyric, sonnet, ode and epic were appropriated through translation into Odia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, along with the blank verses and stanza patterns. It might be a sweeping statement if no mention is made of the use of this word in pre-colonial period between 17th and 18th century. We know of the famed *Rasakallola* by Dinakrushna Dasa (1650-1710) where *kokila* is used many a time figuratively as what is called an *udippana bibhaba* or the excitant factor of the *sringara* rasa in Indian aesthetics, especially in the Bhakti tradition. A case in point is the lines in my English translation:

> In these blissful floral moments, in a night of the moon at that,

> No bosom shall remain unmoved when Kokilabhārati stirs love.

Here it is a love bird with a decorative epithet 'bhārati', signifying Saraswati and the muse. It is also metaphorically used as a vehicle in expressions like 'koilavachanā' or 'kokilavachana'. In his equally acclaimed *Lābanyabati*, Upendra Bhanja (1680? -1740) also used it as an excitant of love in spring. Kokila was, however, reinvented in the poetic vocabulary with new inflections when the English-educated Odia natives like Nanda Kishore Bal translated John Logan's poem 'To the Cuckoo' and Wordsworth's more famous homonymous poem as 'Kokila Prati' and 'Kokila' that carried the semantic baggage of highly valorized English Romantic and Victorian poetry. Both poems were published in the *Utkal Sahitya* in 1901. Kokila was not just a tatsama word with

conventional figurative, but a new poetic trope carrying suggestions and valences of the mystic, noumenal, transcendent and immortal as opposed to the quotidian and mortal. It became a marker of literary modernity as well as mother-tongue literacy.

In the poem 'Bana Priya', written by Bal about the same time, under the influence of 'Ode to A Skylark', the same word *kokila* features in *Prabasi*, which Bal wrote under the influence of Tennyson's 'The Princess'. Interestingly, in *Prabasi*, another synonym 'pika' is brought into use along with 'kokila', and here the bird functions as a messenger of love, carrying over into a new context its residual meaning from the past. We have many more instances of the poetic currency of *kokila*. In the 10th volume of the *Utkala Sahitya*, published in 1917, Dinabandhu Mohanty wrote a poem entitled 'Bāni Agamone' which invokes Saraswati, in a high-flown, grand style, and where *kokila* is the preferred word among a plethora of Sanskritic words. Upendra Kishore Mohanty's poem 'Basanta', and 'Kokila Prati', published in *Sahakara* in 1931-32, and Hara Narayan Singh's 'Pika Prati', published in the same year in the same journal are some instances of its usage. These poems are creative translations from English into Odia, without being faithful to the original except in a very broad sense. But these helped the mother tongue re-invent itself with new creative possibilities of a modern subjective sensibility and idiom emerging from the material grounds of print literacy which had deeply entrenched itself from the late 1860s with the emergence of newspapers and journals. The literacy base developing in an ambience of cultural nationalism academically created the mother-tongue by standardizing the vernacular, assigning to it the status of literacy and investing in it cultural power. What happens here is a shift of register in the literary usages from the low prestige, oral pre-colonial literary

vernacular to an educated and cultured register of the mother tongue facilitated through the re-invention of literariness, which had already been nourished by poets like Dinakrushna and Upendra Bhanja.

In his essay "On Lyric Poetry and Society", Adorno defined the impulse of lyrical poetry as reflecting a distinctly progressive and idiosyncratic subjectivity. He believed that it was "a form of reaction to the reification of the world, to the domination of human beings by commodities" that had developed since the beginning of the modern era, since the industrial revolution became the dominant force in life" (40). The lyrical subjectivity, in his opinion, was at war with a collective consciousness of capitalist reason, although, paradoxically, it was mediated through the objectivity of society and language. One might as well argue that in the Odia colonial cultural scenario, lyrical subjectivity in Odia poetry was much less idiosyncratic and less independent. On the contrary, the liberty of subjectivism was guaranteed by the nature of translation which I have mentioned to be adaptation. Adaptation guaranteed creative freedom of the poet from the burden of faithfulness to the original English poems and helped the formation of a modern derivative lyrical subjectivity that reworked the Sanskrit diction into a culturally translated sensibility. This is not the only way, but one of the important ways in which the mother-tongue was constructed and regulated in literary terms in a cultural spectrum where the literate and literary were a continuum enabled by the colonial Odia-English bi-lingual education that entailed translation from English into Odia.

Translation is a broad-spectrum activity embedded in an equally broad range of diverse contexts. While at one end of the spectrum the word-for-word, literal translations are preferred in the theological, juridical and scientific contexts; in

the literary context, and especially that of lyrical poetry, trans-creation or adaptation comes forth more naturally, with great scope available to the author to reanimate the indigenous semantic resources and expressive modes. The latter mode has in fact been the cause of the shifts and changes in literary status of languages – be they at the stages of pre-print or print literacy and in their respective modes of production. Writing a cultural history of the vernaculars in India and examining the relative authority of Sanskrit, Sheldon Pollock holds that Oriya developed as a 'literary' vernacular around mid-fifteenth century, with Sarala Dasa's adaptation of the *Mahabharata* and Balarama Dasa's adaptation of the *Ramayana* (*The Language of the Gods in the World of Men* 396). The adaptations were a long way from the time when Sanskrit had been the only literary language for the genre of Kavya, having monopoly in the field of scribal production of literacy and literariness. Vernacularization of literature in the pre-colonial context of Odia and many other Indian languages was a revolution, one might say, replacing Sanskrit, although drawing on its poetic resources. But in the colonial times, once again, through the same process of adaptation, the mother tongue emerged from the pre-print vernacular by drawing on the resources of both English and Sanskrit. While Sanskrit was invoked as a hallowed cultural tradition for its moorings, English was assimilated into it through translation.

To conclude, one would do well to rethink the issue of mother tongue in the literary context – which is usually overlooked by linguist – and explore in greater depth the cultural logic of translation underlying mother tongue in the colonial times.

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Politics and Poetics in Translation of the Classics

SHAHEEN SABA

> Translators are the shadow heroes of literature, who make it possible for cultures to talk to one another, who have enabled us to understand that we all, from every part of the world, live in one world. –Paul Auster[1]

Abstract

This paper seeks to uncover the politics surrounding the selection and elimination in the process of translation by presenting instances of the translation of classical masterpieces supported by contemporary postulations. Translation is not a mechanical transposition of words across languages but a cognitive activity that demands active participation of the translator as the individual identity of the translator is not isolated from the process. Most of our acquaintance with the Western and Greek epics has been through English translations and it will not be naive to say that many of these translations have themselves become classics by virtue of various translation strategies. There are multiple manners in which a translation can be approached but none provide a universal model or blueprint for translation as it is not free from the translator's ideology and intervention. Besides cultural appropriation and maintaining equivalences (grammar, style, vocabulary), untranslatability is one of the major challenges for the translators of ancient epic romances such as the Ramayana, the Iliad or the Dastan-e Amir Hamza. Heterogeneous factors compromise the translation of certain sections in classics (the obscene, erotic) that disturb the

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[1] Auster, Paul. 2007. Foreword to Allen, Esther ed *To Be Translated or Not To Be.* Diputacio, Institut Ramon Llull.
<*http://www.pen-international.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Translation-report_OK-2.pdf*>

organicity of a work. Despite the sincere efforts of the translator, the politics of censorship, bowdlerization, publishers and power structures are major impediments of translations and discourses. Therefore, translation becomes an incomplete simulacrum of the original text. Ethically, poetic justice can only be achieved when a text is produced in unexpurgated form as in case of the translation of the Dastan-e Amir Hamza by Musharraf Ali Farooqi.

Keywords: Translation, classic, untranslatability, epic, *dastan.*

Let Us Define Translation

Translation eludes definition by having synonyms such as conversion, paraphrase, version, transformation and change. Each of these synonyms has a different connotation altogether and compromises with translation as we understand it as a transfer of text from one language to another. The synonyms may come into being in process of translation but neither is an appropriate alternative to translation. Translation has been inadequately defined by various practitioners and theoreticians. The word 'translation' is itself very elusive. Casting a glance at history of human civilization one can observe that translation has often been a means of exploring the unknown and assimilating them for enriching one's knowledge vault. If translation or transcendence means to carry over, it is not just a linguistic and verbal carry over, although that is what flashes in one's mind when one thinks about translation. Quite the contrary translation is a loaded baggage since a text is transported from one world to another. Words are highly symbolic with social, economic, historical, aesthetical, political, cultural, mythical and legendary valences. The ambiguity in defining translation goes on to inform the traditional theories on translation. Hence one can only attempt

and try as best to convey the message and meaning inherent in the source text (Bell 1991).

'The translation should give a complete transcript of the idea of the original work' (Tytler 1790: 9), and also keeps the style and manner as the original. This was a reaction against Dryden's concept of 'paraphrase' which vested the translator with too much liberty. The idea of the original work is the sole output of the author and the translator can only intuit, 'We all translate by intuition'. There is no 'science of translating' (Vermeer 1987). Scientific theories of translation can exist but they are neither applicable nor perfect for translating. Instead of presenting a history of translation or rather summation of the views of theoreticians and practitioners, the paper will critically engage on the nuances of translation of classic epics, the politics of canon formation and censorship with special reference to the translation of epic romances. The paper also lays out the fact that translation is not merely a calculated verbal transfer but a cognitive act which cannot be overlooked because words on a page are a result of cognitive exercise though not deliberate, the translations will always bear the watermark of the translator as the cognitive faculty cannot be separated from the subjectivity of the translator. The translator is also a product of multiple forces (state, family, society, education, law etc.) that garner the cognition, of formulating opinions, priorities and choices, of perceiving things or approaching a text or any reading for that matter.

Translation as a Linguistic and Cognitive Act

Lawrence Venuti views translation as a process 'that involves looking for similarities between languages and cultures—particularly similar messages and formal techniques—but it does this only because it is constantly confronting dissimilarities' (2008: 264). Translation should not attempt to

remove these dissimilarities rather it should be a site where different cultures bloom, a space which introduces the reader of the 'cultural other'. 'A translated text should be the site where linguistic and cultural differences are somehow signaled (…)' (ibid.). This strategy based on an 'aesthetic of discontinuity' can best preserve that difference that reflects the distinctness of both the cultures.

Decades ago J. C. Catford defined translation as, 'the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)' (1965: 20). This language oriented definition may be the oft quoted definition in Translation Studies but the last three decades have witnessed diverse approaches to translation which interrogate translation beyond replacement of 'textual material' as proposed by Translation Studies scholars like Venuti, Susan Bassnett, Harish Trivedi, Tejaswini Niranjana and others. Bassnett in *Reflections on Translation* (2011) gives a very clear sketch on some seminal questions on translation and its emergence as a discipline in the last thirty years. No doubt the 'textual material' is derived from the text, but a text can no longer be defined as words on a page, rather it is an amalgam of cultural and metaphorical signifiers and signifieds. The text is interdisciplinary, plural and irreducible post Roland Barthes distinction between a work and a text. Translation Studies has turned more accommodative towards the diverse specters of translation for instance, multilingualism, retranslations, gender and translation, cultural turn, children's literature, scandals, media and translation, post- colonial, legal translations etc. It has travelled from the task of translator to the identity of translator to its invisibility. Post the 'death of author', we may witness the 'birth of the translator' very soon.

Translation is 'what happens linguistically and cognitively as the translator works on the translation' (Hatim and Munday

2004: 346). This is reiterated by Jean Delisle, Hannelore Lee Jahnke and Monique C. Cormier in *Translation Terminology* (1999) where they seek to bring a homogenization in the existing multiple definitions. Delisle defines translation process as 'the cognitive activity where 'translators' establish inter-lingual 'equivalences' between 'texts' or text segments'. The text is divided into four parts; the same basic text is translated in four languages- French, Spanish, English and German. The compilers of this dictionary conducted a study of eighty-eight teaching handbooks published since World War II. Their studies yielded 838 concepts and 1419 terms from fifteen handbooks related to translation. This compilation of terminology challenges the authors of other such compilation to establish the basic vocabulary that can be useful to university professors, who practise and teach translation. The editors add that their goal throughout this dictionary is to bring clarity and uniformity to those concepts that previously had imprecise definitions and that often have been used in translation courses in university settings. The work that these terminologists have put together is very handy for the 'practical functional terminology' to meet the needs of these users of translation handbooks.

Dastan-e Amir Hamza in Translation

The Dastan-e Amir Hamza is a seminal existing epic romance in Urdu in India. This four volume epic is the exclusive representative text of the *dastan* genre. *Dastan* basically means a long story. It existed in the oral form and was passed down from one generation to another by the masters to their pupils. The narrators were called *dastangos* (storytellers) who narrated marvelous stories from *Dastan-e Amir Hamza* to gatherings in the street and court. Musharraf Ali Farooqi has translated it into English in an expurgated form as the *The Adventures of Amir Hamza* (2007), this translation has been made from

Ghalib Lakhnavi and Abdullah Bilgrami version which was published by Naval Kishore Press in 1871. Keeping the intentional fallacy aside the intention of the translator for choosing a particular text for translation may be important. In the preface to *The Adventures of Amir Hamza*, Musharraf Ali Farooqi clarifies that his personal fascination with this book as a young boy led him to translate this text so that the world can know that Urdu literature has such a fascinating epic romance that transposes one to another realm. He was so ensnared by the *dastan* that the characters visited him in dreams and later he was haunted by them. On a lighter note he set to translate the text so that it is known to the world through English. He also checked if any complete translation of this single volume Ghalib Lakhnavi and Abdullah Bilgrami edition 1871 had been done. Quite obviously Sheikh Sajjad Hussain's slim translation as *Dastan-e Amir Hamza: An Oriental Novel* (1892) appeared like a short English summary. Frances Pritchett's translation *The Romance Tradition in Urdu: Adventures from the Dastan of Amir Hamzah* (1991) too appeared unsatisfactory as it had been done from 1969 Maulana Abdul Bari Asi edition, an expurgated version sans the ornamented Urdu. For Farooqi translation of a classical work of such mighty stature can be justified only by reproducing it in its grandeur. Musharraf Ali Farooqi makes some important observations on Pritchett's translation of the 1969 Maulana Abdul Bari Asi edition: "the choice of Asi's version for her translation implies an endorsement of what is inevitably a shortsighted approach, an unredeemable impoverishment' (2000: 170). He wonders at her choice 'to translate a rather callously expurgated version, when scholarship is, and should be, sensitive to the original texts and sources" (ibid.). For him sincere scholarship should not look at marketability or ease of translatability. Thus, he set himself to this mammoth project. Farooqi's translation recalls and reclaims of a lost piece of rich literary heritage, the history

of our ancestors- the stories/*dastan* that coloured and lightened North India and bought people together.

Translations of the Classics

The translation of the Bible has been one of the most talked topics in the world as it is the word of God. Hence one had to be very careful or else face the law (in medieval times they were executed) as seen in case of early translators of the Bible. But the Bible can be used as a metaphor for translation. As for the decades loyalty to the source text was to dominate the translation world. It was the cry of 'word-to-word' and not cultural, semantic or sense for sense as would be developed by later theoreticians. The word becomes sacred and the sanctity must be maintained for translation; the violation of which entails all the possibilities of being labeled as blasphemous.

Besides this, translation is not free from the politics of majority vs. minority language. The attitude of people towards secondary and tertiary languages varies. For instance, in England, Welsh and Scottish appear to be of little importance since the emergence of English as world language (Bassnett 2011). The translation of Bible into native languages and also English had a great impact on respective languages. Bassnett quotes Michael Cronin from *Translation and Globalization* who remarks that, 'there is an unequal power relationship between minority and majority languages, and hence translation tends to be unidirectional, with the language perceived as least powerful absorbing most from the dominant language which often remains impervious to the other' (2006: 145).

The translations of timeless classics such as Homer's *Iliad* and Virgil's *Aeneid* were much safer to deal with. Here they were being assimilated into English which was not a dominant language back in the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

Alexander Pope and John Dryden, besides others, translated them into English. This was to be followed by many more translations in future, some vibrant hybrids, some original, 'some others are simply cuckoos' as Lorna Hardwick quotes Michael Walton who has briefed up the problematic nature of contemporary 'theatrical response to classic drama'. These works are identified with the cuckoos who smuggle into other's nest and thus hijack the original occupants. The fact that Classics (Greek, Roman Indian etc.) are constantly being translated embody a dual process that of assertion (since translation ascribes value to the source) and subversion (since translation remake texts for new situations and therefore change perceptions of the source). Translations increase the iconic value of the source texts 'as they accumulate meanings and encourage veneration because they situate and resituate the texts at the intersections with the traditions in which they are received they also transform both the texts and their associated iconic status' (Hardwick 2008: 341). The word classic is also not an isolated term that can only be applied to the ancient classical epics such as Homer's *Iliad,* Virgil's *Aeneid, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata* or *the Dastan-e Amir Hamza.* But history has provided us with instances when the translations of these classical epics themselves become classics, for instance, George Chapman's translation of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in 1616. This can be seen in the light of Lawrence Venuti's observation who suggested that the translations should have a tint of foreignness to familiarize the readers with the fact that they are reading a translation. Susan Bassnett in *Reflections on Translations* (2011) presents a similar argument where some translators preferred to signal the antiquity of a work in their language of translation. But this Victorian view of medievalizing the language faded because the translators had to deliberately create a language which appeared obscure to the contemporary readers. The translator

must strive to make a text sound authentic and readable by translating in a language that is comprehensible. This stands quite contrary to Venuti who campaigns against erasing any such traces or presenting a rather smooth translation which makes the translator invisible as the text will be appropriated by the receiving culture as has happened with many classics. But as obvious such translations were welcome by the Romantics[2] who were enamoured by accessing them for the first time in English translations. John Keats wrote a sonnet 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer' (1816). The translation gave an epiphanic moment to Keats when he read Chapman's translation of Homer.

The Iliad has been republished by publishers with fresh translations, prefaces, commentary and introduction ever since. Despite being a difficult read, it has been approached in all possible manner but translating a classic demands special competence as 'it is difficult to kill a sheep with dignity in a modern language, to flay and to prepare it for the table, detailing every circumstance of the process' (Cowper 1837: xvii). It has been rendered into blank verse by William Cullen Bryant (1870), adapted literally translated with explanatory notes by Theodore Alois Buckley in 1873. It was further translated by Robert Fitzgerald in 1974 with drawings by Hans Erni. Robert Fagle's version of the *Illiad* provides us with yet another way to approach Homer. Fagle's *Iliad* can be taken as an instance to show the various styles employed by the translators while translating classic masterpieces. In the 1990

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[2] Lawrence Venuti closely follows the thinking of the German thinker Friedrich Schleimacher whose formulated ideas in the nineteenth century ran contrary to the French school of thinking which upheld deomestication. Venuti's theory of foreignization fine tunes with the post-colonial scholars of translation who do not uphold domestication as it erases the traces of the source text's native identity.

version Fagle confirms to Matthew Arnold's proposition that translation is a means of empowering the academic elite. Fagle's version was literal in an academic i.e. Arnoldian sense, striking a balance between the 'literal' and the 'literary' which brings it close to John Dryden's concept of 'paraphrase' resulting in a modernized version of Homer (Venuti 2008: 119). But fresh translations have not ceased for instance, the recent translation of the *Iliad* by Caroline Alexander published by New York, Ecco, an imprint of Harper Collins Publishers in 2015. These are only a handful among the long list but one can deduce from above is that the *Iliad* has constantly been reassessed for the readers. The reason for the translations themselves becoming classics are varied ranging from the popularity of a translator or scholar or easy availability, or abridgement or clarity. Hence a source text (here the classic) is a classic as it has been canonized, but the journey of a translation attaining the status of a classic has many stories behind it.

Talking about the two translations of the comparatively lesser translated *Catullus,* states that the marginality of *Catullus* was due to a combined factor. The epic genre was privileged over lyric in English poetry translation, "But there was also the issue of morality, with English writers at once attracted and disturbed by the Pagan sexuality and the physically coarse language, entertaining a guilty fixation on the poet's scandalous affair with 'Lesbia' (Venuti 2008: 69). Like *Dastan-e Amir Hamza* which was itself a translation from a Persian version as obvious from Ghalib Lakhnavi's title in Urdu *Tarjuma-e Dastan-e Sahibqiran Giti-Sitan Ala-e Paighambar-e Aakhiruz Zaman Amir Hamza bin Abdul-Muttalib bin Hashim bin Abdul Munaf,* published by Matba-e Hakim Sahib, Calcutta in 1855, the two translations of *Catullus* (The anonymous *Adventures of Catullus* and *History*

of His Amours and Lesbia (1707) were also translations from French Jean de la Chapelle's *Les Amours de Catulle* (1725).

A classic translation of a classical epic text is inherently an archival performance of the target culture, one that reinscribes the literary history and norms of the target culture onto the originating space of epic (Armstrong 2008: 169). Philip Lutgendorf, professor of Hindi and Modern Indian Studies at the University launched the project of retranslating Sanskrit epic poem *the Ramayana* by Tulsidas, a sixteenth version which is written in more standardized Hindi. Lutgendorf remarked that the interest in retranslating this classical epic was to produce a free-verse translation as prior translations 'indulged in a turgid prose' which 'he finds antithetical to the momentum and compression of the original' (Guzman 2015).

Therefore there are multiple reasons behind a fresh translation of a classic. As Musharraf Ali Farooqi opined that prior to his translation there was only one complete translation of *Dastan-e Amir Hamza* that was carried out by Frances Pritchett from a 1960 expurgated version edited by Abdul Baari Aasii which according to her was an easier read. But Musharraf Ali Farooqi went straight to the first 1871 edition and dared to translate the classical epic romance passionately and responsibly with all its ornamentation and bulk that reveals the splendor of *Dastan-e Amir Hamza*. One is struck not with epithets of the same word as Lutgendorf remarks that in Book I of the *Ramayana* there are twenty nine epithets for 'lotus', but of different words and different ways of presenting the same thing repeatedly and the never ending verities of flora, fauna, dresses, weaponry, horses and troops. Therefore, translation of a classic requires precision in achieving the symmetry and parallelism in the target language.

Tackling Untranslatability in the Classics

Untranslatability is one of the major hurdles that a translator has to face at some point or the other. There have been various debates on domestication vs. foreignization, views on retention of source language words and terminologies as some consider that it makes the translation obscure or irritable read while in some cases it becomes an unavoidable necessity. Turning back to classic epics with a work as diverse as *Dastan-e Amir Hamza* (1871), it becomes unavoidable. *Dastan-e Amir Hamza* is not located in a fixed geographical location or time thereby we find an abundance of verities; allusion of heroes from Rustam to Alexander, the text travels from Persia to India to Sri Lanka to China. The composition of the text makes it unique in its kind as it has layers of sedimentation over time as it did not enjoy the popularity of running in prints until Munshi Naval Kishore (1836-95) began publishing them from Naval Kishore Press established in 1858. Rare handwritten manuscripts of *Dastan-e Amir Hamza* dating back to Akbar and even earlier are no longer traceable. The text kept on growing as it landed in various places. For instance, the current text has lot of Indian elements as the *dastangos* (storytellers) of Lucknow added local flavour to the existing corpus so that the listeners would not feel it to be an estranged narration, this is exemplified through the presence of words such as *mangtika, camurbandh, bhagat, katar, bichawa, jamdani, dotara* etc. Musharraf Ali Farooqi has translated them at his best. For the untranslatable, he has added detailed notes and list at the end of the English translation.

The politics of publishing houses cannot be dissociated from translations as they cater to texts more accessible to a national reading public as they target profits. Translations of books such as *Jellyfish* (2008), an experimental novel recounted by a neurotic homosexual man does not feature in the reading list

because the readerships for such works are 'woefully small'. Translation ideology and poetics cannot be isolated from translatability which involves professionals such as publishers, translators, editors and educators (Lefevere 1992). Along with the patrons of literature, these professionals go on to determine the fate of classics. But ideology and poetics are not fixed entities and hence liable to change with the passage of time. What is mundane today (*Jellyfish)* may be queued up besides *Hamlet* and *Odyssey* tomorrow. *Dastan-e Amir Hamza* shared the same fate which was not rejected in totality but neither was it considered as 'pure literature', a term which itself is very ambiguous. It enjoyed peripheral status and women of respectable families were advised not to read this particular book as advocated by Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi in *Bahishti Zewar*[3]. Thus canon formation in literature has been flawed in itself; there are no fixed parameters for making a work classic. Art and literature had already been polarized (classic/non-classic, high/low art, pure/impure, sacred/profane, conformists/non-conformists etc.); therefore it is either of the pairs.

Attempts are being made to overcome the classic/non-classic barrier through multiplicity of canons as advocated by Emily Apter. World literature is more accommodative towards differences but it is not possible to translate everything or to substitute it for a universally global idiom. This is evident from the fix of untranslatability that every translator faces. The manner in which translation has been included in the umbrella of world literature is perplexing. Although on the one hand,

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[3] This is an Islamic book on moral conduct and jurisprudence for Muslim women written in Urdu. After its publication it became a household name. It was gifted to the newly wed bride so that she may be able to conduct herself properly at the in-law's house. It has been translated into English by Maulana Mohammad Mahomedi. Barbara Daly Metcalf's book *Perfecting Women* (1992) is a commentary and history of *Bahishti Zewar.* <https://archive.org/details/BahishtiZewar_201307 >

this promotes the lesser known texts, on the other hand world literature appears to be ignorant of the linguistic and cultural specificity by anthologizing it as World Literature (Apter 2013). To overcome untranslatability translators intervene to make text simpler for the target audience as postulated by Lefevere, for instance, the modification made by Anneliese Schutz to temper anti-German sentiments in Anne Frank's diary in her translation for Fischer Publishing House in 1955. There are texts that deviate so much from 'acceptable' and 'expected' that the translators simply steer clear of these untranslatable elements (Lefevere 1992).

Translating the Erotic in the Classics

Vocabularies of sex or obscene or erotic passages pose another major challenge to the translators as they are notoriously difficult to translate. However, it is important to note that there is a very thin line dividing the obscene and erotic as they are determined by the aesthetic reception which vary culturally. The same happens in case of translation of epics as what may appear aesthetically appealing in the source language may appear indecent or obscene in the target language. 'Translators in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century suggest that they are sparing their readers material or language that would be shocking (or repulsive or distasteful) to the translator's contemporaries' (Roberts 2008: 285). There is another high concern that the audience may also be morally corrupted by such texts besides being shocked. This is reflected in the legal rulings against such representations in literature which includes translation of classical texts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by organizations such as the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice. In the modern period, D. H. Lawrence's novel such as *The Rainbow* (1915) had to face censorship and resentment. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928)

was banned in the United States till 1959[4] along similar lines. The book was explosive as it showed the physical and emotional relationship between a working class man and an upper class woman. It was a major threat to the vanguards (state and religion) of the society.

The *Dastan-e Amir Hamza* also suffered a similar fate, the erotic content being one of the contributing factors for not making it to mainstream literature. It is not assumed that a work of merit must be the mainstream, but it is the recognition, the passport that it grants for circulation worldwide that matters. As I have observed, there is also a gender bias involved in the censoring of such texts. As the *Dastan-e Amir Hamza* initially existed in the oral form, it was meant to be narrated (*dastangoi)* in public gatherings which hardly comprised of any women. It was safe as long as it did not reach the drawing rooms in print especially for women. Hence after it came out in print by the efforts of Munshi Naval Kishore it was publicly declared unfit for women because it contained erotic lines, lust, rape, sex and obscene pranks played by Amar Ayyar (the trickster) on his adversaries. But the fact that the protagonist (Amir Hamza) is free to wed as many women as he likes, despite promises and commitment dilute the argument. The *Dastan-e Amir Hamza* has licentious spaces but a warrior (Amir Hamza) is still celebrated for his valour and martyrdom for the cause of Islam. Musharraf Ali Farooqi has, however, not expurgated the text of these scenes by reproducing them craftily in his translation titled *The*

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[4] When the full unexpurgated edition was published by Penguin Books in Britain in 1960, the trial of Penguin under the Obscene Publications Act 1959 was a major public event and a test of the new obscenity law. The 1959 act (introduced by Roy Jenkins) had made it possible for publishers to escape conviction if they could show that a work was of literary merit. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Chatterley%27s_Lover>

Adventures of Amir Hamza (2007). The translator has also been successful in translating the *vasokht*[5] and *sarapa*[6] beautifully.

Some translators, however, prefer to expurgate the text of such elements for various reasons, moral concerns and purification of the text being the primary ones. Some translators of the expurgated editions of classics 'often seek also to justify their decision to conceal or modify those aspects of the text they consider unworthy of the author inappropriate to their intended audience or otherwise un-punishable' (Roberts 2008: 284). Tom Lewis' comments on the problem the Victorian courts faced in distinguishing between works of high art and classic literature and obscenity from his article 'Legislating Morality: Victorian and Modern Legal Responses to Pornography'. He argues that the seekers of such legislation were not concerned about 'the existence or consumption of obscene materials per se' but their availability 'to a much wider reading and viewing public'. Therefore, the translation stands chances of plaguing the sanctity of the home by retaining such passages and the translators should function as moral guards (Roberts 2008: 286).

Apart from this, obscenity was linked to class. This is a stark polarization of society that tends to show the upper class as refined and the lower class as uncouth and uncivilized, and hence such text containing lewd passages cannot adorn their houses. This is a generalization as sex or intimacy which is present in the society irrespective of caste, class or race.

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[5] A form of Urdu poetry, conventionally defined as one in which the lover asserts his pride and self-regard. However, the verses in question do not strictly adhere to this definition.

[6] A grouping of verses in which a poet elaborately details the corporeal beauty of his female beloved

> The ancients, in the expression of resentment or contempt, made use of many epithets and appellations which sound extremely shocking to our more polished ears, because we never hear them employed but by the meanest and most degraded of the populace. By similar reasoning we must conclude that those expressions conveyed no such mean or shocking ideas to the ancients since we find them used by the most dignified and exalted characters (Tytler 1790: 145-146).

The labeling of obscenity in literature was heralded in India by the British. The first instance was found in series of reports on the Bengal book trade compiled by James Long for the government in 1850s. Measures to curb obscene literature in India ran parallel to the 1857 Obscene Publications act in Britain. In India 'The earliest Indian obscenity law was the Obscene Books and Pictures Act (Act I of 1856), which imposed a fine or imprisonment for the sale of obscene books or pictures'(Stark 2009: 91). But there was no clear-cut distinction between 'erotic' and 'obscene' and the publishers were left confused.

Forms like *vasokht* were particularly targeted as they were considered highly erotic. A number of *vasokhts* also figure in the *Dastan-e Amir Hamza*. As suggested by Stark the Victorian sensibilities and puritanical hold of Britain was responsible for censor of obscene literature in India. Besides this, the local clerics themselves were critical of the literature being circulated at that time as seen in the case of Maulana Thanvi. As Naval Kishore Press was a major publishing house in the North in late nineteenth century and responsible for publishing many other seminal works besides the *Dastan-e Amir Hamza*, an editorial was devoted to the question in *Avadh Akhbar* (the first Urdu daily in North India launched in 1858 from the Naval Kishore Press in Lucknow). Stark says "it was

typical in offering an apologetic statement to the effect that just as exaggeration was regarded a merit rather than a defect in oriental literature, in the same way 'obscenity couched in a fine language' was considered 'quite an art among the eastern writers''(2009: 95). There were varied responses from various regions of India as the sanitation of literature came into effect. This can be a reason for triggering what came to be known as 'underground literature' that was sold cheap in bulks. They sold like hot cakes and ran into publications until they were discovered.

In light of the above contestation, it will be apt to say that moral policing of art, literature and translation does not promote a healthy environment for growth of civilization. Undoubtedly, cultural and linguistic divide fringe translations with problematic instances, which a translator tries to overcome with the best possible strategy. But sometimes specific targeted sections (obscene/erotic) of a classic is declared untranslatable not by the translators but by the often pretentious moral vanguards. Translators are doubly vulnerable to be charged for translating something obscene or unpleasant because the vanguards fashion the 'what is readable' and 'what is fit' according to their lenses. Ethically, translation of any text should be fearless, free from the fetters of power and politics. Only then can we introduce a piece of literature gracefully to another culture. As observed Musharraf Ali Farooqi has translated all such passages sans sanitation. This has familiarized the readers of today with the *dastan,* the epic romance that is known and notoriously famous for trickster's acts, passionate love and war in its original intrinsic form.

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Translation of Diasporic Conflict as Represented in Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss

Preethamol M. K.

Abstract

There has been an evident shift in the focus of English literature towards the new writings of the erstwhile colonized nations. The new writers wanted to posit their multifarious experiences that went beyond the boundaries of ethnicity and diaspora, to a level that claimed the recognition of main stream literature on the basis of the human experiences recorded in them. Thus, diasporic literature had the touch of writers who wanted to assert their national identity and also to express their point of view on the impact of colonization. The writings relocated, reconstituted, re-examined and re-established the contours of culture among others.

The paper titled Translation of Diasporic Conflict as represented in Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss takes a look at the current issues of globalization, multiculturalism, immigration, westernization, postcolonialism, terrorist violence, alienation and exile. Technological advancements have made the concept of space and time shorter and thus a new connotation can be given to the term diaspora. Thus, the paper finds out how diaspora works on two levels – life on two continents – the cultural encounter in the context of a globalised scenario. This new reading of diaspora is done in the context of the wide canvas of the 2006 Man Booker Prize winning novel The Inheritance of Loss by the renowned Indian born American author Kiran Desai.

Keywords: Diaspora, cultural conflict, ethnicity, westernization, globalised scenario.

Preethamol M. K.

Introduction

Diaspora can be defined as a group of diverse population who belong to different ethnicities, religions and languages. They share social, cultural, linguistic and religious practices across national boundaries. Diaspora, as a cultural lingua from the context of a third world country, has several socio-political concerns like poverty, ethnic conflict, terrorism, communalism and even fundamentalism that the third world countries share with that of the other.

South Asian literary diaspora has the robust vernacular literary tradition of Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao to boast about. Times have changed and South Asian writing in English has taken a step forward – going global with Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Arvind Adiga and so on. There was a time when there was an evident lull in the area of study of South Asian literatures. But again, following the September 11, 2001 attack on the US, the term South Asia became a lingua open to contests and its relevance was questioned for all the wrong reasons. Despite the flux, South Asian literature is to a great extent dominated by diasporic writers who migrated from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal to western countries like the USA, Canada and the UK. Elleke Boehmer, in her *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphor,* remarks about diasporic writers as such:

> For different reasons, ranging from professional choice to political exile, writers from a medley of once colonized nations have participated in the late twentieth century condition of migrancy. … In the 2000s the generic postcolonial writer is more likely to be a cultural traveler, or an 'extra-territorial', than a national. Excolonial by birth, 'Third World' in cultural interest,

cosmopolitan in almost every other way, he or she works within the precincts of the Western metropolis while at the same time retaining thematic and/ or political connections with a national, ethnic or regional background (226-227).

The new understanding of the term diaspora owes its origin to a new outlook in the way issues have been focused on by writers of the recent times. Contemporary novels have moved away from traditional themes of colonialism, freedom movement and partition. The focus is on issues that are more immediate and local. Thus, there is a reimagining to the term diaspora as writers have moved away from events in the colonial history of their nation to focus on those that may have made great global impacts. Representation of terror, trauma and violence, themes and issues pertaining to middle class issues, focus on issues affecting marginal groups in Indian society on the basis of class or religion, political and social conflicts caused by ethnic tensions burning in the country, plight of the underprivileged, concerns of marginalized and repressive communities have gained popularity in the hands of the recent writers. Paul Brians, in his *Modern South Asian Literature in English,* remarks thus "fiction tends to concentrate on a handful of topics: family life, love, marriage, death and war in particular … fiction exists to reshape human experiences to tell disturbing stories to amuse, to excite, intrigue, challenge and move the reader"(5-6).

To analyze a similar reimagined diaspora, *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai is selected. The main reason for selecting Kiran Desai is her contemporaneity. Also she is a representative writer who has expressed her concerns pertaining to the Indian subcontinent ranging from ethnic conflict, communalism, fundamentalism, alienation, terrorism and other socio-political conflicts expressing the desires and

aspirations pertaining to life. Also her works concentrate on areas of ethnicity, identity, migration and transnationalism. These ideas have gained urgency because of the large scale movement of people in the twentieth century as well as due to the phenomenon of globalization. People have been dislocated from their homelands to new host countries not forcefully as the term diaspora originally signified but voluntarily as well. This new mobility and dispersion have been prompted by many factors such as education, job opportunity, business and seeking asylum. Also advancements in modern means of transportation and the development in all means of communication have made it easier for people to travel from their homelands to other parts of the world. Thus, a new definition to the term diaspora has gained momentum, framing a novel way of reading and envisaging the term. The reimagined diaspora has an identity that is plural in nature. The modern diasporas are very much conscious of their ancestral homes. But at the same time they are aware of their present status as citizens of a particular nation. They maintain close relation with their ancestral homes, thus by declaiming a double identification or "double consciousness" as Paul Gilroy comments. Modern diasporic generation is hybridized in nature where there is a negotiation with their dual identities. But it is a happy compromise where they have relocated themselves from the country of their birth to their new homes more out of choice than any kind of compulsion.

Modern diasporic writers like Kiran Desai explores contemporary realities of shifting national boundaries, juggling different locales of the home and foreign lands, racial and cultural identities that they yoke together in the fast moving pace of the modern world in her works. The juggling of locales pictures a condition of the diaspora that envisages a twin process of displacement. Kiran Desai, a representative of

modern diasporic writer is an immigrant in the US who finds her past life in India-a store house to recreate Indian situation in a global context. She is the writer of *The Inheritance of Loss* which won the Man Booker Prize in 2006 for Fiction.

The novel is set in the mid-1980s in the Himalayan town of Kalimpong and revolves around the life of Jemubhai Patel, Sai Mistry and Biju against a diasporic backdrop. The novel has a wide canvas exploring post-colonial India and also the United States and thus two distinct cultures are the locales for the novel. Against the dual cultural backdrop, Desai focuses on basic human emotions like love, sex, conflict, struggle, marriage and even physical abuse. The novel projects the lives of people trying to find meaning in their lives-to have a sense of home and identity. Jemubhai Patel, the retired judge, lives in an isolated house, nestled in Kalimpong, at the base of the majestic mountains of Kanchenjunga. Sai Mistry, the young girl, is sent to live with Jemubhai Patel upon the untimely demise of her parents. The character of the cook, Panna Lal, is consumed by the thoughts of his son Biju who is busy hopscotching from one city to the other in the US searching for a Green card. Sai falls in love with her Nepalese tutor Gyan but their romance is affected by the fervors of GNLF. He prioritizes his identity as an ethnic Nepali and despises her and her bourgeoisie way of life. Biju is the representative of people who believe they will make it big in America one day. But he fails miserably and returns home to the disappointment of his father.

The chaos depicted in the novel makes us realize that the novel is about the destruction of common man's life and how they are the inheritors of loss. The novel brings in daily concerns of joy and the fears of ordinary people of India and their relationships build on agony and ecstasy. The novel captures the loss of faith in India and the characters are portrayed to be

trying to survive the world of East and West. Kiran Desai analyses the painful efforts of her characters to adopt Western habits in Indian scenario. The four prominent characters – Jemubhai Patel, Sai, Panna Lal and Biju are drawn into a vortex dream for money, status and security which pull them into the dark pit where they struggle in vain for survival.

The Inheritance of Loss depicts the diasporic consciousness in the form of loss of cultural identities and conflicts present in the human civilization across the globe. The novel is an interesting journey from the base of Kanchenjunga to the modern cities in the United States. In order to delineate the travails of people globally shuttling, Desai moves between first and third worlds, illuminating the blinding desire for a better life. It is the story of the false hopes of immigrants, the ingrained belief of luxury in a foreign land, the racism, the exploitation of humans from the third world for cheap labor and finally the home coming of the immigrant who loses all but is happy to be back home. Jasbir Jain comments in her work *Writers of Indian Diaspora* thus about the characters in the novel "… who have moved away from one culture to another … caught between two cultures … often engaged either in a process of self recovery through resort to   history and memory or in a process of self-preservation through an act of transformation" (101).

Kalimpong in the Himalayas on one side and the cities in the United States on the other side portray diasporic conflict in a global context. The characters in the novel live in two worlds – one is that of the western world and the other that of the inescapable Indian class system. This conflict engulfs them all their lives as their whole life is straddled with these two worlds – in their daily lives and in their world of dreams and hopes. The characters face the conflict inherent in the diasporic world when they learn that they can never escape their predicament

of letting go one world and embracing the other. There is no mistaking the contemporary relevance of Desai's exploration of the post-colonial chaos and despair that is driving the multi-cultural world of today. But we can never ignore the fact that diaspora is a combination of diverse cultures and languages. With it come the dark and the light sides of diasporic life when analyzing from a global context. To conclude, the novel projects the darker side of globalization – the great gulf of difference between the rich and the poor. It paints a shocking portrait of people with crumbling hopes nurtured on the western notion of rationality and superiority of the white race. The novel brilliantly captures globalism reverberating in the after effects of cultural encounters. There is the mingling of the East and the West, haunting of the past and the present that adds to the richness and profundity of Desai's writings.

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Mothering Nations and Nationalizing Mothers: Reading the Fairytales of Colonial Bengal

SARANI ROY

Abstract

This paper argues how the fairytales of colonial Bengal resist closure in absorbing the very silence of the gendered discourse of nationalism of which the genre is a product. The paper tries to address how the nineteenth century Bengali fairytales registered subversive moments in the process of the evolution of a new historical consciousness, one that both accepted and rejected the dominant categories of available gender identities.

The paper broadly deals with issues of pregnancy and its representation in fairytales. It examines how particular socio-cultural meanings of pregnancy play a vital role in the understanding of our fairy stories. The working definition of fairytale provided by Vladimir Propp insists that the functional axis of fairytale proceeds from lack toward fulfillment. While poverty has been the traditional marker of this lack in fairy tales from distant parts of the world, nineteenth-century Bengali fairytales have defined this lack especially in terms of childlessness. This is something symptomatic of the contemporary discourses of gender roles. This paper analyzes stories from collections like Thakumar Jhuli and folktales of Bengal involving discourses of pregnancy and childbirth, motherhood and fatherhood in ways varied and critical, and exposes the very instability of the cultural meanings of these concepts.

Keywords: Fairytales, gender, pregnancy, labour room, male-impotency, breastfeeding, nationalism, colonial Bengal.

Sarani Roy

Introduction

Recalling an early scene from Guillermo del Toro's *Pan's Labyrinth*, where Carmen, the very pregnant mother of the protagonist, Ofelia, feels a sudden need to vomit following her rebuke of Ofelia for carrying a book of fairytales, the question which has troubled me is whether the figure of the pregnant mother bears any special significance in the context of the film, especially in its use of the fairytale narrative not only as a thematic component but as a structuring principle. Whether the pregnancy narrative demarcates or delimits the generic scope of the fairytales is a question that I address in this paper. I look for the answers not in films from abroad but in the fairytales of colonial Bengal. The reference to the film, though brief and not pursued in detail, remains an important point of departure for my argument in this paper.

Shibaji Bandopadhyay in his seminal work on colonialism and children's literature in Bengal has observed how fairytales always move towards a definite telos but end by suggesting a timeless future: "so they lived happily ever after" (1991: 73). They show a consciousness of space but are apparently forgetful of time. Bengali fairytales have in fact spatialized time; crossing the seven seas and thirteen rivers are all that the prince takes in reaching the demon's den to retrieve the princess. But the complexities of dealing with time become unavoidable as soon as there is a pregnant woman present in the story. The span of her pregnancy is always specified in time; at times she is in a hurry to produce the newborn whose story it is going to be and at times the moment of delivery is unexpectedly prolonged to arrive at the climactic scene. In both cases there is an attempt to keep the pregnant body outside the main narrative discourse, in the process, however making it all the more central to the cultural meanings of the text. The pregnant body is essentially marked by porous

boundaries and thereby it takes on unstable connotations vis-à-vis the culture that produces it. The chief source of its fluidity is its ambivalent positioning in between visibility and invisibility. But it has always been the visible belly which has rendered the woman invisible. More recently, theorists have identified how the deployment of visual images of women's pregnancy not only alters their experience of being pregnant and their decision-taking capacity, but also alters the definition of maternity altogether (Maher 2002: 97).In *Disembodying Women,* Barbara Duden asks "How did the unborn turn into a billboard image and how did that isolated goblin get into limelight?" (1993: 37).The fact that the infant can be seen even before it exists in the world leads up to the erasure of the mother's subjectivity. It is a pre-formed person, "simply awaiting discovery" (Hartouni 1997: 23).

The working definition of fairytale provided by Vladimir Propp is relevant here. According to Propp, the functional axis of fairytale proceeds from lack towards fulfillment and the journey along this axis hinges on obtaining something precious from the other world followed by a return to the mundane world where the shift is necessitated by a stable string of thirty one "functions" (1986: 263).While poverty has been the traditional marker of this lack in fairy tales from distant parts of the world, nineteenth century Bengali fairytales have defined this lack especially in terms of childlessness. I shall be reading this as something symptomatic of the contemporary discourses of gender roles and their performances and shall also try to show how this reading can help us perceive something beyond the "universal", "timeless" status of fairytales. My reading would chiefly focus on four texts – *Thakumar Jhuli* and *Bongoponyasa Thakurdadar Jhuli* by Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar, *The Folk Tales of Bengal* by Lal Behari Day and the story of *Kheerer Putul* by

Abanindranath Tagore. While the first three books are collections of fairytales supposedly collected from the firsthand accounts of the rural people of Eastern Bengal, Abanindranath Tagore's book is an original text written in the same generic mode as the other stories.

The Issue of Language and Translation

Apart from Day's text, all the other texts are written in Bengali. The earliest Day's book was written for a very specific and different kind of target readership apart from the other books. It was written with intention of familiarizing the English with Indian folk and fairytales. Apart from *Thakumar Jhuli*, I have not come across or used the translated version of any of the other texts even if there have been translations available. Even the translation of *Thakumar Jhuli* is a partial translation as it chooses only twelve stories out of the entire collection. So I have mainly used my own translations of texts wherever necessary. Perhaps it would be relevant here to briefly discuss the issue of language inherent in the fairytale collections we are dealing with. The very fact that the choice of language distinguishes Day's book from the other books despite being written in the same generic vein needs to be addressed. Writing in English and writing in the vernacular the same kinds of stories represented two very different political agendas. As in any other colonial transaction so does in standardizing the folklore research project language played a critical role. A derivative discourse and a colonial import the discourse of folklore had to grapple with the problematics of language. Born out of the rift between the oral and the written modes of language it finds itself trapped in an in-betweenness that can be molded to mean very different things. In every folklore-collection project, there remains a gap between the language of the folk whose lore is to be collected and the language of the collector/ethnographer/editor. The difference

can be of dialects within the same language or of all languages. But certainly this difference is symptomatic of the asymmetry of power-relations between the two parties engaged in the act. It is needless to say that in a colonial situation the issue takes on more and new complexities. Initially collected and compiled in English, the language of the colonizer as in Day's collection, the Bengali folklore was gradually being co-opted by the vernacular, the language of resistance. Day tries to prove his efficiency in the task of collecting popular tales by saying that he was "(…) was no stranger to the *Marchen* of the Brothers Grimm, to the *Norse Tales* so admirably told by Dasent, to Arnason's *Icelandic Stories* translated by Powell, to the *Highland Stories* done into English by Campbell, and to the fairy stories collected by other writers (…)" (1912: 5). His familiarity with western works gives his own work, the preface of which he was writing, a kind of credibility and authenticity. This claim was important for someone who was struggling with the incompatibility that he believed existed between his Indian identity and the novel and elitist work he had undertaken. When vernacular came to be the medium of the collection of folk and fairy tales, the situation underwent a significant change. People like Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar and Rabindranath Tagore countered Day's agenda of crediting and glorifying the British predecessors where they rejected any notion of comparison with the colonizer's texts and asked for an autonomous paradigm to discuss both written and oral texts of the East. However rejection of something is also to be conscious of its presence all the time. And that was the case with them. While Lal Behari Day acknowledged, whether knowingly or unknowingly, the contribution of written texts in shaping a new and different kind of orality in colonial Bengal, Mitra Majumdar and Tagore dismissed it completely to fit it into project of the anti-colonial nationalist identity construction. Without going into any more

complexities but in keeping in mind the issues raised we would now try to read the texts in some details. What we shall see in the due course of the paper is how linguistic translation is only a prologue to the constant process of cultural translation in which these texts are engaged.

The Discourse of the Labour Room

Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar in the preface to his *Bongoponyasa Thakurdadar Jhuli* has identified the labour room of rural Bengal as the birthplace of the numerous circuits of stories which have continued to enchant life there from time immemorial (1906: 14). Dakshinaranjan's preface merits special attention because of the way it makes connections between the labour room and fairytales. He even adds an annotation to further the discussion, elaborating how from the day the pregnant mother enters her labour room it becomes a community-practice to entertain her with an unending flow of stories; stories narrated, sung, performed till the middle of night. On the sixth day of the child's birth everyone remains awake till dawn for it is believed to be the night when the "bidhata purush", a word denoting someone like a divine messenger, will come down to write destiny on the infant's forehead (Mitra Majumdar 1906:14). The author of the preface has also added that in our traditional medical discourses of the Ayurveda, the practice has been considered especially beneficial to the expecting mother's health. Dakshinarajan's romanticization of the rural labour room actually falls into a larger project of the time – one that has set out to locate markers where cultural differences can be negotiated vis-à-vis the habits and customs of the colonizer. Partha Chatterjee, in one of his seminal texts, *The Nation and its Fragments* has elaborated a model in which he has shown how "[Indian] nationalism has separated the domain of culture into two spheres – the material and the spiritual" (1993: 119). While in

the material sphere the claims of the western civilization reigned supreme in terms of science, technology, economic organization and statecraft, the spiritual sphere remained unparalleled in its superiority to the West (119-20). Elsewhere he has suggested this was necessary for the Indian nationalists because they had to draw the closure to the question of women in society, an issue hotly debated by both western thinkers and administrators and also by the Indian nationalist revivalists and reformists ("The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question" 1993: 237). While the British needed to highlight the "poor condition" of women in India to argue for the logical need of their "civilizing mission", the Indian nationalists had to reclaim their women "to protect, preserve and strengthen the inner core of the national culture, its spiritual essence" (239). All these arguments are important here for several reasons. Women's health and childbirth had been a constant focus in the "civilizing mission" of the colonizer who considered it "barbaric and medieval" to give birth at home with the help of midwives with no doctors, nurses or medicine. This, I argue, constitutes the moment of breach in the nationalist paradigm of thought which took pains to keep apart the western world of medicinal sciences and Indian women's health and problems of childbirth primarily because the two belonged to two different spheres of action – respectively, the material and the spiritual. The two cannot be equated despite the connections they may have. This is the process of selection which characterizes the appropriation of colonial modernity. Dakshinaranjan's representation surely has a political claim to make because we are to remember the tryst between Tagore and Dakshinaranjan in "collecting" the tales of Bengal in *Thakumar Jhuli* as a desperate attempt in replicating "the musical aura of the past" in "the present-day idiom of Bengali language" (Tagore 2012: xii). In writing the Preface to the book, Tagore asks rhetorically "Can there be anything more

quintessentially indigenous [my emphasis] than *Thakumar Jhuli* in our country?"(xi).This project of nation-building had its own silences and aporias which need to be discussed and for that we will have to go back to our fairytales once more.

The representation of the labor room complicates the fairytales to a greater extent. The Bengali word for labour room is *antur ghor* and as the Bengali dictionary tells us it denotes a separate place exclusively set for the pregnant mother till the birth of the child (Basu 1937: 570). It is quite different from the western labour room that is precisely a medicalized space meant for the delivery of the child while the *antur ghor* is retained for a broader span of time. The western model of the labor room is located within the hospital which is a male domain as opposed to the *antur ghor* which is primarily a female space. The *antur ghor* is a suspension of the marital bed when the woman is carrying her child. In post-pregnancy period, the *antur ghor* takes on a different function. It sanctions the female body's return to normalcy by institutionalizing the suspended menstrual cycle followed by a dip into the Ganges after twenty one days. Altogether the *antur ghor* experience provides the new mother with rigorous social training upholding values like restraint, sacrifice and thereby reinforcing the conventional meanings of motherhood. More importantly, this is also a period when the woman is subject to constant vigilance and the policing are done by the other women of her family and neighborhood. And exactly this is where our fairytales would lead us to while exposing the invisible links between the discourses of patriarchy and nationalism. The stories of "Kironmala," "Princess Kolaboti," and "The Champa Brothers" from *Thakumar Jhuli* hinge upon the dangerous potential of the labour room as an exclusively female space functioning outside the male supervision. Due to its veiled status it involves an ambivalent positioning between

power and powerlessness. The supposedly vulnerable condition of the pregnant woman inside it grants a position of control and authority to the other women who are in charge of her. All of the three above-mentioned stories are marked by the disappearance of the new-born child immediately after the birth. The other women deputed to take care of the pregnant mother are responsible for this as they are clearly jealous of the new privilege accorded to the expecting mother. They declare the child to be dead as a consequence of which the new mother falls a victim to the king's wrath and is rendered homeless. In "Kironmala" it is the spinster aunts and in "Champa Brothers" it is the other queens who are the evil players. "Princess Kolaboti" is a slight variation of the theme where the youngest queen only gets to drink the leftovers of the other queens who have finished taking the magical herb prescribed to induce pregnancy. As a result the youngest queen gives birth to a monkey and subsequently is banished from the palace by the king. To talk about Abanindranath Tagore's *Kheerer Putul* or *The Condensed Milk Doll* we have to think whether it can be put into the same brackets with the other fairytales as it is certainly not part of any "collection" and is an original text. However there can be no doubt that it uses the dominant model of Bengali fairytales and also consciously plays with its conventions. In *Kheerer Putul* the labour room is an absence for the child who is never born. Yet the elder queen enjoys all the privileges of a pregnant woman including new house, good food, maids to look after and so on. The fact that the king cannot see his son for ten years until the day when the son gets married prolongs the period of the queen's supposed pregnancy. And it is again a female intervention that threatens it. The witch on recommendation of the jealous younger queen sells her poisonous sweets. What we are looking at here is actually the transition when the personal becomes the political. The nineteenth century was a turbulent time in the history of

Bengal when all the distinctions between the categories of the public and the private were miserably blurred. The decisions taken within the four walls of female quarters had the potential to change the course of the history of the nation and the female body was the site where the questions of nationalist self-fashioning could be negotiated. The labour room was private in its location but public in its function, a mediating space between the palace and the outside world – a life of privilege and a life of struggle. Once expelled from the labour room, the mother and child together bring into focus the internal divisions that characterize the king's kingdom. While the unfortunate children grow up fast and try to mend the ways of the world, the destitute mothers literally become working-class figures: the rag picker in "Champa Brother," the maid servant in "Princess Kolaboti," and so on. We may remember the monkey in *Kheerer Putul*. A representative of the common masses, visibly the "other", he is instrumental in restoring equilibrium in the country. The return of the lost child then becomes a symbol of a possible reintegration of the nation. Until then the labour room remains a mystery. This is actually the mystery of origins to which the tale has to return. The entire point of a fairytale is to draw a "suitable," "happy" closure to the narrative of origin – not only the origin of an individual but the origin of a nation.

Structuring the Monogamous Family

Why the discussion of pregnancy becomes imperative to understand the cultural contradictions of the time is quite clear. The pregnant women epitomize a change in the existing order, a possible beginning of a new order as well as an end to the existing order. The pregnant body is perhaps the most suitable metaphor of a time in transition. The women of our fairytales are impregnated by polygamous kings, men who fall easy victims to the traps of the 'other' women; but there is a marked

difference between the characters of the fathers and the sons that are born in the due course of the stories. What distinguishes the male children from their fathers is the practice of monogamy, the most important tool of furthering the bourgeois notion of the perfect family and by extension imagining the perfect nation. Thus the fairytales shrewdly juxtapose feeble, foolish, incompetent fathers who owe their weaknesses to their questionable and polygamous characters with their equally mature, intelligent, responsible and invariable morally upright, monogamous sons. This is surely not an isolated case; nor is it coincidental. Tracing similar tendencies in the representation of love and marriage in the nineteenth century genre of the qissa, Kumkum Sangari points out, "There is a structural shift from the noble hero's acquisition of women and wives to the institution of monogamy, as well as a shift of narrative interest to female protagonists in which, paradoxically, misogyny provides the structural coherence" (2004: 217). The treatment of love changes drastically in these genres from its treatment in traditional romances. The main thrust of the idea of love becomes the relocation of "*male* desire in marriage by making it the (only legitimate) space of sexual pleasure and instituting the exclusivity of the wife's claim" (227). "In premodern romances and devotional traditions, love was often associated with transgression or rebellion but could still occupy, in common with prescriptive traditions, emotional structures that were monogamous, enduring or monogamous for women, polygamous, transient or sequential for men. However, in emerging nineteenth-century definitions, love marriage was associated with monogamy for women *and* men. It privileged the choice of partner and promised an end to male promiscuity" (227-8). Now it's "an unrebellious, politically and socially ratified love that could double as a pragmatic rapprochement with bourgeois notions of conjugality" (228).

Here the fairytale, like the qissa, in redefining the interrelations of love and marriage, "*intersects with many of the key themes in nineteenth-century reformism: the reconciliation of duty and desire for men and proper institutionalization of monogamous marriage were part of the problemtic of patriarchal sexual regulation*. Male decadence (…) was a recurring concern and one item on the agenda was to wean them from the company of the prostitutes and low castes (…) the emphasis falls on so much as on reforming repositioning male desire and vanquishing the 'other' woman. It resolves the decline and fall of the landed aristocracy through a salvage narrative that proposes to domesticate male sexuality. It tames the older masculinity, identifies royal authority with sexually regulated masculinity (…)" (227-8). Advocacy for monogamy and locating love and sexual desire within marriage was done on the pretext of producing "better progeny and end family conflicts; it even praised the ancient the practice of *swayamvara*, a princess choosing *her hus*band in public assembly for having ensured mutual attraction and compatibility" (228). But the transition from one order to the other is never easy; it certainly has its moments of clashes and overlapping. Nineteenth century Bengali fairytales are caught somewhere in between the old and the new orders, between polygamous kings and monogamous princes, between the reality of the broken families and the dream of the companionate marriages, between the residual and the emergent. The pregnant mothers though deliver their children, but cannot resolve the conflicting meanings of motherhood. Thus Duo Rani in *Kheerer Putul* is pregnant even without a child in her womb. Loving and caring for a monkey is enough to satisfy her motherly instincts, yet the story cannot end until she produces a male heir to the kingdom; and though the evil Suo Rani, the other woman is strategically removed there remains much doubt and uncertainty about the possibility of

restoration of mutual love and respect between the king and the Duo rani. On the other hand the daughters who are born out of this pregnancy who do not have such 'great' responsibilities on their shoulders as protecting the family-line or the country oscillate between various roles, are surely given less importance in comparison to their male counterparts. Yet they stand out as exceptionally gifted individual at times outshining their brothers in merit and efficiency like Kironmala or Champa perhaps because they are the future mothers who will have to produce national heroes.

Childlessness, Male Impotency and the "Wish to be Female"

The idea of male impotency is somewhat unique to these tales where the shame of being childless is assigned to the king instead of the more common practice of accusing and excommunicating the woman. The stories of "Madhumala", "Pushpamala", "Malanchamala", from *Bongoponyasa Thakurdadar Jhuli* open with the king's mourning for a child. It is curious the way he is called "antkunde", the Bengali word for impotent where the gender is identified as masculine (Basu 1937: 48) in "Madhumala" and is shown to be living a life of humiliation and depravity for not being able to produce an heir where even the sweeper has the audacity to dismiss the king for being impotent. Does this signify an improved status of women in society? To locate this shift, I have looked into the correspondences between Freud and his Indian psychoanalyst friend Girindrasekhar Bose. Bose, noticing the absence of castration fears in many of his patients (most of them were middle-class, educated Bengali *bhadralok* of nineteenth century Calcutta), a symptom claimed to be universal in men by Freud, reported it to the latter (Indian Psychoanalytic Society 1964: 16-17). Bose has defined this absence as a "wish to be female" which was prevalent in Bengali men (17).

Christine Hartnack's postcolonial reading of the situation demands special attention here. According to her these men indeed wished to be female for they envied their own women who lived an unchanged life in the safety of the home, unaffected by the realities of colonial domination while they had to remain stuck to the colonial chronotope of the merchant offices (2003: 10). Following this line of argument, Hartnack interprets the wish "as a desire not to be tainted by colonialism, to belong to a world imagined to be all Bengali, thus untouched by the stresses and conflicts induced by foreign rulers, or as an imaginary withdrawal into a presumably ahistorical pre-colonial time, where the contemporary demands for change were not an issue" (2001: 147). In "Pushpamala," impotency is even represented as an equalizing force which makes the king no less a subject of pity than his executioner who is also childless. Even to highlight the absolute powerlessness of the king it is ultimately the executioner who is awarded a son and the king finds himself bound in an unwanted pledge of marrying his daughter to the executioner's son. The sense of being powerless to change anything of the colonial reality remained omnipresent in the male consciousness which perhaps found its displaced expression in their experience of being impotent and childless in the fairytales of this time.

The Representation of the Issue of Breastfeeding

The story which deals with the idea of pregnancy and its corollary issue of breastfeeding is "Shankhamala" from *Thakurdadar Jhuli*. "Shankhamala" settles the dispute of "the real" mother by a unique test in which the two mothers are asked to make a public display of their ability to breastfeed. As a result the real mother turned out to be the one whose milk went straight into mouth of the boy without faltering a little as opposed to the false one whose milk could cover only a short

distance coming out of her breast. The episode is significant in showing how the female body is discursively constructed where it is literalized that a woman's body and her reproductive abilities indeed constitute her social position. We must here refer to Rousseau who talked at length on the debate between the efficacies of breastfeeding and wet nursing in the context of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Europe. In Rousseau's argument wet nursing represented a complete moral travesty in need for reform which he saw as symptomatic of a society in political and social decay (1979: 45-46). Penny Weiss and Anne Harper point out that Rousseau's criticisms of wet nursing were not to do with the quality of a mother's care but rather with the dangers it presented to blood ties and patriarchal patterns of family (2002: 52). To save a declining moral order Rousseau even put women on public display, and what they displayed was a capacity for "perfected pity," "the possibility of free-imagining bodily needs and compulsions as ethical, and putting the impulse of commiseration to the service of the social order" (Wingrove 2000: 34). They created "a maternal spectacle," (159), as a defense against the civilizational contamination of what is "naturally" good and "naturally" feminine. In turning motherhood into festivity, Rousseau invoked the dangers inherent in coalescing the categories of the private and the public, the personal and the political. We cannot forget that even a touching spectacle was still a spectacle, and virtuous display was still a display. The ending of "Shankhamala" features a similar spectacle which serves the function of restoring the real mother to her glory, that of punishing the false mother and sustaining the family and the kingdom. It answers all the questions of the legitimacy of Shankha's pregnancy in the absence of her husband, guaranteeing her chastity.

In juxtaposing the two mother-figures the story directly draws on the contemporary discourses and debates around the comparisons between the European and Indian mothers, and their respective breast-feeding and child-rearing techniques. The body of the mother with a special focus on her breasts was attributed with serious political connotations which quickly became the site where important resolutions to the imperialist as well as nationalist questions could be drawn. The issue of racial purity and superiority came up with great prominence. The purity of the mother's milk was to play a deciding role in securing the purity of the (male) child's blood. This was also the time which witnessed a remarkable growth in the medicalization of maternal health and the post-natal phase. Contemporary colonial health manuals talked about the problem of the scarcity of lactation of the memsahibs whose bodies could not cope with the tropical climate of India and consequently they had to hire native Indian wet nurses to feed their children. The white fraternity of India did not really approve of this practice as the bodily 'touch' of the lower-class Indian woman threatened to 'contaminate' the European child (Saha 2017: 149-51). In contrast to the 'dry' bodies of the English memsahibs the heavily lactating bodies of the Indian women were seen as a source of excess, and fecundity and therefore a site of questionable moral behavior which also made the possibility of the white man's sexual attraction to these women a constant point of anxiety. On the other hand, in the anti-colonial Indian nation-building project the phenomenon of wet nursing English children by Indian women was seen in two ways; one showed an apparent sense of dismay born out of the feeling that it is by depriving the Indian children that these women were feeding the masters' children thereby weakening the whole racial-national fight against the colonizer; the other way involved a more subtle sense of racial superiority which was a result of the glorification of the act of

breast-feeding itself. What was suggested was that Indian women were morally far more superior to their western counterparts precisely because they were greater mothers who could better sacrifice for the welfare of their children. Among the European nobilities hiring wet nurses was already quite popular even in their own countries which also become clear from our reference to Rousseau. Even when there was no climatic or biological reason responsible for the lack of production of milk, the European women chose not to breast feed being driven by ideas like bodily fitness and fashion consciousness. It is interesting how the public realm of science and the private realm of women's child birth converged in the woman's body in nineteen century Bengal making it the 'contact zone' where two conflicting cultures encountered each other; also it became instrumental in defining a new nationhood grappling between tradition and modernity. So the apparently simple question 'who is the real (or the better) mother' that the fairytale in Day's collection deals with, takes on very loaded dimensions when read in the context of the time of its (re)production.

Speaking of pregnancy we cannot help thinking in terms of hunger, desire and excess – ideas related to female biology with which the patriarchal society has been traditionally uncomfortable. The female body lactates to regulate its excess. Self-preservation and self-gratification are the carnal points of the narrative of pregnancy no matter how much patriarchy denies those. In "The Boy whom Seven Mothers Suckled" from Lal Behari Day's *The Folktales of Bengal,* the elder six queens eat up their own newborn babies out of severe hunger. The only exception is the youngest queen who decides to keep her son alive and all the six queens help in nursing him; they all suckle him; the child is born to not one but seven mothers. The story is central to this discussion for it registers the

lacunae of the dominant discourses of pregnancy and motherhood that operate primarily by glorifying the sacrificial and ever-suffering image of the mother. It hints at the central contradiction inherent in the discourse of motherhood that of between the woman's individual, autonomous existence and her overarching motherly persona upon which the culture projects most of its expectations. The story of "Malancamala" strikes an even more rebellious note in rendering the connections between motherhood and sexuality clear and obvious. Married to a new born child Malanca feeds her own husband. The boy takes full control of his wife's breasts and since there is no father to confront he grows up without knowing the oedipal wish. She is an interesting variant of the wet nurse figure who shows the limitations of simple biological motherhood and represents the deeper possibilities of the relationship with the foster-child which not being sanctioned by blood-ties, at times even makes room for a dangerously unsettling, incestuous liaison.

Conclusion

In the course of our discussion we have seen that the fairytales of colonial Bengal were structured around the two choices of motherhood- that of the good and the bad mothers, mothers adequate for reproducing eligible national heroes and mothers intent upon destroying the potential in the possible future heroes. The struggle is that of between the Lakkhi and the Putana. Lakkhi, often preceded by the Maa address, the Hindu goddess of wealth and prosperity, is also the embodiment of the ideal wife and the mother. Lakkhi is often contrasted with Putana, "the Hindu mythological demoness responsible for infants' diseases and infanticides"; contemporary medical practitioner Sundarimohan Das referred frequently to Putana "as a metaphor to criticise mothers who refused to breastfed their babies or caused infanticide by irregular breastfeeding

without proper care" in his paper titled "Ravages of Putana" (Saha 2017: 155-57). On the other hand the new Hinduised as well as medicalized nationalist idealization of Indian motherhood found its expression in the mythologized figure of Lakkhi who was both educated in the modern scientific ways of child-care and who had also naturalized breastfeeding as the most desirable and necessary act to accomplish motherhood (155). What I argue here is Shashthi, another mythological deity though not classical or pan-Indian as Lakkhi, emerges as a balance between these two extreme forms of motherhood. The entire question of the struggle between the reified image of the mother-goddess and the "real" woman of flesh and blood claiming to live in her own right is dealt by Abanindranath Tagore in *Kheerer Putul* where goddess Shashthi is unable to control her lust for the condensed milk doll. Even being a "goddess" her human needs are still alive. The sacrificial aspect of motherhood is subtly undermined by the appearance of Shashthi who ate up the condensed milk doll in the same way as the six mothers gobbled up their sons in Lal Behari Day's story, yet her benevolent intervention ensures the happy ending to the story. When the text equates and replaces the doll with a real (male) child the larger political project becomes clear as it not only completes the fragmented royal family but also secures the future of the country. Yet many questions remain unresolved in the text including the death of the childless, villainous Suo Rani and the status of the new-born child who occupies the in between space of the natural and the foster child and also the disturbing suggestion that the smart monkey is likely to outshine the new-born prince in all capacities in near future. But the point remains that Shashthi, a Hindu folk goddess, venerated as the benefactor and protector of children, especially as the giver of male child, takes on an alternative independent female identity in the text. Perhaps what we are seeing is the woman coming into age, growing

increasingly conscious of her body, emerging out of the Bengal Renaissance with too much force to be safely enshrined within the perfect private sphere which colonial modernity has designed for her. This is the threshold moment in the formation of a new historical consciousness where the long-held beliefs of a culture are contested. The time demanded contradictions. Thus the fairytales had to end without proclaiming a closure.

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Translating Poeticity: A Case Study of the Tirukkural Translations into French

Pugazhendhi Kumarasamy

Abstract

If translating prose is a challenging task, translating poetic text is a greater challenge and even considered impossible by many scholar-translators who made honest attempts to do the same. To render as equally as possible the form and the content of the original work into the target language remains the eternal concern of literary translators. Although it is desirable to keep both, the aesthetic value and the message intact in translation, most of the times, translators succeed in rendering one of them and scarify the other. Tirukkural, the monumental poetic work of Tamil literature, has been translated into numerous languages across the world including French. After the first translation into French in 1767, Kural has been translated several times again into the same language by several scholars. Among the available translations in French, the one done by Lamairesse in 1868 and another one done by Gnanou Diagou in 1942 are particularly remarkable as the former is a native French speaker and the latter is a Francophone of Tamil origin. This paper presents the differences and similarities between the two aforementioned translations and thereby attempts to investigate the possibility of translating the masterpiece of the philosopher Tiruvalluvar into a foreign language.

Keywords: Translation, poetry, French, Tamil, Tirukkural.

Introduction

Among all types of texts that are translated, only literary texts engage the translator in a creative process and offer him/her, if not a lucrative experience, a joyful one of working with great

literature. The creativity involved in translating a literary work is made up of numerous factors such as *who translates?, for whom s/he translates?, who is translated?, from which language s/he translates?, into which language s/he translates?, etc.* In other words, these aforementioned factors decide how the translation of a literary work is done. Generally, literary translators make a series of choices that define the final output of the translating act. S/he first chooses the literature of a particular language, then a particular author of this literature and then a particular work of this author and so on. This combination of more than a few choices has led to the creation of several branches in the study of literary translation. Each one of these branches indicates the decisions made, freely or under constraints, by the translator.

This truth is further confirmed by the fact that unlike in other fields of translation i.e. commercial, scientific, judiciary, technical, literary translation has given birth to several terms that reflect not only the level of creativity but also of liberty involved in the act of translating. Literal translation, adaptation, transcreation, rewriting, recreation are not merely terms that can be used in the place of translation as each of these terms refers to a different subfield of literary translation.

Also, a literary translator faces challenges that are not even imaginable to a non-literary translator as the latter concerns himself more with language and sometimes exclusively with language. If the literature of a language is divided into genres and these genres are in turn classified into literary currents to which they belong and these literary currents are further dissected into authors and their styles, each language and each genre and each period and each author and each style presents challenges in its own way to a translator who attempts to render them into another language.

Commonly, any literature is divided into two major categories: poetry and prose, and in most literatures, poetry is the ancient form of expression that preceded prose. Although prose poetry emerged as a new genre in the 19th century, the distinction between poetry in verse and prose as a simplified form of expression continues to exist in literature. It is true that prose can be beautiful as well and entertain the reader with a message in it but the bond between form and message is not necessarily inseparable, whereas in a poem, its form is intricately linked with the message and the images evoked by the words. For instance, Racine, a 17th century French dramatist, uses the alliteration with the sound of "s" to evoke the hissing sound of a snake in his play *Andromaque*. In twelve syllables, the sound of "s" is repeated five times including the word serpent which carries the sound in it.

"Pour qui **s**ont **c**es **s**erpents qui **s**ifflent **s**ur vos têtes?"(Racine 1886: 126)

Possessing all the above mentioned qualities, poetry never ceases to raise doubts and queries on the possibility of being translated. Some translators even look at it from a distance as a sacred fortress, whereas others dare to conquer its impenetrable edifice.

French Translations of the Tirukkural

Edouard Simon Ariel, an official of French colony, who translated the *Tirukkural* into French in 1844, called it "a nameless work by a nameless author" (Pope 1886: i). He also calls it a mystery that attracted him, and therefore, wanted to introduce it to the French public. Many great men who translated *Kural* declare the quality of its content which motivated them to translate it but remain silent on the poetic form which expresses the content. The reason, why the translators have not spoken on poetic form of the work is

unknown to us. We can only assume that the translators gave more importance to the content than to the form, or the poetic elements in the *Tirukkural* were not comprehensible to them that they didn't take them into consideration while translating or, according to the translators only the message was translatable and not the poetic form of *Tirukkural*.

Then, should translators give up translating *Kural*? Or should they attempt to translate it despite the loss of its poetic value in translation? I would believe in the second opinion in his article entitled "Poetry Translation", Professor Hashim G. Lazim expresses his view that translators shouldn't give up translating poetry despite the risk of losing its poetic value. Also, he argues that if poetry is neglected for being untranslatable, we would be unaware of a great many poetic works from other literatures.

In this paper, I present the differences observed between two translations of the *Tirukkural* into French. Since the two translators belong to two different centuries, it's also an attempt to see if the translation has evolved with time and to examine the differences between a translation done by a target language translator i.e. *Lamairesse* and the one done by a source language translator i.e. *Gnanou Diagou* who knows French. The comparison will be done with the examples of seven couplets selected at random to see how close they are to the original and how different they are from each other.

In order to make it understandable to a non-francophone reader, I provide a literal retranslation into English of the translated couplets. And by literal translation, I mean a translation which is, as possibly as it could be, close to the French version.

The following couplet has been taken from the chapter "மடியின்மை" (Tiruvalluvar 2010: 129) which means

unsluggishness and the following couplet from the *Tirukkural* explains how important it is to avoid sluggishness for the well being of the family.

குடியென்னுங் குன்றா விளக்கம் மடியென்னும்

மாசூர மாய்ந்து கெடும்– 601(Tiruvalluvar 2010: 129)

(kudiyennung kundra vilakkam madiyennum
maasoora maainthu kedum)
The illustrious light called family will be put out
if it is tainted by the filth called laziness.
L'éclat illustre dont a brillé constamment une
famille s'efface
lorsqu'elle tombe dans une obscure inaction.
(Lamairesse 1867: 102)
The illustrious light with which shines a family
effaces itself when it falls in an obscure inaction
La flamme inextinguible appelée famille s'éteint,
envahie par les ténèbres appelées paresse. (Gnanou
Diagou 1995: 90)
The inextinguishable flame called family goes off,
Invaded by the darkness called idleness

The first translation brings the meaning in a direct manner and it eliminates the metaphor in the original. Instead of "The illustrious light called family" as in the original, it is translated as "the illustrious light with which shines a family" and conveys the message in one single utterance without any punctuation as in the original. The qualities of light compared to the family and the qualities of obscurity compared to idleness are not transferred as a metaphor, they are rather expressed as qualities attributed to family and idleness.

The second translation to some extent restores the alliteration of the sound"கு" in the first verse by using twice the sound "F" in flame and family. Even though the same sound "ku" is not transferred, it is replaced by the sound of "F". It is also interesting to notice that a punctuation "," is used in the translation avoiding a conjunction "when". We can also notice that the metaphor is transferred as in the original.

The following couplet has been taken from the chapter "வினைத்திட்பம்" (Tiruvalluvar 2010: 141), which means *firmness or power in action*. It says that action is more important than talking about the ways of executing an action.

> சொல்லுதல் யார்க்கும் எளிய அரியவாம்
> சொல்லிய வண்ணம் செயல்– 664 (Tiruvalluvar
> 2010: 141)
> (solluthal yaarkkumeli yaari yavaam
> solliya vannam seyal.)
> It is easy for anyone to say but it is hard
> to dowhat is said in the same manner.
> Rien de facile comme de tracer des règles et de
> donner des ordres à tout le monde;
> rien de difficile comme d'arriver à l'exécution.
> (Lamairesse 1867: 111)
> *Nothing as easy as making rules and giving orders*
> *to others;*
> *nothing as difficult as being able to do.*
> Il est facile à tous de proclamer un projet,
> mais difficile de le réaliser de la façon annoncée.
> (Gnanou Diagou 1995: 99)
> *It's easy for anyone to utter plans,*
> *but difficult to do it in the said manner.*

The first translation of the above mentioned couplet changes the verb "சொல்லுதல்", which means 'to say' in Tamil, into "making rules and giving orders" whereas the second translation changes the same verb into "uttering plans". Both the translations have used different verbs in the place of "to say" and added an object to the verb which is not there in the original. It is also important to notice that amongst the two translations, the one done by *Lamairesse* keeps the repetition of the same word "**Rien** de facile, **rien** de difficile" which to some extent imitates the repetition of the word "சொல்லுதல்" in the original. Both the translations have introduced a verb with an object while the beauty in the original lies in leaving the verb 'say' without any object so that the reader can himself or herself add a suitable object. These translations, hence, make us think that the translators have added their subjective choices to the translation, thereby acted more as a reader-translator who gives his subjective interpretation of the text than a mere messenger who simply coveys the message of the author.

The following couplet has been taken from the chapter "நலம்புனைந்துரைத்தல்" (Tiruvalluvar 2010: 233), which means in Tamil praise of her (a woman's) beauty. It presents a comparison between the softness of a flower called "*Anitcham*" and the delicateness of the beloved woman.

> நன்னீரை வாழி அனிச்சமே நின்னினும்
> மென்னீரள் யாம்வீழ் பவள்.–1111(Tiruvalluvar
> 2010: 233)
> (Nanneerai vaazhi anitchamai ninninum
> Menneeral yaamveezh baval)
> O flower Anitcha who lives in good waters! The
> woman I love is more delicate than you.

O fleur anicha !, je te salue ! Tu es la plus délicate des fleurs, mais l'objet de mon amour est plus délicat que toi. (Lamairesse 1867: 179)

O flower Anitcha! I greet you! You are the most delicate amongst the flowers, but the object of my love is more delicate than you

Vivo, fleur Anistcha ! ta bonne nature l'emporte sur celle de toutes les fleurs; cependant celle que j'aime est d'une nature, encore plus délicate que la tienne

(Gnanou Diagou 1995: 170)

Long live flower Anistcha! You are the most soft natured amongst all the flowers; however the one I love is of a nature more delicate than you

The couplet from the section "காமத்துப்பால்" (Tiruvalluvar 2010: 225) is a comparison between a flower and the beloved lady of the poet. On the one hand, the rhyme in the beginning of the verse is not transferred in the translation; on the other hand, the translation speaks more explicitly of the comparison that was kept unsaid in the original. In other words, the original doesn't speak about the softness of the flower. It simply says "O Anitcha who lives in good waters". The comparison becomes more evident only in the second verse that starts with the word "மென்னீரள்" which means "delicate" referring to the woman. The beauty of a poetic text is to say things more implicitly, a significant characteristic which distinguishes a poem from prose. Moreover, the above mentioned couplet seems to be appearing in the subdivision "களவியல்" which speaks about premarital-love, hence, the implicit nature of the comparison seems to be nothing than an echo of the secrecy that characterizes the premarital love relation between a man and a woman. One more important element in the original is that the "flower Anitcham" is not

mentioned as a flower in the original; it's rather treated as an equivalent to a human being (personification) with whom the lover holds a conversation. The two translations are explicit interpretations of the poetic text of which the beauty resides in the implicit.

The following couplet has been taken from the chapter "குறிப்பறிதல்" (Tiruvalluvar 2010: 229), which means *recognition of the signs (signs of love).*

இருநோக்கு இவளுண்கண் உள்ளது ஒருநோக்கு

நோய்நோக்கொன் றந்நோய் மருந்து.–1091(Tiruvalluvar 2010:229)

(irunokku ivalunkan ullathu orunokku
noinokkond rannoi marunthu.)
There are two looks in her eyes; one makes you sick
and the other makes you recover.
Il y a chez elle deux regards, l'un qui donne
destourments, l'autre qui les guérit.
(Lamairesse1867: 176)
In her there are two looks, one which gives
torments, the other which cures them.
Ses yeux peints ont deux regards, dont l'un me cause la douleur, mais dont l'autre
constitue un remède à cette douleur. (Gnanou Diagou 1995: 167)
Her lined eyes have two looks, of which one causes
the pain, but the other one is a remedy to this pain.

The couplet is highly alliterated with the sound "N" and the word "நோய்" is repeated thrice. It's also assonantal with the sound "e". The message is highly implicit, hence, many

meanings can be attributed. The first translation of Lamairesse seems to completely ignore the alliteration and the assonance of the original. If we observe the second translation, the word "douleur" which means pain is repeated twice; hence, we can say that the effect of alliteration is to some extent restituted by the translator although it's not as successful as the original.

The following couplet has been taken from the chapter "நீத்தார்பெருமை" (Tiruvalluvar 2010: 11), which means *the greatness of Ascetics*.

துறந்தார் பெருமை துணைக்கூறின் வையத்து

இறந்தாரை எண்ணிக்கொண் டற்று. – 22
(Tiruvalluvar 2010: 11)
(thuranthaar perumai thunaikoorin vaiyatthu
iranthaarai ennikkon datru)
An attempt to tell all the greatness of those who renounced is like trying to count the number of those who died in this world.Enumérer tous les mérites des religieux est aussi difficile que de nombrer les hommes qui sont morts depuis le commencement du monde jusqu'à ce jour.
(Lamairesse1867: 12)
Counting the merits of the religious is as difficult as counting the men who died since the beginning of this world till date.
Tenter d'évaluer la grandeur de ceux qui ont renoncé au monde, c'est
tenter de dénombrer les morts ici-bas. (Gnanou Diagou 1995: 5)
Attemting to evaluate the greatness of those who gave up the world is attempting to count the dead ones down here.

Before getting into the study of the above mentioned couplet and its translations into French, we should pay attention to the translation of the chapter title under which it appears. The chapter title in Tamil is "நீத்தார்பெருமை" 'Neethaar Perumai' which means the greatness of those who renounced and which is translated by Lamairesse and Gnanou Diagou as follows:

> Eloge de la sublimité des religieux. (Lamairesse 1867: 12)
> Praise of the sublimity of religious
> Grandeur de ceux qui ont renoncé au monde (Gnanou Diagou 1995: 5)
> The greatness of those who renounced the world

The translation of Lamairesse changes the connotation of the title by adding the word "religieux" which means religious or, clergymen or, faithful whereas the original has no reference to religion. Also, we see that the translation of Gnanou Diagou has no religious connotation at all and therefore reflects the original.

We can observe the same term used again by Lamairesse, in his translation of the couplet. Religion, therefore, takes a centre place in the interpretation of the *Kural* by Lamairesse, which will be passed on to the reader as well. As far as the translation of Gnanou Diagou is concerned, the word chosen is neutral and so is close to the meaning of the text.

The following couplet has been taken from the chapter "கேள்வி" (Tiruvalluvar 2010: 91) which means *hearing*.

> செல்வத்துட் செல்வஞ் செவிச்செல்வம் அச்செல்வஞ்

செல்வத்துஎெல்லாந் தலை.– 411 (Tiruvalluvar 2010: 91)

(selvatthut chelvanj chevichelvam atchelvanj chelvatthu lellaandh thalai)

Hearing is the most precious of all riches and it is also the head of all riches.

Les richesses qui s'acquièrent par l'ouïe, c'est-à-dire par la conversation de savants, doivent être appelées les richesses par excellence, puisqu'elles sont supérieures à toutes les autres. (Lamairesse 1867: 73)

The riches that are acquired by hearing, which is by conversing with scholars, should be called the ultimate riches, since they are superior to all others.

La richesse des richesses est celle de l'oreille. Elle est la première de toutes les richesses. (Gnanou Diagou 1995: 63)

The riches of all riches arethose of the ear.
they are the first of all riches.

The couplet is highly anaphoric; the word "செல்வம்" which means "riches" in Tamil, is repeated five times, thereby emphasizing the fact that hearing is the unparalleled wealth one can have. The translation of Lamairesse is a complete elaboration of the original by adding to it some personal interpretation that hearing is related to conversation between scholars alone. But the translation of Gnanou Diagou reestablishes to some extent the "anaphora" by repeating the word riches thrice. Besides, as we already discussed in the case of another couplet, the chapter title of this couplet is also translated in an interesting way, differently by both the translators.

கேள்வி

S'instruire par le commerce des savants (Lamairesse 1867: 73)
Learning by the commerce of scholars
De l'audition (Gnanou Diagou 1995: 63)
Audition

The French culture, in which conversation and rhetoric are much appreciated, has no doubt influenced the translation of the title and the couplet by Lamairesse. Although the original speaks about hearing rather than what should be heard, hence, giving all possible choices of hearing which also include listening in a conversation, the translation limits the meaning to "listening in a conversation" alone. Therefore, the translation of Lamairesse restricts the meaning because of the cultural boundaries within which the translator is confined. But the translator Gnanou Diagou has taken the same term as the original "audition or hearing" which, as in the original, contains the possibility of multiple interpretations about 'hearing'.

The following couplet has been taken from the chapter "ஊக்கமுடைமை" (Tiruvalluvar 2010: 127) which means *energy* or *motivation*. In this couplet, the poet makes a comparison between the elevation of aquatic flower which is proportional to the water level, and the progress in a man's life which would also be in proportion to his benevolence.

வெள்ளத் தனைய மலர்நீட்டம் மாந்தர்தம்
உள்ளத் தனைய துயர்வு.– 595(Tiruvalluvar 2010: 127)
(vellath thanaya malarneettam maanthartham
ullath thanaya dhuyarvu.)

The rise of an aquatic flower depends on the level of the water similarly men's progress depends on their benevolence.

Les fleurs qui naissent dans les eaux ne s'élèvent que jusqu'au niveau auquel les eaux montent elles-mêmes, de même les hommes ne s'élèvent qu'en raison de la hauteur de leur âme. (Lamairesse 1867: 101)

The flowers born in water grow till the level to which the water itself rises, in the same way men grow as high as their soul.

La longueur des tiges des fleurs aquatiques est la mesure de la profondeur de l'eau : ainsi la grandeur est la mesure de la force de volonté de l'homme (Gnanou Diagou 1995: 89).

The length of the stem of aquatic flowers is the measure of the depth of the water: thus greatness is the measure of the strength of man's will.

Although Lamairesse's translation transfers the metaphor, it introduces the word 'soul' which in the original is 'will' or 'mind'. Hence he relates it to a term which is more perceived as a religious one in French. In Gnanou Diagou's translation, he maintains the word 'will' as it is more close to the original. One more proof that the translators approached the original text with different perspectives is proven through the translation of this couplet. Lamairesse speaks about the height of the water that contributes to the length of the stem whereas Gnanou Diagou speaks about the depth of the water that contributes to the stem's growth. Again both the translators translate the title of the concerned chapter differently as given below.

ஊக்கமுடைமை

De la force d'âme. (Lamairesse 1867: 100)

Force of the soul

De l'énergie (Gnanou Diagou 1995: 88).

Energy.

Conclusion

In the light of the above given examples and comparisons, we observe that both the translators have approached the text from different perspectives. Gnanou Diagou's translation seems to be more close to the original than that of Lamairesse. As the translator Gnanou Diagou is from the source-culture i.e. Tamil, we may assume that he had a better understanding of the original than the translator of the target culture i.e. Lamairesse. However, we also have to admit that Gnanou Diagou's translation does not succeed in transferring all poetic elements that are in the original. This is probably because the poetic elements of the *Tirukkural* are not as translatable as its message. Besides, Lamairesse's translation is more like an interpretation of the *Kural* in a religious perspective. Also, Lamairesse adds in several cases elements of French culture to which he belongs. In addition to all this, we also tend to think that a poetic and philosophical work such as the *Tirukkural* is more rooted in its own language that its rendering in any other language cannot happen without going through some loss both in terms of its form and its content. As these attempts of rendering the *Tirukkural* into French have not been entirely successful, should we call them translations or should we invent a new term for these renderings, as has been the case so far in the field of literary translation?

Note

All translations of the original couplets into English as well as all retranslations of the French versions into English are done by me.

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Translating 'Pure', 'Clean' and Woman's Body: A Case Study of Memory and Experience from within and outside the Fishing Community

RENU ELZA VARKEY

Abstract

This paper is a part of my ongoing PhD research. The work as a whole does focus on how the day-today lives and beliefs of the fisherfolk have become to what it is now, tracing back to the unwritten history they have been carrying along generations, through collective memories and icons based on their experiences, from a literary point of view. This paper, in particular, is based on the narratives of the fishing community from Alleppey, and Trivandrum, two major coastal districts of Kerala, a Southern State in India, and also compares their oral narratives and representations in other media. The research questions that led to this study have popped up while reading the famous Malayalam novel, Chemmeen by Thakazhi Shivasankara Pillai.

The paper is based on the query about the existence of certain myths, especially those concerning the chastity of women and the concept of purity, as highlighted and overtly emphasised in this particular novel and other similar narratives. How does their collective memory get translated into their day-today lives and rituals? This paper specifically looks into the layers of translation interconnecting the concepts of purity and woman's body based on conversations with the fisherfolk, and their representation or misrepresentation in other media.

Keywords: Memory, experience, translation, gender, fisherfolk narratives.

Brief Introduction to the Community

Located at the extreme southern tip of the Indian subcontinent, Kerala is situated between the Arabian Sea to the west and the Western Ghats to the east. Kerala's coastal line extends to approximately 580 km in length, while it varies between 35–120 km in width. Geographically, the state can be roughly divided into three climatically distinct regions, viz., the Eastern Highlands (rugged and cool mountainous terrain), the Central Midlands (rolling hills), and the Western Lowlands (coastal plains)[1]. Recognised by UNESCO as an indigenous community, the *Mukkuva* Community (Fishing Community) of Kerala is one among the many marginalised communities in the society. Despite the large number of people belonging to the community, the inferior treatment meted them is often due to the manual labour they are communally engaged in.

According to G. John Samuel, the *Mukkuvars*, believed to have emigrated from Ceylon, are today found in Kanyakumari District, coastal areas of Kerala, Lakshadweep, and in some scattered areas of Karnataka and occupies a major area of Sri Lanka. Although they are described as a homogeneous ethnic group, their present lifestyle is believed to vary according to geographical, ecological and other influences (Samuel 1998: 118). They are a community that has differing ethnic identities based on the state or country of domicile. Although they are considered a marginalised community in India, their social and numerical position make them an important community in Sri Lanka. They are also located in Lakshadweep Islands of India but are called *Melacherries*. They are also identified as the *Araya* caste among the communities who follow Hinduism towards some of the southern parts of Kerala. Inhabiting the

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[1] India, National Portal of. "Kerala."
<http://knowindia.gov.in/knowindia/state_uts.php?id=14. n.d>

coastal regions of the state, their main source of income for livelihood is fishing.

Oral Narratives and its Significance in the Community

The community owns a rich oral tradition. The folk element prevalent among the *Mukkuvar* can be found in various genres of their narratives such as folktales, myths, beliefs, songs etc. It's a surprise that their oral tradition is still an under explored area in research though their culture is impregnated with their indigenous and local knowledge. As an indigenous community, they have a close relationship with the sea and its ecology. With the intervention of modernity and technology, many of their exclusive cultural memories and knowledge are being forgotten and deteriorating as the generations pass by. Underlining the fact that we live in a patriarchal society, there are certain dogmas which are still followed among the fishing communities for ages, based on gender.

While they respect the sea as a Mother, rather than a Father figure (according to the Hindu Mythology Sea is considered a Male God, *Samudradevan*, *Varuna*), it's fascinating to observe how gendered spaces are mapped in their society which lead to geographical limitations of women, though the intensity of these beliefs can vary from region to region. Even if it's stating the obvious that the society follows Patriarchy, the gap lies in the fact that these oral texts were never learnt from a folk or literary critical perspective. Till now, the life of women from the community was studied only from a human/gender rights or economic perspective, but a study concerning their portrayal in the myths or their beliefs remain untouched. This paper focuses on how the body of a woman and the concepts of "pure" and "clean" is represented in three different contexts- in a mainstream literary text which was also adapted to a motion

picture, a one-act play and some personal narratives from the members of the community.

Translation from within the Community and outside

In the paper, 'Translating Europe's Others', Talal Asad and John Dixon talk about the intricacies of translating the Other's in the context of Colonialization by Europe. Even if the scenario is different, reading the context as 'The Mainstream's Others' equates this to their observations. When an upper class/caste person writes about "the others" who are considered to be the minority or marginalised of the same society, the tendency is that it brings in the same effect. They discuss the historical and political context within which the two parties relate to each other-the society to be represented and the society for which that representation is destined (Asad & Dixon 1985: 170). It is also equally important that how a dominated language accommodates the narratives of these communities, which mostly remain in the oral form.

The lived experience and collective memory of a culture which has travelled over generations, within themselves undergo a translation and become part of their belief system adapting to their day to day lives. It can be reinforced by what Asad says, "In Ethnography, the primary material is oral and what's vitally important it is, for the most part, embedded in the activities of the everyday life. Hence, only a lived experience can talk authentically about a memory rather than observing from the outside world" (Asad & Dixon 1985: 173).

'Pure' (ശുദ്ധം: śuḍḍham), 'Clean' (ശുദ്ധി: śuḍḍhi) and Woman's Body

The words śuḍḍhaɱ and śuḍḍhi have a Sanskrit origin and are derived from the root word śuḍḍh which means pure. śuḍḍhaɱ

means pure and *śuďdhi* means clean. Pure and clean in every culture and community, throughout the time have undoubtedly been associated with the woman's body. Evidences from various cultures are in abundance to substantiate this belief. Starting from religious to historical to socio-cultural texts and norms, fidelity and menstruation are two of those major factors which determine "her" pure and clean body, anywhere in the world. The case is no different in the fishing communities.

Discussion of the Texts

Chemmeen – the Celebrated Novel and Cinema

In the Post-Colonial India, there has been a boom of education, literacy and literature even though the access was very much limited to certain social strata. *Chemmeen* (1956) by Thakazhi Shivashanakara is a novel written in such a social scenario that gradually became one of the canonical literary works in Malayalam. The time period is also very important in the literary history of Kerala, as 1940's marked the advent of realistic novels in Malayalam literature and Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai is one of the most eminent figures who promoted the genre[2]. Thus, *Chemmeen* has always been considered as a masterpiece text in the Malayalam literary history. For its popularity and well-acclaimed reception among the readers, the novel was awarded some of the prestigious literary awards in the country. It was later adapted into a motion picture which won national awards in several categories and got translated and published in some of the major World Languages, thus reaching out to a global audience. *Chemmeen* is the only novel which grabbed the attention of the global reading public till mid-2010's which in fact opened a door for the global society to the fisherfolk

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[2] George, K. M. Western Influence on Malayalam Language and Literature. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi. 1998. P: 104-106.Print.

community and their existence. The novel *Chemmeen* is written in the backdrop of a coastal village in Alleppey. Through the novel, Thakazhi narrates the story of the relationship between Karuthamma, the daughter of a fisherman who is a Hindu by religion, and Pareekutti, who is the son of a Muslim fish wholesaler. The novel revolves around a myth which is claimed to exist among the fishing communities along the Coastal Kerala, about chastity. The myth as depicted in the novel is that "if a married fisherwoman is infidel when her husband is in the sea, the Sea goddess (*Kadalamma*, literally translated as Sea Mother) will take him along and he would never come back". Going by the myth, a woman's chastity was believed to have had all the power to bring back her husband safely from a tormenting sea. In support of this argument, following is an excerpt from the English translation of the novel done by Anita Nair[3]:

> On a mere plank wood, the first fisherman had rowed through waves and currents to a point beyond the horizon. While on the shore his faithful wife had stood facing the west waiting. A storm blew up and churned the sea. Whales with their mouths gaping open gathered. Sharks beat the water into a frenzy with their tails. The undertow dragged the boat into a whirlpool. But he miraculously survived all these dangers. Not just that, he returned to the shore with a huge fish (Nair 2011: 7-8).

The word 'faithful' holds the complete meaning of the whole scenario. The whole novel reaffirms the myth about women's

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[3] *Chemmeen* was first translated into English in 1962 by V.K.Narayana Menon titled, "Anger of the Sea Goddess " which has been included in the UNESCO Collection of Representative Works (Gollancz publishers, London/Harper and Brothers, New York. The text has undergone multiple translations in English and in this research, the translation included is that done by Anita Nair.

body, the concepts of chastity and purity which are the safeguard of the men's lives and ultimately extending to that of the culture and community. However, when the knowledge of this myth became popular through the literary work, it got overgeneralised to mean the complete stretch of the coastal community. The following are some of the passages from the translated novel which substantiate the argument:

> (…) She had not been entrusted with the life of a man going out to sea. And if such a life was in her hands, she would cherish it. She knew how to take care of it. No one needed to tell her, a fisherwoman, that. Chakki[4] continued to speak, 'Do you know why the sea cries at times? The sea knows that if the sea mother gets angry, all will be ruined. But if she is pleased, she will give you everything, my child. There is gold in the sea, my daughter, gold! (...) Virtue is the most important thing, my daughter. The purity of the body and mind! A fisherman's wealth is his fisherwoman's virtue (Nair 2011: 8-9).

> On the day of Karuthamma's marriage, her mother tells her, "Daughter, we are entrusting a man to you. It isn't as simple as what you think. We are not giving a girl to a man. Contrary it's the other way around… Our men live in a sea where the waves rise and fall, daughter!" (Nair 2011: 103).

As a curious reader and as a researcher, the multiple encounters I had with the fisherfolks revealed that there exists no such prominent myth which is particular about the women's chastity as highlighted in the novel. The hypercritical stand that had been raised by the members of the fishing community

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[4] Chakki is a character in the Novel, Chemmeen who is the mother of Karuthamma.

from the time this novel was released is still not to be heard in the mainstream literary arena. The community believes that whoever goes to the sea committing a crime won't come back as the Sea Mother punishes them, just like a mother or goddess punishes her children. And, infidelity is just one among those crimes. As it's mentioned in the novel:

> Do you know why the sea cries at times? The sea knows that if the sea mother gets angry, all will be ruined. But if she is pleased, she will give you everything, my child. There is gold in the sea, my daughter, gold! (Nair 2011: 9).

 They believe that the Sea Mother will provide them with everything according to their need and punishes them when they do wrong. Hence, they forbid themselves from doing any such act that offends the Sea, believing that Sea sees and hears everything. It accompanies with their belief that *Kadalamma* takes away all the dirt along with her and purifies the shore.

Some of the other notable passages from the novel which can be read in this particular context of woman's chastity are:

> One of the old sea ditties told the story of one such woman. Her fall from grace caused the waves to rise as high as a mountain and climb on to the shore. Dangerous serpents foamed and frothed as they slithered on the sands. Sea monsters with the cavernous mouths chased the boats to swallow them whole (Nair 2011: 104).

> While talking to her lover after the marriage and before leaving the shore, Karuthamma wished to tell him she would pray for him. But she wasn't sure if she could. A fisherwoman was allowed to pray only for one man's welfare. The man she was entrusted to. Her tradition wouldn't allow her to pray for another man. So how could she say that to him? (Nair 2011: 107).

But, a very interesting statement that caught my attention is the following lines. "These days there is none of that strict code of purity. These days men too have changed. People and customs change. But a daughter of the sea has to safeguard her virtue." (Nair 2011: 104). Even when they talk about the changing times with 'no strict code of purity' being followed these days, and men are hinted as having the liberty to live as they wish to, the daughter of the sea is imposed with the virtue of morality. She is still expected to hold the key that safeguards her society. The burden of these moral codes never seems to have a chance to get dissociated from a woman's body.

The interesting query is that, how a general belief which involves no gender discrimination simply gets narrowed down into a myth which revolves around the woman's body? How has a woman become a guardian angel of a whole community just by generalising a myth which has nothing to do with their memory or day to day experiences? How has a whole community been portrayed in front of a mainstream society worldwide through a woman's body as a cultural signifier? Why are the oppressed voices, yet strong still unheard regarding these misrepresentations? These questions take us back to the point – the privilege of a translator from outside the community. The societal privilege of caste and class, in the context of Kerala, (India) allows a translator to manipulate facts in a literary work and present it to the world serving what suffices their need. In this context, the novelist is being addressed as the translator, as he claimed in his work that it's from his close experience of living near a coastal village[5] which prompted him to write this novel, also perpetuating and thus immortalising an unwritten oral myth among the community.

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[5] Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai has written about it in the introductory note to his novel *Chemmeen* P: 10).

The canonisation of this novel also challenged the movement of the literary works from within the community to find a space in the mainstream literary arena. The brilliant critique written for *Chemmeen* against the misrepresentation of the community all throughout the novel by a well-acclaimed doctor and scholar from the community, Velukkutty Arayan had been shut down immediately and his original literature is still rarely available even for reference or research purposes. He was not critical about mentioning the myth in the novel but warned about the potential Thakazhi's exaggeration and overemphasis of the myth had, to destruct the novel completely (K. E. N 2013: 45). Keeping the reality about the community in darkness and embracing the hypersensitised myths through a fictional work by judging the whole community through those lenses, pushing them even down in the societal hierarchy is the biggest tragedies these misrepresentations have caused. Even if there were instances where the author tried to bring forth strong resistance from different characters against the system at different points of time in the novel, all those efforts died without given a chance for a possible societal reformation by breathing the last breath along with the tragic love story (K. E. N 2013: 47). It has also to be noted that, these communities have their own indigenous variety of the language with exclusive vocabulary which cannot be easily understood by others. On a linguistic level too, the dominating language and culture failed to accommodate the community's exclusive linguistic variety. The language is rich with vocabulary and style closely associated with their fishing job which is almost missing throughout the novel. Their variety of language is again considered much inferior to the 'Standard Malayalam', and is often referred to as a slang which includes a lot of otherwise considered derogatory and substandard vocabulary.

Directed by Ramu Karyat, the novel was adapted into a motion picture in 1965. The portrayal of the woman's body was even more problematic in the cinema. Women in the community are mostly of darker skin complexion as they are geographically located much closer to the sea, and naturally, the salty heat waves result in a tanned skin tone. They are emotionally very strong as they live in a highly men-oriented space, and in most cases, they are the ones who control the family and finance, as the men will be busy going to sea. But when the novel hit the silver screen, the female protagonist was represented as a very fair and shy lady typical of the usual filmy heroines. In a note written for the English translation of the novel *Chemmeen*, Meena T Pillai-a renowned film scholar from Kerala remarks, "The taut body of Sheela's Karuthamma marks the transformation of the central female subject of a coastal community drama into an objectified erotic figure created on demand to the visual and erotic desires of Malayali audiences… Therefore Sheela (the renowned actress from Malayalam movie industry) as Karuthamma[6], though most unlike in physical features to real fisherwomen (generating innumerable 'academic' critiques on Sheela as "Veluthamma[7] referring to her fair skin), caters to popular audience expectations on how the heroine of a melodrama can plausibly be constructed on celluloid according to the aesthetic conventions of the cinema, in the process becoming popularly accepted as realistic (…)" (Pillai 2011: 253). Malayalam cinema is always known for its male gaze oriented take, Karuthamma was also not an exemption. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to state that, even the Karuthamma was introduced in the novel was not as fragile and opinion-less like in the movie. The key factors were lost in translation as the

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[6] Karuthamma can be literally translated as Black Mother.
[7] Veluthamma can be translated as White Mother.

female protagonist was represented in the adaptation of the novel. The motion picture has reached more audience than the readers of the novel and the misrepresentation too has reached every category of audience.

While the experiences in a coastal village led Thakazhi to write a novel which has limited the sea simply as a background of the story of a romance and an overemphasis laid on the myth of chastity, there are writers who try to reflect on the community women's real-life experiences, in their own style and originality through their works.

Matsyagandhi and the Smell of Fish

It is in that context the one-act play *Matsyagandhi* written by Sajitha Madathil, an acknowledged theatre artist, becomes very relevant. The text referred here is a performance of the one-act play by Shylaja P Ambu in 2012. The play is located on the shores of Thiruvananthapuram. The play was critically acclaimed for addressing the real-life issues, the fisherwomen face in the society in terms of their body by locating them in the mainstream and public spaces. The act deals with the intervention of modern techniques of fishing in the day-to-day life of the fishing community i.e. how the big trawler fishing boats and ships of the importing companies have become life-threatening elements for the fishermen who go for fishing on their small boats. The protagonist is a female, an *Araya* woman who narrates the tragedy which she has undergone by losing her husband to a similar accident and crying frantically to the audience about their miserable lives. She brings in an interesting interconnection built by intertwining the reality with mythology by narrating the myth of Satyavati, parallel to her experience.

The myth of Satyavati dates back to the times even before the epic of the *Mahabharatha*. Satyavathi was the daughter of the

Chedi king Uparicaravasu, born to an *apsara*[8] Adrikâ, who was turned into a fish. One day the semen of King Uparicaravasu happened to fall in the river Ganga, and Adrikâ accidentally swallowed it to become pregnant. When the fisherman caught the fish and found two human babies in its stomach, he presented the baby boy and baby girl to the king. Because of the fish smell of her body, the baby girl was given back to the fisherman. She was adopted as the daughter by the fisherman who lived on the banks of the Yamuna. Due to the smell her body emanated, she was also called *Matsyagandhi*[9]. Got attracted to her beauty, a sage named Parasara had a conjugal relationship with her and fathered her son Vyasa, who later compiled the *Vedas,* and authored *Puranas* and the *Mahabharata*. Interestingly, the earlier name of Satyavati was also Kali indicating her dark skin tone. The sage granted her a boon which transformed her *Matsyagandha* to the fragrance of musk. Later, by getting captivated by the fragrance of her body King Shantanu married her (George 2003: 262-63).

Satyavati becomes relevant here for the same smell of a fisherwoman's body. She later states in the play[10], (my translation)

> (…) when the Government snatches away the authority of the sea, this *matsyagandham*[11] is my hope now. For the tourists who come here to see the sea, along with the fish, now we will also be there, the *Matsyagandhis*. And, this whole shore will be filled with small *vyasas*, who don't know who their fathers are (Sajitha 2012).

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[8] A celestial nymph.

[9] Williams, George. M. *The Handbook of Hindu Mythology.* New York: Oxford University Press. 2003. P: 262-263.

[10] Translation of the relevant parts from the One Act Play *Matsyagandhi.*

[11] Smell of fish.

The women from the fishing community towards the southern coast of Kerala, are very much active in selling fish in the market and processing them, even if they won't go fishing in the sea. They follow the traditional way of selling fish by carrying it in the vessels or baskets on their heads. Dealing with fish all day long, it's natural that their body will smell of fish. There is a common tendency among the mainstream populace not to accommodate the fish sellers in the spaces such as public transportation and all other mainstream domains because of their body odour. While in the mythology, as a baby girl she was rejected for her fish smell and later as a blessing, the smell transformed into the musk fragrance for Satyavati that attracted king Shantanu, in reality, the Araya woman continues to smell the same 'fish stench' which is considered as 'unclean' by the society. Thus, in this context, the woman's body gets associated with purity in terms of odour and cleanliness.

As the play continues, someone asks the fisherwoman, what is she doing on the sea-shore leaving her hair open? She confronts the audience and the public by asking certain questions from their day-to-day encounters. She questions them about her husband, the small baby fishes and the *Arayans*[12] who have lost their lives because of the trawler boats, nets and foreign ships. She sarcastically responds to the people who advocate the myth that if the *Arayathi*[13] stays on the shore leaving her hair open; the Sea Mother will get angry. She decides to let her hair stay open from then onwards. She continues by saying, (my translation) "Let the Sea Mother get angry! Let her anger bring down all those trawler boats and foreign ships (...)" (Sajitha 2012).

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[12] The Fishermen who follow the Hindu religion.
[13] Fisherwoman (Wife of a fisherman).

She concludes the play by associating the stench of her body with that of the smell of the baby fishes getting killed every day by the huge fishing ships and machines.

This stench of fish is not from my fish basket. It is the smell of the sea decaying. The stench of the little fishes being slaughtered by the trawler nets. It is the stench of the dead dreams of *Matsyagandhis* decaying (Sajitha 2012). (My translation).

The Pure Mother Sea and Impure Fisherwomen

In both the above-discussed texts, the commonality draws attention to the association of woman's body to the concept of purity and cleanliness. According to the popular belief of the community, regardless of its regional location, they consider Sea to be the purest and believes that 'She' takes away all dirt from the shore[14]. During field visits to the coastal villages of Alleppey, I met certain fisherfolk who believed that the Tsunami which had hit the South Indian shores in December 2005, was ultimately the Sea purifying the shore. They say, "it was something which has happened because the shore was highly polluted and the Sea Mother came in high waves to clean the shore by taking away all those accumulated particles which were causing the dirt". While Sea is considered female and believed to be pure and clean, it's interesting to observe that even within the community, the woman's body is considered to be impure associating it with menstruation and hence, is not allowed to go into the sea, and in certain parts not even to the shore. They believe that while menstruating, even her accidental touch on the fishing gears and crafts such as nets and boats will keep the fishes away from coming near them

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[14] Excerpts from the field notes (Alleppey), translated by me.

and the men who went for fishing will have to return empty-handed from the sea[15]. There are specific rituals which some of these regions practise, purifying the instruments from this touch and making them worthy of catching fish. They also believe that women (from the community) are not supposed to enter the Sea, as it may pollute the Sea. Even if times are changing, I have met some older women from the community of Alleppey who have not even gone to the seashores, because of this strong notion of purity.

Observations

The paper was mainly focussing on how a woman's body has been represented in three different textual contexts using the parameters of purity and cleanliness. While *Chemmeen* has nullified the existence of every other possible belief just by hypersensitising the myth of chastity, it showed us an ample context in which how a translator's privilege works. While representing a community through his/her writing, you have the liberty to focus on what you think will grab the readership of the target text. But, the question of ethics remains there unanswered. The privilege is because of the security his subjective location in the upper strata of society provides him, which negates all the controversies brought forth from the otherwise marginalised fishing community, like for example the critique by Velukkutti Arayan. But, lately, there have been strong voices emerging from the communities who still critically talk about Thakazhi's *Chemmeen* which is important to be discussed even today, many years after its publication.

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[15] Narratives from the shores of Trivandrum. In conversation with Mr. Robert Panipilla and referring to his book, *Kadalarivukalum Neranubhavangalum* (can be translated as, 'Sea Knowledge and Personal Experiences') published by D. C. Books in 2015.

As discussed, the problematic representation of motion picture made the portrayal even worse by subduing the personality of Karuthamma to just another naïve heroine on screen. In both the cases, Thakazhi created Karuthamma as the representation of many women who are cautious of their body, those bodies that are chained to the titles of morality whose virtue would be judged only based on chastity and fidelity. Even if it was placed in the fishing community associating it with an overemphasised myth, the fact that it was undoubtedly a reflection of the whole of the society that always judges a woman based on these parameters.

While Sajitha tries to bring forth the issues of fishing communities through her one-act play, the focus strongly revolves around the woman's body. Even though it's closer to the reality which they live in, the burden of the female body as a cultural signifier for morality is strongly addressed. While in *Chemmeen* the female protagonist always tried to adhere to the myth and safeguard her chastity, we see an *Araya* woman in *Matsyagandhi* who is using her body as a protest against the dreadful experiences she had to go through which are the aftereffects of the 'so-called' development and globalisation. While the previous text was a romantic novel which narrowed down the woman's body as a sacred property that would safeguard the whole society, the latter uses the body as a strong means of protest by articulating and refusing to follow the myths the people believed in for generations. She uses her body as a tool to avenge those people, by fighting against the government because of which she and many other Araya women who have lost their husbands. Her fight is also for all those baby fishes who are being killed every day by the big trawler boats. By liberating her body from the moral ties and explicitly expressing her desire for the Sea Mother to get angry and bring down the huge vessels which caused the deaths of all

the Araya men in the sea, she creates a voice of protest. She embraces the odour of her body that the society views as unclean because of the fish stench and hopes to attract the tourists who come to see the sea, equating herself to *Matsyagandhi* from the Puranas. By associating the stench of her fish basket with that of the decaying dead baby fishes in the sea and her dead dreams, she makes us realise it's not just the death of her husband but also the destruction of the ecology of the sea which has deeply affected her. Even if the author of the one-act play doesn't belong to the community, on a larger level it gets translated as her protest against the parameters of morality attached exclusively with a woman's body by the patriarchal society.

In the conversations with the older fishermen from the coastal villages of Alleppey and Trivandrum, they shared their beliefs which surrounding *Kadalamma*, the Sea Mother. There was not an instance they agreed to the portrayal of their community through the novel *Chemmeen*. As mentioned in the above discussion, it has been negated by the members of the community that there's no such stand-alone myth which is based on the women's chastity in any of those shores which were part of my fieldwork. But, they practice a strong notion of purity which is associated with menstruation, the bleeding woman. While Sea is a mother who reproduces for the sons of the Sea i.e. the fishermen, fulfilling their daily needs, the women have restricted movements in the sea and shores, especially in the coastal villages of Alleppey. It's an obvious fact that many of the religions consider menstruating women's bodies as polluted entities and they are restricted in most of the sacred spaces. Likewise, the sea is considered a sacred space by the community, where Sea is not just the Mother but also a ferocious Goddess. But at the same time, these beliefs are products of memories and experiences which are handed over

to them through generations. Ultimately those memories are translated as myths or part of a belief system which became an inseparable entity of their everyday life. The translation happens strictly within the community where there are no external agents that can influence this process.

Conclusion

By problematising the woman's body as focus, the primary concern of this study was to observe how each narrative translates the woman's body and brings in variations in the meanings of concepts of pure and clean. It was also to highlight how the subject position of the translators affects these semantic manifestations. In the first case, Thakazhi talked about the myth of chastity as a complete outsider or in his words as an observant participant but ended up exaggerating it into a prominent reality. Adapting the novel into a motion picture was an additional level of unethical translation to the already existing misrepresentation. On the other hand Sajitha Madathil, who is not a member of the community did justice to her fictional representation by linking them with real-life instances. The gender of the author also favoured much to the realistic portrayal of the female protagonist. The third instance where the memories are translated from within the community gave a clear picture of how purity is associated with a female body. The attempt was to draw attention to the fact that the scope of the translator to bring forth a meaning associated to any particular entity is large and multiple. In this study, it shows that the translator is also an author, interpreter and an orator who has the flexibility to fit into any of these roles. But, it cannot be ignored that there are potential consequences too which can cause a damage to the cultural identity of a community or people by misrepresenting them to a target culture and audience.

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Rewriting of Children's Literature: Do We have a Universal Norm?

PRIYADA SHRIDHAR PADHYE

Abstract

This article envisages proving the universality of the norm of rewriting in the genre of Children's Literature and its translation. The article seeks to prove how re-writing is a phenomenon integral to the genre of children's literature. The author then goes on to prove how this norm is at play in even cultures as distant as the Indian and the German. Finally, attempt is made to identify the reasons for this norm. While proving the prevalence of this norm in the children's literature of the world, the article subtly reveals the power equations that are at play like societal structures, religious establishments and political forces (Itamar Even-Zohar). These, sometimes subtle and sometimes not so subtle forces, shed light on the scheming forces that shape the world of translation by playing a crucial role in deciding what gets translated, how it gets translated and why it gets translated when it does get translated. This paper envisages focusing on these forces of Translation with special reference to the translations of children's literature in the world.

Keywords: Rewriting, children's literature, Polysystem theory, politics of translation, Grimm's Fairy Tales, the Panchatantra.

Introduction

This article explores the universality of the norm of "rewriting" in Children's Literature and its translation. It is important here to briefly explain what the terms "norm" and "rewriting" mean in the context of this article. The term "norm" in this article should be simply understood as a rule (in

opposition to an exception) and not in the way Gideon Toury uses it. When the term "rewriting" is used, it is meant to refer to all attempts, by the author or the translator- addition, deletion and appropriation of the content matter, change of form and the attempts to sanitize and erase textual content.

The phenomenon of rewriting with respect to the genre of Children's Literature and its translation will be discussed in two sections. The first section will investigate in general terms, how all literature for children and its translation, is basically an act of re-writing. The second section will deal with, what I would like to refer to as a "conscious and intentional re-writing", by the authors and translators of Children's Literature. "Conscious and intentional rewriting" is the act, where the authors and translators knowingly add, delete, appropriate, erase and sanitize the texts, with the intent of, what can be idiomatically referred to as, 'playing to the gallery' and 'serving – as- ordered' or to use Children's Literature and its translation as a tool to further a hidden personal agenda, which may be, among many others, of political, social and religious nature. The article will end with a few concluding remarks, in which attempt will be made to understand the reasons behind this phenomenon.

For the purpose of this article, I have selected two comparable works, one representative of the Children's Literature in the West and another representative of the Children's Literature of India. Representative of the Children's Literature in the West is the *Children's and household Tales* of the Grimm Brothers and representative of Indian Children's Literature is The *Panchatantra*. One reason for choosing these two works for investigation is their comparable success as children's literature in the world. Both the works have transcended cultures, languages and countries of the world and still continue to be translated widely. As Lanman puts it, *the*

Panchatantra has made a "(…) triumphal progress from its native land over all the civilized parts of the globe" (1915 Preface: ix) and Dollerup maintains that the Grimm's Fairy Tales are "one of the most widely translated works of German Literature" (289: my translation). The other reason for choosing these two works is the fact that in terms of their spatial and temporal origin they have nothing in common. The book Children's and Household Tales was first published on German soil in 1812 whereas *the Panchatantra* dates back to the 5th century and the oldest version was believed to have been written in Kashmir. This suits best to test the universality of the norm of rewriting.

Let me begin by proving that rewriting, as a phenomenon, is common to both the *Grimm's Tales* as well as the *Panchatantra*. My point of departure is that there is nothing like an original where children's literature is concerned. All children's tales, as we know them, are re-worked and rewritten. Let us first consider the case of the *Grimm's Tales*. The Grimm's Fairy Tales have the indelible mark of their authors Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm and have been widely, though erroneously, perceived to be German. If we study the historical and social setting of their collection, we realize that they were rewritings of oral renditions. The brothers were born at a time when Germany under Napoleon was witnessing a surge of nationalism. Their efforts to create a national literature drove them to collect folk tales and legends of Germany. Their association with people like Karl von Savigny and Clemens Brentano and their especially Jacob's, interest in the Norwegian mythology of Norse, to which one can attribute the presence of nature and the fantasy elements in their stories, all contributed to giving the tales their specific character (Dollerup: 3-4). The stories were collected in the spirit of 19th century Romanticism–the return to sources and nature (Shavit

1983: 64). Their main source, amongst many others, was the Wild and the Hassenpflug families (Zipes: 10). Most of the storytellers like the Hassenpflug family were of French origin (Zipes: 11). This is particularly true of the tale "Little Red Riding Hood", to which I return later in the article. It was known much prior to the Grimm's version, as one of the tales in Charles Perrault's *Contes*, a collection of fairy tales, which was published by Perrault in 1697. So what came to be known as German fairy tales were actually inspired by the Norwegian mythology and believed to be French in their origin. This poses the question: How German is the Grimm's fairy tales and should they not be considered as re-writings of oral renditions of Norwegian and French tales?

The same conclusion, albeit in a different light, is true of the *Panchatantra*. If one takes up any translation, old or new, in Indian or foreign languages of the *Panchatantra*, it is often mentioned that the translation is from the original Sanskrit book written by Vishnu Sharma. Research has established that Vishnu Sharma is a pseudonym and a school of thought believes that the *Panchatantra* was ghost-written by Chanakya. Even if we are not sure today whether and how the *Panchatantra* tales were written or collected, there exist today multiple Sanskrit versions/ re-writings of this great work like the oldest and probably the most original Kashmiri *Tantrakhyayika* (written between 300 BC and 570 AD), Purnabhadra's *Panchakhyanaka*, Ksemendra's *Brhatkathamanjari*, Somadeva's *Bhrathkathasaritasagar*, and the list goes on and on[22]. The versions which are available to

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[22] In the year 1910 the German Indologist Johannes Hertel was commissioned by the Philosophy department of the University of Strasbourg, in their capacity as administrators of the Lamey Foundation to undertake a study which would be dedicated to researching all the prevailing versions of the *Panchatantra* in the world. His book "Das

us today are old incomplete manuscripts in the form of fragments. There are no "originals" to refer to. Indologists and Philologists study multiple versions of the *Panchatantra* to understand which stories or parts of the verses and prose can be traced to this or that version. It is also interesting to observe that translations of the *Panchatantra* in Indian and foreign languages often simply mention "translated from the Sanskrit"[23], as if to suggest that there is only one *Panchatantra* written in Sanskrit, from which the translation has been done. This again emphasizes the fact that even the *Panchatantra* is in fact a case of a rewriting which has happened over the years and so it is difficult to speak of the "original" with regard to the *Panchatantra*.

To conclude this section, all children's literature, in one way or the other, is a rewriting of stories that were handed down orally from generation to generation. Even in case of children's literature with canonical status like the Grimm's Fairy Tales, the right of the brothers to authorship and their claim to proprietorship is questionable. In the case of the *Panchatantra*, which version is the "original" and which has

Pancatantra: seine Geschichte und seine Verbreitung" compares all the available versions and translations of the work in the world and he also attempts to identify which versions are corrupted and which translations can be traced back to certain original works.

[23] Though there are many versions of the *Panchatantra*, no translation mentions which version was used for the translation. I cite two examples of famous translators. One is Richard Schmidt and the other is Theodor Benfey. Schmidt's translation was published in 1901 simply mentions "a collection of old Indian fairy tales, translated for the first time" (my translation). Theodor Benfey's book was published in 1859, has the title "The Panchatantra: Five books of Indian fables, fairy tales and stories translated from the Sanskrit" (my translation). No translation mentions which book was used as the original giving the impression that there existed only one book called the *Panchatantra*.

been rewritten has long been and continues to be a topic of research.

Having discussed the phenomenon of rewriting of children's literature in a broad sense, I will now devote the next section to, what I have earlier termed as "conscious and intentional re-writing" of these works by their authors and translators, an act for which a stronger word like manipulation may not be totally wrong, because it deals with adding, deleting, appropriating the content for vested interests which range from religious, commercial, political to ideological. This conscious and intentional rewriting of children's literature stems from the need for acceptance and approval by the players involved in the process. These myriad players range from the parents who read the stories to the children and the pedagogues and ideologues who decide what is appropriate for the child on the one hand, to the commissioners of the translations who may range from publishing houses to religious establishments on the other hand. A few examples to prove the point are being presented.

We are aware of the fact that from 1812 to 1857 the Grimm's *Tales* had been edited by Wilhelm Grimm multiple times. The editing, or a new writing of the tales, in my opinion, was done with a view to make the tales acceptable to the people and the times. A few examples will prove the point for which a brief overview of the historicity of children's literature in the West is necessary.

The first written children's literature in the West is dated late 17th century. Early 17th century Europe witnessed a paradigm change in how children were educated. The system of apprenticeship for learning a trade had been in operation till the 17th century. This system was replaced by establishment of schools. The schools were mainly run by the church (Shavit

2007: 38-40). The children's literature of the time is marked by educational values and not fantasy, as even fairy tales were not considered appropriate reading material for children back then, because of the presence of violence in most, as well as the sexual references in them. Hence presence of sexual references in children's literature was prohibited. Wilhelm Grimm's editing of the tale "Little Red Riding Hood" as well as the tale "Rapunzel", it appears, was undertaken with the aim of making the tale acceptable by adhering to this unwritten norm. By the time the *Children's and Household Tales* came on the scene in 1812, there seemed to be concrete dos and don'ts with respect to children's literature. There were six editions of their book which was first published in 1812. New editions followed in the ensuing years in 1819, 1837, 1840, 1843, 1850 till the final one in 1857. One finds many differences in the stories if one compares the first edition in 1812 and the last edition in 1857. Wilhelm Grimm, who edited the fairy tales so as to tailor them to meet the approval of the adults and the church, adapted them to the *Zeitgeist,* which was marked by Christian ideals, nationalist fervour, rapid industrialization and urbanization and the establishment of the nuclear family. He rewrote the content of the stories as narrated to the Grimm Brothers by their narrators. The tale Little Red Riding Hood would be one such case in point. It was written by Perrault to caution small country girls of city bred men who take advantage of the girls with their sweet talk[24]. The satirical and ironical levels of the text enabled Perrault to play with the symbol of the wolf, which in light of the moral of the story, stands for "gentleman of the town" who does not hesitate to take advantage of poor, innocent country

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[24] Refer to the first chapter of Shavit Zohar's book titled "Poetics of Children's Literature". The chapter is called 'The Notion of Childhood and Texts for the Child. Charles Perrault

girls. The theme of gentlemen who take advantage of little country girls goes well with the presence of erotic elements in the story. In the Grimm's version, the erotic elements had to be done away with and so the text was rewritten. The child became the narrator and in keeping with the ideals of a child in the early 20th century, the narration was with innocence. In Perrault's version, the child is devoured by the wolf , because he wanted to drive home his point of cautioning the innocent girls but in the Grimm's version there are two endings and in both the child is saved (Shavit 1983: 62).

Another instance where Wilhelm changed the content of the story to do away with sexual undertones in the story is the story Rapunzel (Zipes: 13). In their 1812 version of "Kinder- und Hausmärchen" on page 41, Rapunzel has the following conversation with the witch which unmistakably has sexual undertones, 'Tell me Mrs. Gothel, my clothes are becoming tighter and do not fit me' (my translation).

 In the story, this sentence reveals that Rapunzel is pregnant. This sentence in the story has a function which is vital for the plot because it is this naïve remark by Rapunzel that tells the witch that somebody has been visiting Rapunzel. The same was changed in course of time and in the 1857 edition it disappears. In its place, the following sentence is found on page 68: 'Tell me Mrs. Gothel, how come I find you heavier to haul than the Prince; he is here in a moment' (my translation).

As regards adapting the stories to the values of the times, there are instances of changes made with that view in mind too. After the war against Napoleon (1810-1815), there followed a period of industrialization and urbanization throughout Europe (Dollerup: 6). The nuclear family became a norm as many people shifted to the towns. Family values were important. In the 1815 edition, in the stories "Snow white" and "Hansel and

Gretel" (Grimm 1815: 49), it is the mother who causes the children harm. Keeping the nuclear family set up in mind, this had to be changed to the step mother taking the place of the mother. The idea of one's own mother harming one's child would have been unpalatable to the people of the time.

Content of the Grimm's Fairy Tales was adapted more and more till the last edition in 1857 not only had met with approval but had also developed into what can be described as a peculiar style of the Grimm's tales.

This conscious rewriting of the Grimm's *Tales* was done with an eye on what was considered to be pedagogically "correct content". This stamp of adult approval contributed to their success. Another aspect that could have played a role in the rewriting of these stories could also be the fact that the ability of the child had been taken into consideration. In the case of the Grimm's Fairy Tales, the child was unmistakably the "intended reader" (Shavit 1983: 60). Hence violence and sexual references had been probably thought to be difficult for the children to understand.

To test the universality of the norm of "intentional and conscious rewriting" I would now like to take an example of such an instance in case of the *Panchatantra*. One example of the same in an Indian language and one in a non-Indian language will suffice to prove the point.

The *Panchatantra* tales exhibit massive rewriting, not out of any pedagogical considerations or for seeking adult approval. The rewriting of the *Panchatantra* was, in my opinion, an "interventionist act". The translations of the work studied in languages known to the author of this article reveal that the translations of the *Panchatantra* were often commissioned by religious and political institutions and personalities. The tales have been translated in practically all languages of the world

and in all cultures, Semitic as well as non–Semitic. It is worth noting that very often the translators were representatives of religions establishments and had been converted from one religion to other. The enthusiasm of the translators for their new religions was revealed in the religious touch they gave to the translation of the *Panchatantra* and also in the fact that they dedicated the translations to the higher authorities of their adopted religions. One such translator was Johannes von Capua. Capua was a Jew, who had been converted to Christianity. He dedicated the translation to the Cardinal Matthäus Rubens Ursinus (Hertel 396). He translated it between 1263 and 1278 from a Hebrew text into Latin. His translation was titled Directorium vitae humanae. Another such translator was Anton von Pforr, who was a member of the clergy. He was the Vicar of Jechtingen and had been commissioned by the Count Eberhard of Württemberg (Wegener 152) to translate Capua's Latin version of the *Panchatantra* into German. The translation of Johannes von Capua's text into German is called "The book of examples of old wisdom" (my translation of the German title - Das Buch der Beispiele alter Weisen) and it is dated 1480. It was this book that was used for the translations into Danish, Dutch and Icelandic (Hertel 398). The translation was also used as a relay for the more recent translation (published in 1926) of the work into German by Hans Wegener. Wegener mentions in the afterword that, he (Anto von Pforr) "satisfied himself by giving the interpretation a Christian touch' (my translation) (Wegener: 151).

In India the *Panchatantra* was extensively translated into all Indian languages. The spread of this work to the southern part of India has been attributed to the Marathi translations which used the Jain texts as original. So Marathi was the gateway

language for the translation in the south Indian languages and the Jain texts worked as relays (Hertel: 250).

An excellent example of a conscious and intentional rewriting of the *Panchatantra* is the Bhagvatisatish. This is a translation in the Marathi language, in fact, in a dialect of Marathi language spoken near Aurangabad. The translator was called Nirmala Pathak and belonged to the Bhagwat sect. The translation has used a couple of Jain texts as the original. Because the Jain texts were always written in a way that they advocated the tenets of the Jain religion. Nirmala Pathak had to intervene and modify the content so as to make it suitable to the tenets of the Bhagwat sect, of which he was a disciple. Not only was the content changed but also the form. Bhagvatisatish has been written in the Ovi meter, so that it gains more acceptances among the people (Hertel 262-267). When it came to content of the text, one finds that there were deletions, additions modifications as well as erasure of certain elements, the former being more on a superficial level of changing the names of places and the protagonists and the latter being of a serious nature. A few examples of the former are, changing the name of the city to *Mahitala* from *Mahilaropya*, doing away with the character of the King Amarsakti and naming the sons of the King Sisukti, Rudrasakti and Anekasakti instead of Vasusakti, Ugrasakti and Anantasakti. Changes of this nature are, what I would like to call, superficial in nature (Hertel 274-275).

Changes which were, in my opinion serious in nature, where the discourse of the original(s) was changed, will be discussed now. In my opinion, the Jain treatment of the *Panchatantra* was undertaken with a view to emphasize the Jain doctrine of *Karma*, so there were never references to God in the stories. This was changed by Nirmala Pathak in the *Bhagwatisatish*. The translator avoided all references where the power of the

"*Karma*" was highlighted and praised at the cost of the power of the Gods. Nirmala Pathak instead highlights the power of Gods and Brahmins. The story in *Bhagwatisatish* begins with the queen worrying about her sons who had received no learning and invoking "God" to help her (Hertel 274-275). In the story of the monkey and the crocodile the monkey thanks "God" in the end for saving his life (Hertel 278).

In the *Bhagwatisatish* the translator also sanitizes the text of Jain beliefs and appropriates the text so as to suit the tenets of the Bhagwat sect (Hertel 273). The Jain authors and translators were in the habit of highlighting the moral of the story, which was a *"karma moral*" at the end of the story. Since the translator Nirmala Pathak wanted to avoid mentioning the Jain moral of *"karma",* some stories in the *Bhawatisatish* end abruptly, for instance, story 4 of the weaver Somilaka in the second Book (Hertel 277f).

I will take one more example to prove my point and come to the end of this section. In book III, story IV, there is the story of the king Mukhya. He is very hungry at night and eats a baby snake. Then he falls ill. So he relinquishes the throne to his son and sets off to Benares. Moral, according to the Jain version, is that one should not eat after sunset otherwise there will be consequences. This, as we know, is one of the Jain principles. The Marathi translation does not mention the moral at the end of the story (Hertel: 278), hence, this story too ends very abruptly.

Conclusion

There is a groundswell of difference between the tradition of written Children's Literature and its translation in India and the West. In these concluding remarks I would like to briefly discuss the major differences and conclude this article by presenting some deliberations on the reasons for the universal

prevalence of the norm of rewriting in the genre of Children's Literature and its translation.

The first essential difference is that stories are narrated to children in India as against read to in the West. Though the children's literature in India dates back to even before the 5th century, in the written form, like the case of the *Panchatantra*, as against in the West which begins sometime in the 17th century, stories continue to be narrated at meals by a grandmother, or a cousin in India. Writing did not necessarily fix them (Ramanujan: 448) as it did in the West.

The children's literature in India grew out of the canonical texts like the *Mahabharata, the Ramayana, the Panchatantra*, the *Buddhist Jatakas* and the *Kathasaritasagara* among other books whereas in the West it was created and hastily put together because there was a 'gap" in the literary polysystem at the time (Even-Zohar). This "gap" was filled with books modelled on the lines of chapbooks, which already occupied a peripheral status in the adult literary polysystem, which was one of the reasons, why the children's literature in the West suffered a peripheral status (Shavit 2007: 38-40)[25]. There is no evidence of such marginality of children's literature in the Indian context.

If the content of what is Children's Literature in the West and India is compared, one finds many differences. The *Grimm's*

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[25] Shavit has done in-depth research on the status of children's literature in the West. She maintains that the children's literature in the West suffered an inferior status, one because it was developed from cheap chapbooks which already occupied a peripheral position in the literary polysystem, second because the newly developed notion of childhood drew not only literature but also the clothing and the language from the lower class. The highbrow society did not want to be identified with children's literature as it was considered to have an inferior status in the European literary polysystem.

Tales essentially preach the existing discourse of the time, they preach what was considered as right. This has been proven in the article by the fact that the stories were sanitized of sexual references. The stories do not, so much as, suggest an alternative to the prevailing discourse whereas the Indian tales often "question and comment on official notions and myths of the culture (…) show the underbelly of the official virtues" (Ramanujan: 469). Sexual content was not a taboo. The *Panchatantra* contains many sexual references (Book 1 story no.3, the story of the businessman Dantil and story no.4, the story of Ashadabhuti and Devsharman) and my investigation so far shows that there have not been any attempts to erase them in the translations in Indian and in non-Indian languages.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned differences the norm of rewriting, intentional or otherwise, is common to both the systems of children's literature. Is it possible to suggest the reasons for the universality of this norm? In this last section of the concluding observations I would like to deliberate on a few reasons for this phenomenon.

One of the reasons for the prevalence of this norm in the West is the unavailability of literature, written exclusively for children, when it was needed. To fill this vacuum in the literary polysystem the genre had to borrow heavily from existing adult literature which had ideological and religious focus and was written in a sophisticated style. A few examples of such in the West are *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). All these books were meant for adult consumption. *Gulliver's Travels* was a satire on human nature, *Robinson Crusoe* was a tale filled with religious connotations by Defoe and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was originally a tale which plays with logic. When these books came to be adapted for children

they had to be rewritten by doing away with satire, ideological undertones and sophisticated writing style.

The rewriting of Indian children's literature, as seen in the case of the *Panchatantra*, seems to have been done for religious reasons. The commissioning agents in the form of religious establishments and the religious convictions and leanings of the translators seemed to play a major role in the fact that the *Panchatantra* was rewritten.

I conclude this article with the words that rewriting is a universal phenomenon in the writing and translation of children's literature though the reasons may vary from culture to culture.

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INTERVIEW

An Interview with Mary Snell-Hornby

GEETHAKUMARY V.

Mary Snell-Hornby (hereafter **MSH**) is an eminent scholar of Translation Studies and a founding member of the European Society for Translation Studies (EST) and its first President. She has been a Professor of Translation Studies at the University of Vienna and an Honorary Professor of the University of Warwick (UK). She was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of the University of Tampere (Finland) for her contribution to the discipline of Translation Studies. Geethakumary V. (hereafter **VGK**), an assistant editor of *Translation Today*, interviews Mary Snell-Hornby.

VGK: You have been associated with the Rewriting-Culture School of Translation Studies which was launched in the 1980s. Looking back thirty years, how do you assess the impact of the School on Translation Studies?

MSH: In those days translation was seen simply either as part of Comparative Literature (literary translation) or as part of linguistics (an exercise based prescriptively on equivalence with items in the source language), and so there was no discipline of Translation Studies, let alone different schools. This changed in the early 1980s, when two different groups of scholars, quite independently of each other, developed theories concentrating, not on the source text, but on the reception and purpose of the translation in the target culture. One of these groups, on the initiative of Hans J. Vermeer, developed the "skopos theory"(from the Greek word *skopos*, meaning "aim" or "purpose"), which applied to all types of translation and interpreting as an independent field of study, and it included the training of future professionals. It views translation, not simply as linguistic recoding, but as a cultural transfer. This

was the group I was most closely associated with, and from today's viewpoint I can say that it helped lay the foundation for the discipline of Translation Studies we know today.

VGK: How far has the European Society for Translation Studies (EST) succeeded in fulfilling its objectives as laid down in its constitution?

MSH: The objectives of the European Society for Translation Studies (founded in September 1992) defined four main objectives in its constitution: (1) to foster research in translation and interpreting, (2) to promote further education for teachers of translation and interpreting, (3) to offer advice on the training of translators and interpreters and (4) to facilitate contacts between the profession and the academic training institutes. I think the first three objectives have been largely fulfilled: today EST has several hundred members from 46 countries, has a regular newsletter, organizes a major Congress every three years, along with numerous smaller conferences and workshops, it finances several awards, and it offers weekly information on the many events in the discipline taking place all over the world. The title "European" does not mean that membership and events are limited to Europe: In 1992, when scholarly institutions were largely local, regional or national, the epithet "European" signalized "supranational". The next major EST congress, by the way, will take place in 2019 in Stellenbosch, South Africa.

The fourth objective is more problematic: to this day the translation profession – and this includes interpreters, with the exception of conference interpreters – has still a low status in society, and training mainly goes unnoticed, if it takes place at all. This is however not only the fault of EST, but is also due to the translators themselves and their respective associations along with the training institutes, which have not succeeded in

promoting and gaining public recognition for the skill and expertise necessary for good professional translating and interpreting.

VGK: Along with Andre Lefevere, Susan Bassnett and others you were connected with the early practitioners of the Systems Approach to Translation Studies. This approach seems to have been launched by polysystemists like Itamar Evan Zohar in the late 70s of the last century and given more concrete foundations by translation scholars like Andre Lefevere in the mid-80s. Do you think it is still effective in Translation Studies? Are there ways in which it can be 'modified' or 'refined'?

MSH: Andre Lefevere was a prominent figure in the second group of scholars I mentioned above, which is what you describe as the "Rewriting-Culture school": this approach, at least here in Europe, is mainly known as Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) and is centred round literary translation That group of scholars supported the polysystem theory, which was indeed launched by Itamar Evan-Zohar; it was developed for Translation Studies by Gideon Toury, who remained a leading figure in the discipline up to his death in 2016. Susan Bassnett was also a prominent member of this circle, and of course I was closely associated with her when I was Honorary Professor in Warwick. This school of thought is indeed still influential in the discipline. Of course I could think of various points of modification and refinement – but after thirty years that would be extremely problematic and would go far beyond the scope of this interview.

VGK: In your first book *Translation Studies. An Integrated Approach*, apart from positioning Translation Studies as a discipline, you largely concentrated on the process, rather than the product of translation, sometimes with micro-level

illustrations. Although such in-depth linguistic/cultural analysis is highly valuable for practicing translators, as one finds in the works of Eugene Nida, Peter Newmark and others, it operates on the borderline between description and prescription! How significant is it in contemporary Translation Studies?

MSH: This book was written during the 1980s, when I worked in the English Department of the University of Zurich, and the "integrated approach" was intended to combine the then conflicting worlds of linguistics and literary studies. The book should be seen as a product of its time, although it still sells well (especially in Asian countries!). Hence the focus was on the process of translation (I was then teaching German-English translation to Swiss students of English) along with the micro-level illustrations, which were examples taken from my classes. You find a similar approach in the work of Nida (himself a translator) and Newmark (a teacher of translation). The idea of including a descriptive element was then a novelty, particularly in university language departments, which by nature had a prescriptive approach. I am actually rather skeptical about whether this book is still significant for contemporary Translation Studies and would rather people concentrated on the second book *The Turns of Translation Studies* (cf. my Preface to this, p. ix!).

VGK: Many theorists argue that the 'top-down approach' suggested by you for 'textual analysis' is more valid theoretically, but for those who are not trained linguists it can be difficult to follow. Please comment.

MSH: I have had no evidence that this analytical approach is difficult to follow. It provides another perspective of the translational task in hand. Instead of viewing a text as a sequence of lexical items, it takes the communicative function

and the broader sociocultural background as its starting point and sees the other items as dependent on this – which needs no training in linguistics.

VGK: In your later book *The Turns of Translation Studies* you briefly discussed the U-turn in Translation Studies which is marked by a return to Linguistics. How does this actually work out? Does it seriously undermine the work done by 'culturists' in the last three decades or more in the West?

MSH: Here again this discussion must be seen in the context of the time when it was written (2005, published 2006) and the period to which it refers (the first few years of this century). What is meant is the re-introduction of topics such as the age-old debate on the translation unit and linguistic equivalence (which was the central issue from the 1960s to the early 1980s), the focus on computer corpora (actually taken over from lexicography projects in the 1980s, particularly the COBUILD project in Birmingham) and the theme of "translation universals", a favourite concept of Transformational Generative Grammar, which famously dominated the 1960s. Of course it is legitimate to revive any traditionally popular issue and discuss it further, but in such cases I saw no progress made in the Translation Studies debate and agree with Hans Vermeer that it rather showed the pendulum swinging back to traditional views. But I don't think that it did anything to undermine the work done by the "culturists", which on the contrary moved on to create a much broader conception of the term "translation" (see 7 below).

VGK: Lawrence Venuti noted that only 4 percent of the total volume of translations in the world is basically literary in nature. Yet Translation Studies has been, and still is, largely literature-centric. This is despite the fact that aesthetics and ideology are equally at work in non-literary translations and

the key issues in Translation Studies are equally applicable to them. Although some work on audiovisual translation and translation in the media, especially on scientific and technical translation and translation of advertisements have tried to correct the imbalance, literary translation studies still dominate the discipline. Do you foresee a drastic change in the near future?

MSH: The observation is quite correct that literary translation only forms a small percentage of the total volume of translations in the world. However, only one branch of Translation Studies is concerned with literary texts, and that is because of its century-old historical tradition – and the unbroken dominance of Literary Studies in academe. However, there is meanwhile a vast amount of work done in many other areas such as legal translation, translation for international organizations, translation technology and terminology, machine-aided translation etc. etc., not to mention Interpreting Studies, which you do not include in your questions. And I would not agree (and neither, I think, would the translators involved!) that aesthetics is very prominent in much of this material – in how far ideology is involved depends on the text and the translation concerned. Audiovisual translation has branched out on its own to form an exciting new field with its own plethora of specialized literature, but here again it depends on the material concerned whether one would recognize any literary value (this may be the case in various film-scripts for dubbing). Subtitlers of my acquaintance – and those who write academic papers in the field – rather analyze the technical and cultural difficulties involved, and most of the language of TV soaps etc. is of nil literary significance. Advertising (and with it work on localization) is another interesting field in itself – again with plenty of specialized literature. In my Institute, which was founded for the training of non-literary translators,

literary translation was for many years barely existent: now that the Institute has developed into a Centre for Translation (and Interpreting) Studies, literary translation forms a part, but by no means a dominant one, of the teaching programme and research. So such a dominance depends on whether scholars are working in literary studies (including translation), which seems to be the basis of your interview questions, or "T&I" (Translation and Interpreting Studies) as an essentially interdisciplinary field of studies. And here a wide gap still exists.

VGK: Many translation scholars of your generation, especially those who blazed into prominence during the 1980s, the heyday of the "Rewriting-Culture" school of Translation Studies, have contributed significantly to Adaptation Studies, the discipline that branched off from Translation Studies during the first decade of the new millennium. John Milton's essay "Translation Studies and Adaptation Studies" published in 2006 seems to have formally launched the discipline. The emergence of Adaptation Studies represents a greater paradigm shift than the emergence of the "Rewriting-Culture" school of Translation Studies. It appears to have provoked a new look at issues like originality, equivalence and intertextuality. By positioning translation as only one among the many forms of adaptation (taking off from Lefevere's positioning of translation as one among the many forms of rewriting) and by erasing the dividing line between writing and rewriting it seems to have accomplished a unification of cultural productions, much like the still elusive unification of forces in Physics. What is your take on the future of Adaptation Studies?

MSH: As you point out, what has been developed as Adaptation Studies branched off from Translation Studies in the early years of this century – but in fact it only takes up

much of what had long since been accepted as part of Translation Studies. In the 1980s the skopos theorists Hans Vermeer and Katharina Reiss identified five broad translation types: interlinear translation, grammar translation, documentary (or "scholarly") translation, communicative (or "instrumental") translation and adapting (or "modifying") translation, as with multimedial (or audiovisual) translation (as essentially interdisciplinary areas) or when news reports are used by press agencies (see *The Turns of Translation Studies*, p. 53). This broadens the entire concept of translation to include areas such as stage and opera translations, and film versions of literary works. In this definition adaptation is rather part of translation than the other way round, and the issues of originality, equivalence and intertextuality were debated in Translation Studies long before 2006. It depends of course on the definition of translation, which in the English-speaking debate has been notoriously narrow, and it is significant that much of the work in Adaptation Studies seems to be involved with British and American material, whereas the five translation types quoted above go back to European theorists. Meanwhile however, the broader definition of translation has been widely accepted (see the *History of Modern Translation Knowledge,* ed. Yves Gambier and Lieven D'hulst, planned to appear later this year). The future of Adaptation Studies will of course depend on the scholars in the field, but at present I tend to see it limited to literary work (as with film adaptations of novels). Translation Studies as we see it today covers an infinitely broader field, including special language and machine-aided translation, but especially Interpreting Studies, which in recent years has really branched off as a separate field to include hitherto neglected areas such as dialogue interpreting, courtroom interpreting and other areas of public service communication.

VGK: How will you respond to the view that translation is a political activity where politics operates at the level of selection of a text for translation, the process of translation, with the nature of existence of a translated text and its reception among others?

MSH: I fully agree, and of course this approach is not new either. However, this is another completely different (and sensitive) field from the rest of the discussions above, even where "only" literary translation is involved, but far more so in most other areas of the discipline, and it would go far beyond the scope of this interview to discuss the problems and give the issues involved the attention they deserve.

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TRANSLATION

The Shells

Seepyan*

Translated by Hari Priya Pathak

I was trailing my shadow. I knew that the sunlight sporting with the sea waves will keep following me. It will never come before me. The sea was afar. My feet began to sink into the sand when I went forward with the dream to catch the smile of the sun beams floating on the sea surface.

I collected small shells scattered on the sand before returning, and kept deceiving the disappointment of my failure to catch the sun light floating on the sea waves by considering those broken shells my achievement.

I would run towards the sea whenever I had a desire to catch the sun light. I would collect the shells to make up for the failure of catching the glistening sea waves. Consequently, my house was heaped with various kinds of shells-small and big, broken and whole, striped and plain with beautiful colors.

What could I do with them? I could not think of anything. Shells were all around. There wasn't even sitting and sleeping space left for me. The guests were to arrive. I had to clean the house, but I could not throw out the shells which I had amassed with great enthusiasm. I was attached with each of the shells. Each one of them had an anecdote linked to it. Each broken shell would tell the story of its own living form sticking to which and listening to the music of the waves it had attained its youth, and one day was separated from that living being and thrown to the sea shore by the sea waves. It was because of these shells that I never felt lonely at my house. Whenever I would be alone, my eyes would fix on to one of those shells, which then would start narrating its own tale. I just could not

do away with them, and that is why my house remained unkempt.

"What's all this?" They asked as soon as they reached

"This is my earning; earning of my life." I said

"This? This is your earning? You always used to go on the trip to sea side places. Was this the only thing there? We used to think that you would have decorated your house with several pearls by this time."

Wouldn't they be found only by diving deep into the sea? I had visited only the sea shores.

"But what to do of this apparently useless heap?"

"You can make beautiful things out of it and can decorate the house. You can put them together and gift them to the people."

"How? It's already evening. The time is coming to a close. How would it all be possible so soon?"

"There's a lot of time between evening and night, begin with it. Put together all the shells making each moment the thread."

They went outside saying this. My house had heaps of broken shells. I threaded them all through the evening. My hands were bruised, eyes swelled up, but I kept threading, decorating them. Earlier it was my feet which tired, now my hands were exhausted, my eyes weary. People moving in and out would continuously evaluate me and criticize me from their own points of view. They all wanted me to make beautiful garlands and *'torans'* for them, but what was actually beautiful couldn't be made out. Some considered long garlands to be beautiful, others short ones. Some would say, "It doesn't have a proper shape." Others would comment, "The color combination is not good." Some wanted some other things than garlands. Some asked for *toran* and others *bandanwaar.* Some wanted to

entrap the newspaper in the net made up of the shells, while others wanted to have made a case for keeping the letters safely; still others wanted to see the shells in the form of a bouquet. I had only two hands. They had hundreds of tongues, thousands of eyes and millions of expectations. How and for how long could I satisfy all of them?

I didn't have a single pearl at my house.

I had all the garbage of the shells at my house.

I received the gifts of criticism.

I adorned the walls of my house with them; made carpets out of the shells and spread them on the floor.

The whole house was decorated, and then the night broke out. I jumped into the river of darkness.

The carpet had become the waves of the sea. It was echoing the sea…

I was going into the water, down and down….deep and deeper……..

Note

Toran and *Bandhanwaar* are garlands made up of flowers, real or artificial, or shells or any other thing to embellish gates, doors, main pathways or walls in a house.

* The above translation of the short story "**Seepyan**" written in Hindi by Diwa Bhatt has been originally published in **Aakar-15,** Jan-Feb-Mar, 2004, Ahmedabad (Gujrat)

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