Volume 3. Numbers 1 & 2. 2006

TRANSLATION TODAY

Editors:
Udaya Narayana Singh
P.P. Giridhar

Guest Editors:
E.V. Ramakrishnan
Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta

Editorial Policy

'Translation Today' is a biannual journal published by Central Institute of Indian Languages, Manasagangotri, Mysore. It is jointly brought out by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, National Book Trust, India, New Delhi, and Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore. A peer-reviewed journal, it proposes to contribute to and enrich the burgeoning discipline of Translation Studies by publishing research articles as well as actual translations from and into Indian languages. Translation Today will feature full-length articles about translation- and translator-related issues, squibs which throw up a problem or an analytical puzzle without necessarily providing a solution, review articles and reviews of translations and of books on translation, actual translations, Letters to the Editor, and an Index of Translators, Contributors and Authors. It could in the future add new sections like Translators' job market, Translation software market, and so on. The problems and puzzles arising out of translation in general, and translation from and into Indian languages in particular will receive greater attention here. However, the journal would not limit itself to dealing with issues involving Indian languages alone.

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- seeks excellence in the translated word.
- seeks to further the frontiers of Translation Studies.
- seeks to raise a strong awareness about translation, its possibilities and potentialities, its undoubted place in the history of ideas, and thus help catalyse a groundswell of well-founded ideas about translation among people.

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P. P. Giridhar Ph D
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Udaya Narayana Singh
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Volume 3, Numbers 1 & 2, 2006

Central Institute of Indian Languages
Publication No. 577

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Translation Today

VOLUME 3, NOS. 1 & 2, 2006
Editors: Udaya Narayana Singh & P.P. Giridhar

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Prof. Udaya Narayana Singh
Director,
Central Institute of Indian Languages,
Manasagangotri, Mysore – 570 006, INDIA.

Phone: 0091/ 0821–2515820 (Director)
Pabx: 0091/ 0821–2515558
Telex: 0846-268 CIIL IN
Grams: BHARATI
E-mail: udaya@ciil.stpmy.soft.net (Director)
bhasha@sancharnet.in
Fax: 0091/0821-2515032
Website: http://www.ciil.org
www.anukriti.net

To contact
Head, Publications
biswas@ciil.stpmy.soft.net

ISSN-0972-8740
Subscription: Rs. 100.00; US $ 20. 00 including postage (air-mail)

Published by Prof. Udaya Narayana Singh, Director,
Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore.
Printed by Mr. S.B. Biswas, Manager,
CIIL Printing Press, Manasagangotri, Mysore-570 006, India.
Cover Design: H. Manohar.

In This Issue

Guest Editorial

Mapping Indian Traditions in Translation: Concepts, Categories and Contestations
E.V. Ramakrishnan i

Articles

Translation and Indian Literature: Some Reflections
M. Asaduddin 1

Translating Medieval Orissa
Debendra K. Dash, Dipti R. Pattanaik 20

Translation Practices in Pre-colonial India: Interrogating Stereotypes
V.B. Tharakeshwar 83

Processes and Models of Translation: Cases from Medieval Kannada Literature
T.S. Satyanath 111

Disputing Borders on the Literary Terrain: Translations and the Making of the Genre of 'Partition Literature'
H.Nikhila 128

Translation and the Indian Tradition:Some Illustrations, Some Insights
Priyadarshi Patnaik 146

Texts on Translation and Translational Norms in Bengal
Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta 162

Towards a Theory of Rewriting: Drawing from the Indian Practice
K.M. Sheriff 176

Revisiting the Canon Through the Ghazal in English
Chandrani Chatterjee, Milind Malshe 183

Translation in/and Hindi Literature
Avadhesh Kumar Singh 206

Translating Gujarati Fiction and Poetry: A Study with Reference to Sundaram's Works
Hemang Desai 228

Translation of Bhakti Poetry into English: A Case Study of Narsinh Mehta
Sachin Ketkar 248

Translating Romantic Sensibility: Narsinhrao Divetiya's Poetry
Rakesh Desai 270

BOOK REVIEWS

Locating the 'missing link'? Not Quite Translation and Identity (by Michael Cronin)
Ashokan Nambiar C. 282

Theories on the Move: Translation's Role in the Travels of Literary Theories (by Sebnem susam-Sarajeva)
Hariharan 286

TRANSLATION REVIEW

A TRANSLATION OR MIS-TRANSLATION? Review of Rimli Bhattacharya's translation of My Story and My Life as an Actress, autobiographies of Binodini
Debjani Ray Moulik 291

CONTRIBUTORS 296

Guest Editorial

Mapping Indian Traditions in Translation: Concepts, Categories and Contestations

E.V. Ramakrishnan
(With inputs by Subha C. Dasgupta)

In the Indian context, Translation Studies as a discipline or as a discipline at the interface of disciplines is yet to be conceptualized with reference to our literary history. The political boundaries of linguistic states in India do not coincide with their cultural boundaries due to the complex history of social and cultural formations in India. This has meant that the translational discourses of the Indian subcontinent have been rendered unintelligible in our institutional climate of debates and dialogues. The hegemonic role that English has played has further complicated the relationships between Indian languages, effectively sealing off a domain of interactive, subliminal relationships and creative dialogues that made large scale dissemination of myths, metaphors and discourses possible earlier. Indian literary history is a maze of meandering texts which reincarnate themselves in several versions and forms of retellings. Western theorizations and models of translation are inadequate to grasp or explain their manners of enunciation, circulation and reception. As we move backward in time, Indian literary history gets entangled in the history of translations which become part of a network of religious and political transactions. Translations, thus, are deeply implicated in the history of social and political formations as well as in narratives of identity. During the colonial period translation becomes the site where the politics of domination and subversion, assertion and resistance gets played out. We need a new paradigm of Translation Studies, a new way of

looking at translation as an act to understand this complex network of textual and cultural relationships.

The seminar on ‘Indian Translation Traditions’ sponsored by the Central Institute of Indian Languages headquartered at Mysore, and hosted by and held at the Department of English, Veer Narmad South Gujarat University, Surat during 10-11, March, 2006 was an attempt to explore some of the problems mentioned above related to literary translation in India from both empirical and conceptual perspectives. As the papers collected here will testify, comparative studies of pre-colonial Indian traditions may help us evolve alternative paradigms to account for what is culture-specific about the practice of translation in India. Avadhesh K. Singh observes in his paper that since we have always been multi-lingual, we have also been ‘natural un/conscious translators’. There was an easy passage from one language to the other as cultural boundaries were ‘fuzzy’. Notions of faithfulness as such were non-issues, but there were other kinds of tacit understandings within which transfers and retellings took place. For instance, as in oral narrative contexts, the core or 'the story as it was generally known' had to be preserved. It is less important to document changes in the target texts rather than to do so in the context of language usage and then also to map out the function of the translated texts in moulding tastes and shaping values both in elite and popular spheres. There are older texts in Indian languages talking about the role of such translations and it is important to bring them together or to talk about such retellings.

In his paper on Indian translation which was originally given as a key-note address to the seminar, Asaduddin identifies some of the major moments of translation in Indian history. During the time of King Akbar who had set up a *maktabkhana* (translation bureau), we find a major initiative to get the classics of Sanskrit translated into Persian and Arabic. Prince Dara Shikoh (1615-1659) translated fifty Upanishads into Persian in his *Sirri Akbar* (The Great Secret)

which later went into French and English. It is significant that the translations done during the Indo-Muslim encounter were part of a dialogue between civilizations. Quoting Sisir Kumar Das Asaduddin comments that the Persian influence that was widespread in the 18th century Indian literature didn't leave any lasting mark. But it can be safely argued that forms like the *ghazal*, which has become integrated into the literary culture of India, are imprints of this encounter. The narrative tradition of prose romances such as *Qissa Gul Bakawali* and *Qissa Chahar Darvesh* informs the digressive and polyphonic narratives of some of the major modern novels in Urdu, Hindi and other Indian languages. Thus, translation makes available to us a repertoire of styles and modes which become part of a literary tradition. In the context of pre-colonial India this question becomes complex as translational practices are implicated in the competing ideologies of social and religious structures of power. This is convincingly illustrated by the papers dealing with Oriya and Kannada.

Dipti Ranjan Pattanaik and Debendra K. Dash trace the competing ideologies inherent in the practice of translation in medieval Orissa. Even within Orissa different geographical areas evidence different translational practices, depending on the nature of power relations they negotiate. The western part of Orissa with a considerable tribal population did not produce many translations while the southern part with its Muslim patrons had much literary activity. The authors demonstrate how translation was a means of affirming or resisting identities. The translation of a single text by three different authors such as Sarala Das, Balaram Das and Achyuthananda Das suggests that their own cult affiliations and ideological beliefs dictate their approach to the original texts as well as translational strategies. In Balaram Das's translation, for instance, his loyalty to the Vaishnava cult of Jagannath makes him view Rama as the seventh incarnation of Jagannath. Jaina *Ramayana*s retell the same narrative differently and from their point of view. Jagannath Das, the first Brahmin among the early translators in the Oriya

language, asserts his Brahmin identity in his translation by taking an essentialist view of life and the world. The twenty Oriya translations of Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* illustrate how the same text could be metaphysical and philosophical or sensuous and erotic or spiritual and devotional, depending on the translational strategies adopted. Priyadarshi Patnaik closely analyses a passage from *Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana* and its translation into Oriya by Jagannath Das. The original Sanskrit uses a rigid metrical pattern which gives the verse an aphoristic compression whereas the Oriya translation's free-flowing style is more suited to everyday recitation. There is a marked difference in the treatment of metaphors which occur both in the source and target languages.

The theoretical issues raised by the two papers mentioned above find an echo in the issues taken up by Satyanath and Tharakeswar for detailed investigation. Tharakeswar disputes the widely held assumption that translations empowered the regional languages of India and they enabled them to negotiate the hegemony of Sanskrit. He discusses the roles played by religion and state-formation in defining translational practices. He is of the opinion that the Bhakti movement in Kannada was not a product of translations but rather the movement gave rise to translations from Kannada into Telugu and Sanskrit. The nature of transactions between Indian languages and Sanskrit cannot always be described in terms of hierarchy and hegemony as the case of Kannada suggests. This idea is further reinforced by the *Vrathakatha* model suggested by Satyanath in his paper for the study of medieval Indian translations. He argues that categories such as gender, caste, religion, sect and language not only interconnect each other in the medieval context but at the same time insulate and protect the rights of communities over their knowledge and information systems. We need a different concept of literacy to understand the manner of circulation of texts in such a society. His illustrations of the religious and ritualistic contexts of these texts show how performative

traditions co-exist with scripto-centric (written) and phono-centric (oral) traditions. The question of orality complicates the very nature of the text since its boundaries remain fluid in ritualistic, performative traditions. Even as each group carefully preserved their control over their texts, a common epistemology made communication possible between different groups. The transfer of the oral to the written, in the context of bhakti, where divinity is mirrored through the subjectivity of the *bhakta* poet cannot be grasped through questions of equivalence or translation shifts alone. To read a bhakta poet, as Dilip Chitre puts it in his preface to *Says Tuka*, is to understand the "ritual choreography as a whole", the poet as he thinks of God, as he pictures him in "various worldly and other-worldly situations", pines for him and is finally, "possessed by Him". He acts, "through language like God." In his essay on the translation of Bhakti poetry with reference to Narsinh Mehta, Sachin Ketkar says that what comes alive mysteriously in a performance becomes inert when translated into written words. The oral text assumes a face-to-face audience and modulates the syntax to suit the performative requirements of such a situation. The written word uses a different discourse altogether since the addressivity of the language is shaped by the historical needs of a community. In the context of translating Indian Bhakti poetry into English more studies are needed to trace how languages shaped communities, their life and worlds through a shared vocabulary of experiences that fluently moved between multiple worlds. The secular and the cosmopolitan were not alien to this world of radical questionings.

In the pre-colonial Indian literary culture, translation signifies a creative appropriation of texts as part of socio-political negotiations, cultural assimilation and subversions. The translations celebrate the plurality of meanings inherent in the original and test the expressivity of the target language by stretching the metaphorical resources of the language to the limit. We need to evolve new perspectives and paradigms to describe these complex cultural and linguistic processes. The papers mentioned above raise some crucial

questions about the matrix of ritualistic performance embodied in the aural/oral traditions that lie beyond the discourse of contemporary theory. There are pointers to a new poetic of translation in the close readings of translations offered in some of these papers based on an intersemiotic view of literature. Translation is recognized on par with creation itself in this culture where meanings reincarnate and reinvent themselves in various variant forms. This is why *Vishnudharmottarpurana* suggests that it is not possible for any of the artistic expressions to exist in isolation – a knowledge of dance has to incorporate a knowledge of music, music that of painting, painting that of architecture and so on. A theory of translation based on scripto-centric transmission of metaphors and meanings is obviously found wanting in the face of such complex cultural transmissions.

The division of Indian literary traditions into pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial is convenient but it distorts the continuities that one comes across in the domain of culture. Many of the papers collected here follow this division as one of the givens in our situation. However, such a division seems to situate colonial experience as a primary point of reference. Poetry in Indian languages, despite modernism and its liberating influence on the formal patterns of articulation retains generic features derived from the remote past. In fact, the moment of modernism has been marked by recoveries of discourses from the past. A poet like Mardhekar uses the resources of medieval Marathi Bhakti poetry. This embeddedness of the past in the present renders linear divisions such as the pre-colonial and colonial largely irrelevant to the actual practice of translation. It is true that by the end of the 19th century, English intrudes into the consciousness of the subcontinent and gradually makes it mandatory for Indian languages to reconcile themselves to its hegemonic status which comes to be reinforced through administrative and political measures. Both Asaduddin and Avadhesh K. Singh have indicated the trajectory of translations

during this time. Asaduddin suggests that the centre of gravity shifts from a Persian-centred literary culture towards an English-centred world view during the later half of the 19th century. Perhaps this shift needs to be investigated thoroughly.

With colonialism we enter a phase where translation itself needs to be conceptualized differently. Both Orientalists and Anglicists wanted to translate India into their respective 'languages' to reinvent it after their own models. Colonialism was a colossal project of translation where human beings and not texts became the object of translation. Asaduddin rightly says that the project of colonial modernity was made possible by translation. He comments: "Soon there emerged a section of writers and intellectuals who can truly be said to be 'translated men' in the most comprehensive sense." And like all translated beings we become asymmetrical entities haunted by the incommensurate nature of the inadequate equivalences we have to live by. The problem with post-colonial approaches to translation is that they fail to explore the process and project of subjectification inherent in 'colonial' translation.

In a nuanced argument, Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta points out how translation of poetry in the context of modernity complements one's sense of being in the world. For Sudhindranath Dutta translation is self-expression where the original poem is the experience you create. For Budhadeva Bose the process of translation involves a merger with the original. Bishnu Dey locates the significance of translation in a moment of correspondence between the text and the socio-political context of its translation. This goes beyond Benjamin's perception of translation as a realization of some significance inherent in the original. The question these three poets confront in varying degrees is how far we are 'translatable'. Buddhadev Bose's idea of 'atmasuddhi' can be read against the grain to locate the site of translation within the self. This becomes even more apparent in Sudhindranath Dutta's idea of translator as 'Eklavya'. The solitary learner of archery has a

distraught relation with his own absent ideal he is conforming himself to.(Ekalavya, to recollect, was the boy in Mahabharata who, being denied being Dronacharya's student in archery goes on to learn archery on his own, keeping a portrait of Dronacharya and worshipping him as his absent teacher.) Translation becomes a mode of approximating oneself to and confronting an absence. It is during this colonial phase that 'translatability' becomes a major issue in translation in Indian literary culture. Why did this never haunt the translators of the period we describe as 'pre-colonial'? The predictable answer would be that with English the question of cultural difference becomes a gulf that cannot be transcended through our linguistic resources. But after reading scores of articles which deal with the 'problems' of translating 'Indian literature' into 'English' I feel that there is a deeper anxiety at work here. The articles by Sachin Ketkar, Rakesh Desai and Hemang Desai help us understand this anxiety. Ketkar demonstrates how Western theory cannot be of much use in negotiating the gulf between the ritualistic and the secular. Rakesh Desai comments on the translation strategies used by Narasinhrao Divetiya to create the discourse of Romantic poetry in Gujarati. To write about 'nature' in a particular way you need to formulate a new lexicon of experience as well as a new experience. In most of the Indian languages there are similar efforts to internalize the discourse of Western Romanticism by constructing a new self. Hemang Desai illustrates the nature of the gulf one has to traverse in the act of translating modern fiction and poetry from Gujarati into English. From clothes to kinship relations, from architecture to metaphysics the apparent asymmetry between experiential and imaginary worlds inform and haunt the inner recesses of translated works.

Here it may be argued that that there is a shift in the very nature of 'translational authority' while dealing with English either as a source language or a target language. The tradition of retellings and free adaptations in Indian traditions was never haunted by the

anxiety of authenticity. This was perhaps because they could be sure that the text would not translate them. In the precolonial period the ritualistic context allows translations to realize the possibilities of subtexts in the target language. Translating any text is finally a matter of locating its subtexts and it is here that English poses some of the basic problems. And English poses problems here largely because of its historical location.

There is a dialectical relation between English as the language that translates us and English as a language that we translate in. As the story of Tagore's self-translations would suggest, English regulates the subjectivity of the text to suit the requirements of Englishness as a colonial site. When Tagore realizes that he has not been translating his poems into English but has been translated by English into what he never was, he disowns his translations. I think this is a moment of post-coloniality in the Indian translation tradition. In other words, the 'colonial phase' was a period when English translated us into its epistemology. The translation of *Shakuntalam* uses the conventions of Romantic comedy and in the process produces a colonial text that corresponds to their world-view.

Nikhila's paper suggests that strategies of translation employed in creating genres like 'partition literature' which is deeply implicated in the narrative of nationhood and collective identities, misread and misrepresent the texts for appropriating them into categories that are arbitrary and misleading. The post-colonial moment, in this sense, is a moment of contesting Englishness through textual practices which would include translational (and sub-national) ones.

Ideally, post-colonial translation should involve a project of decolonization where subtexts will remain strongly Indian. What was described as pre-colonial translation was in this sense post-colonial. Perhaps Indian traditions in translation will always have to contend with the problem of colonialism in its various forms. The

post-colonial phase promises to open up a different way of evaluating translations of the last two hundred years. As has been shown for Marathi (Kimbahune, unpublished), Shakespearean plays which were successful on the stage were unfaithful to the text while those which remained loyal to the conceptual apparatus of the original were not stageworthy. There were about 70 adaptations/translations of Shakespeare into Marathi between 1850 and 1920. Just as *Rubaiyyat* of Omar Khayyam was translated into most of the Indian languages in the first half of the 20th century, Shakespeare was appropriated in various forms in the second half of the 19th century in most of the Indian languages. A new literary history of Indian languages based on translational practices remains to be written. The paradigm of rewriting is particularly relevant when we discuss the adaptations of canonical texts like Shakespeare and Omar Khayyam in Indian languages. In his paper K.M. Sherrif suggests that Translation Studies could come closer to Culture Studies if they can profitably study 'the vast unchartered terrain of cultural rewriting' under whose rubric he includes a large variety of popular cultural forms such as film remakes, Harikatha and Kathaprasangam, a uniquely Kerala art form where a literary work is retold before a large audience with an emphasis on the sentimental and the sensational, to the accompaniment of music.

One of the effects of the 'colonial' phase of translation has been its disruption of the relationships between Indian languages. Asaduddin points out that in the last few decades most of the translations have been from Indian languages into English. The creative use of translation to negotiate the power structures of a living community is one of the salient features of the Indian translation tradition. In a forthcoming article on the making of literary culture in Malayalam between 15th century and 18th century, I have argued that it was through translations that Malayalam defined its specific identity distancing itself from Sanskrit and Tamil traditions. As articles on Oriya, Kannada, Hindi and Gujarati would

testify, translation has meant the creative assimilation of the other in the Indian context. In the first half of the twentieth century some of the languages such as Bengali and Marathi became languages of power largely due to the presence of major writers in them. In the second half of the twentieth century it is pan-Indian movements like Modernism, Dalit literature and feminist writing that have reclaimed the dialogue between Indian languages. This has also revived the relevance of the precolonial discourse of Bhakti. In the context of Dalit and feminist movements translation becomes a subversive act of resistance as well as a creative act of affirmation. Here it must be added that our celebration of Bhakti poetry very often does not take into account questions of caste, cult, dialect, literacy, ritual and several similar problems that are relevant to pre-colonial society. Scholars like Vivek Dhareswar have argued that the use of post-colonial categories tend to misrepresent the whole experience of Bhakti poetry. The task of understanding some of these pre-colonial categories will require scholarship of a kind that is no more available within our academy. It is however necessary for Indian languages to recover the dialogic relationships between them. This is where theoretical discussions can prove productive.

The paper by Chandrani Chatterjee and Milind Malshe points to the possibilities of translation in an open world where translation becomes enabling and empowering. Two well-known American poets, Adrienne Rich and Phyllis Web find the ghazal form striking because it allows them to overcome the monologic elements of the Western lyric tradition. A genre is a way of validating a text. These poets use ghazal to challenge the conventions and authority of patriarchal American society. The translational process confronts the politics of the genre and also realizes the potential of the form in a different historical context. What is carried across in this cultural transaction is the intimate tonality inherent in the ghazal, a sort of 'person presence' that makes the form itself ideologically loaded. Translation has to be sensitive to this subliminal world of voices which are very often suppressed

when English is used as a target or source language. The example of ghazal suggests that translations from Indian literature have to be informed by an understanding of Indian literary traditions as well. It also illustrates that translation becomes productive when it involves a creative assimilation of the other. Perhaps this is the most outstanding feature of Indian translation traditions. Its revisionist potential is relevant to a world of asymmetrical power relations where culture will have to contest and negotiate inequality in one form or the other.

In conclusion, we hope that the issues raised in these papers will be taken up for further discussion and debate, and will be dealt with more substantially with reference to some of the literary traditions of India which are equally vital but could not be studied here due to unavoidable reasons. A separate volume of essays dealing with the medieval Indian translation scene seems to be a viable project, considering the complex nature of the field.

It is also time we recognized the 'anxiety of translation' in the context of English as a manifestation of its 'authority' that has deep roots in colonial cultural history. Translations of Shakespeare finally led to the emergence of the Indian proscenium theatre. The reception of Shakespeare in Indian languages is part of an Indian literary history that is yet to be written. The way he has been translated and received in sociocultural ethoses is a significant comment on the receiving sociocultural ethoses. We need both diachronic and synchronic studies across several Indian languages to map the uncharted expanse of Indian translation traditions.

Translation and Indian Literature: Some Reflections

M. Asaduddin

Abstract

The paper attempts to lay out the role of translation on interhuman space at various times and places in the world in general and in the Indian situation in particular. Renaissances in various parts of the world were a function of translation into those languages. Translation has an undoubted place in the history of ideas and the history of translation is the history of human civilization and (mis) understanding.The paper goes on to talk about the Indian situation in particular, both endotropic (=one Indian language into another) and exotropic(= Indian language into English).It elucidates the originary moments of translation in Indian history and concludes that translation, the impressionable interface that it is of cultural traffic, is a great tool of intercultural synergy.

The history of translation is the history of human civilization and understanding, and sometimes of misunderstanding. Stories travel from culture to culture, and their transmission through translation takes innumerable forms. The classic case is said to be that of our own *Panchatantra*. In an evocative essay, Amitav Ghosh (1994) has the following to say about *Panchatantra*:

> "These stories too have no settings to speak of, except the notion of a forest. Yet the Panchatantra is reckoned by some to be second only to the Bible in the extent of its global diffusion. Compiled in India early in the first millennium, it passed into Arabic through a sixth century Persian translation, engendering some of the best known

> of middle eastern fables, including parts of the Thousand and One Nights. The stories were handed on to the Slavic languages through Greek, then from Hebrew to Latin, a version in the latter appearing in 1270. Through Latin they passed into German and Italian. …[T]hese stories left their mark on collections as different as those of La Fontaine and the Grimm brothers, and today they are inseparably part of a global heritage.” [1]

Moments of significant change in the history and civilization of any people can be seen to be characterised by increased activity in the field of translation. The European Renaissance was made possible through the massive translation by Arab Muslims from the work of the Hellenic tradition. In the case of India, though there is no consensus about the originary moment of Indian Renaissance – whether there was an Indian Renaissance at all in the European sense, and if there was one, whether it happened simultaneously in different languages and literatures of India or at different times, there is no disagreement about the fact that there was a kind of general awakening throughout India in the nineteenth century and that was made possible through extensive translation of European and mainly English works in different languages, not only of literature but also of social sciences, philosophy, ethics and morality etc. Translation has a special meaning for the people of north-east India because in some literatures of the north east, the originary moment of literature is the moment of translation too. For example, in the case of Mizo it did not have a script before the European missionaries devised a script to translate evangelical literature into Mizo. Raymond Schwab (1984) in his book, *The Oriental Renaissance*, has shown how a new kind of awareness took place and curiosity about the Orient aroused in the West through the translation of Persian texts from Sadi, Rumi, Omar Khayyam and others on the one hand, and Vedic and Sanskrit texts from India on the other.

In the Indian tradition we have an exalted notion of translators. We do not designate Tulsidas, Krittivas, Pampa or Kamban as 'translators' of our great epics but as great poets per se. However, in India, if we leave out the re-telling of the stories of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* in regional languages, the first significant translations, to my knowledge, took place at the time of Emperor Akbar. In his efforts to promote understanding among religions and promote interfaith dialogue, Akbar sponsored debates among scholars of different religions and encouraged the translation of Sanskrit, Turkish and Arabic texts into Persian by setting up a *Maktabkhana* or translation bureau. Persian translation of Sanskrit texts included *Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagvad-gita, Bhagavat Purana, Atharva Veda, Yoga Vashisht* etc. The translations carried out in this phase can be characterised as a dialogue of civilizations. Prince Dara Shikoh (1615-1659), a profoundly learned scholar himself, not only promoted this trend but made it his life-long mission. His interest in comparative understanding of Hinduism and Islam prompted him to take assistance from the Pandits of Banaras with the translation of fifty *Upanishads* into fluent Persian. It was completed in 1657 and given the title *Sirri-Akbar* or *Sirri Asrar* (The Great Secret). This text was translated into English by Nathaniel Halhead (1751-1830) in the colonial period, and into French and Latin by Anqetil Duperron, the famous translator and scholar of *Zend Avesta*. In the preface to the *Sirri-Akbar* Dara Shikoh explains how, for some time, he was upset by assertions of radical differences between Islam and the religious practices of the Hindus. He began looking for a common truth between Muslims and Hindus. As Muslims have a revealed Book which determines their world view, he was looking for the divine word in the Hindu religion and thus the translation of the *Upanishads* came to his mind. As is evident, the primary pivot of Dara Shikoh's translation project was synthesis – spiritual, intellectual, social -- which would give us some clue about the choice of text(s) and the strategies employed in the translation. His own book, *Majmua Al-bahrain*, written in 1654-55,

seems to work out in considerable detail the terms of this synthesis, painstakingly exploring equivalences and terminology between the Sufi philosophical system of the Unity of Being (*Wahdatul wajood*) and the *Vedanta* (The Asiatic Society of Kolkata took the initiative to have it translated into English by Mahfuzul Haq in 1929). Dara Shikoh's project required that he must ignore asymmetry and cultural specificity, but there were others who were only too aware of the pitfalls of such projects. An interesting example is provided by Mulla Badayuni who was ordained by Akbar to translate the *Ramayana* into Persian. The mulla, a staunch believer, hated the command of the emperor, but had to carry it out, a task which a contemporary scholar has described as a kind of spiritual punishment to him. Not only was it repugnant to his religious beliefs, he found the task of transposing a polytheistic worldview on a fiercely monotheistic one particularly daunting. The concept of divinity being shared by a host of gods and goddesses is not only unfamiliar in the Islamic worldview, but is a cardinal sin. There were fierce debates among scholars of translation as to whether it was appropriate to translate Allah into Ishwar or Bhagwan, rasool into avtar or yugpurush, Ram into Raheem, and so on, because in these cases one was not simply translating Arabic into Sanskrit or vice versa but also making statements of equivalence between concepts whose semantic universe was widely divergent and the cultural difference that gave rise to such concepts almost unbridgeable. Faced with the royal command Mulla Badayuni did translate the sacred book all the while hating himself for doing the job. It will make a subject of interesting research as to how he negotiated this dichotomy between his translatorial ethics and the task at hand. This also reminds one of the experiences of Eugene A. Nida, of the American Bible society and a reputed translation scholar, about the difficulty of translating the Biblical concept of trinity in cultures and languages that do not have this concept of Godhood.

The next great moment for translation in India, and specifically in the context of North Indian languages happened during the heyday of British colonialism. It started when Fort William College was established in Calcutta in 1800 and the Scotsman, John Gilchrist became its principal. He, along with his munshis, set themselves the task of putting together in simple Hindustani works in Persian and Sanskrit like *Gulistan*, *Qissa Chahar Darveish, Qissa Gul-I-Bakawali*, *Dastan Amir Hamza, Singhasan Baattisi, Qissa Alif Laila o Laila*. Though this was done ostensibly for the instruction and acculturation of the British officers who came to India to rule the country, the easy accessibility and lucidity of the prose made these works of romances extremely popular, and they were translated and retold in many Indian languages making a deep impact on their literatures. G.N. Devy, as indeed other literary historians in India like Sisir Kumar Das also credits Persian and other Islamic languages with facilitating the rise of indigenous languages. Devy says, "The emergence of *bhasha* literatures coincided with, even if it was not entirely caused by, a succession of Islamic rules in India. The Islamic rulers – Arabs, Turks, Mughals – brought with them new cultural concerns to India, and provided these currents legitimacy through liberal political patronage. The languages – Arabic and Persian, mainly, and Urdu which developed indigenously under their influence – brought new modes of writing poetry and music. The intimate contact with Islamic cultures created for the *bhasha* literatures new possibilities of continuous development" (Devy 1995) These possibilities were realised through translation and adaptation. Two prose romances, *Qissa Chahar Darvesh* and *Qissa Gul Bakawali* were very popular across many Indian languages. In an essay on Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's emergence as an architect of Bangla prose, Tagore remarks, "…with his emergence the darkness and stagnation that gripped Bangla literature disappeared, and disappeared the legacy of *Vijay Basanta* and *Gul-i-Bakawali*, those escapist romances…" (cited in Mukherjee 2003:27, my translation). The impact of the

literatures of the Middle East was inevitable given the long and sustained Indo-Muslim encounter which is certainly one of the most significant civilisational encounters in history, making possible the emergence of personalities like Ram Mohan Roy, a truly multi-lingual scholar, who wrote with equal felicity in several languages including Arabic and Persian. He wrote his first book in Persian, and its introduction in Arabic. The Persianate literary values and themes suffused Indian literature till the middle of the nineteenth century but it is a matter of speculation as to how lasting that impact was, because it seemed to have disappeared as rapidly. Moreover, apart from institutional sites there were very few individual efforts to translate, absorb and assimilate the literature of the Middle East. Sisir Kumar Das, the historian of Indian literature, compares the Indo-Muslim literary encounter with the Euro-Muslim encounter in Spain, more specifically in Andalusia, and points out that while Perso-Arab intervention in Spain and prolific translation of Arabic works into Spanish had its lasting impact manifested in the provincial poetry and the emergence of the troubadours, no similar impact can be discernible in India. This makes him speculate whether the Indian mind, at that point of time, was less open to translation and assimilation from alien sources. In an essay written in Bangla for the journal *Desh* he writes: “Foreigners had come to India, many of whom had learnt Sanskrit, translated from Sanskrit into their own languages. But Indians had hardly shown any interest in foreign languages or literatures. Translation has taken place from Sanskrit and Pali into Tibetan, Chinese, Arabic and Persian. The Greeks had come to India and ruled in the north-west of India for one hundred and fifty years, and from this confluence the Gandhar art emerged … but one does not know of any learned Brahmin who learnt Greek or read the poetry of Homer or reflected on the philosophy of Plato. This happened in Indian culture time and again” (Das 1994:34, my translation). He further remarks that even in matters of translation from Sanskrit into Indian languages, people have shown interest in works with a religious intent. Taking the

instance of Bangla literature he points out that though *the Ramayana, the Mahabharata* and *Gita* were translated from Sanskrit into Bangla, no one showed much interest in translating say, *Shakuntala, Uttar Ram Charita, Mudra Rakshas, Mrichchakatik, Meghdut* or *Kumar Sambhav*.

The greatest impact exerted by any Persian text on the imagination of Indian writers during the colonial period is Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyyat*, not the original one but the English version mediated by Edward Fitzerald's translation or 'transcreation', and this happened at the fag end of the colonial period. By the thirties of the twentieth century, it had been translated into most of the Indian languages, creating a stir in poetic circles and giving rise to new ways of writing poetry in some languages. Haribanshrai Bachchan both translated and transcreated it in Hindi. One he called *Khayyam ki Madhushala* and the other simply *Madhushala*. So widespread was the impact of these two versions that they gave rise to a new trend called 'halavad' which can be roughly translated as 'hedonism'. The Marathi translator Madhav Patvardhan who was a Persian scholar and who had initiated ghazal writing in Marathi produced three different Marathi versions of it between 1929 and 1940, which present multiple perceptions of the original. The reception of Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyyat* in different Indian languages constitutes a unique case for Translation Studies and an analysis of the strategies adopted by different translators in so many Indian languages will help us to make coherent statements about indigenous translation practices. In this context, Borges's seminal essay on the reception of *Alif Laila O Laila* i.e. the *Arabian Nights* in the European world can serve as an example (2004).

As the Orientalists lost to the Anglicists, Persian literature and language lost its salience by the middle of the nineteenth century. The new language of power was English, and with English language a wholly new world opened up to the people of India. Soon

there emerged a section of writers and intellectuals who can truly be said to be "translated men" in the most comprehensive sense of the phrase. Though brought up on traditional Indian literary and cultural values, their mental horizon was formed by literature written in English or translated from English. The lack of openness on the part of Indians to foreign literature that Sisir Kumar Das bemoans with reference to an earlier era does not seem to be valid for this phase of history when Indians took massively to works of English literature, reading them with passion, translating them and adapting them to their purpose. It is important to remember that the phenomenon of colonial modernity that was negotiated in the nineteenth century India and that has changed us irrevocably was possible only through translation. The writers in various Indian languages were invariably reading European and English authors, and translating, if you take the larger view of translation, these into the Indian languages. There were prolific translations from Shakespeare and some lesser known Victorian novelists like G.W.M. Reynolds. The writings of Addison and Steele were very popular in India and the prose tradition as it developed in some Indian languages was indebted to them. The famous Urdu periodical *Avadh Punch* (1887), which facilitated the growth of a kind of sinuous literary prose, used to publish the essays of Addison and Steele regularly. As pointed out before, many Indian writers read and translated these authors and assimilating their style and content, tried to make use of them in the development of their own literatures. The emergence of a genre like the 'novel' can be traced to this phenomenon of translation and assimilation. To take some stray examples: In Malayalam, Chandu Menon's *Indulekha* (1888), commonly regarded as the first novel in that language, was an adaptation of Disraeli's *Henrieta Temple* (1837); in Urdu, Nazir Ahmad is usually regarded as the first convincing practitioner of the genre and his novels were based on English prototypes, his *Taubatun Nasuh* (1874) being based on Defoe's *The Family Instructor*; In Bangla, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was greatly influenced by Walter Scott's practice of the genre of the 'historical

novel'. Frequently, works in English (or those translated into English from other European languages) were adapted to the Indian situation and domesticated to an appreciable degree. These translations and adaptations opened a window to world literature for Indian readers. Rabindranath Tagore recalls discovering a "pathetic translation of *Paul et Virginie* (1787)" in the Bengali serial, *Abodhbandhu* (The Common Man's Friend) in 1868-69, over which, "I wept many tears … what a delightfully refreshing mirage the story conjured up for me on that terraced roof in Calcutta. And oh! The romance that blossomed along the forest paths of that secluded island, between the Bengali boy-reader and little Virginie with the many-coloured kerchief round her head!" (cited in Joshi 2004:312). The colonial administration gave utmost encouragement to the translation of Western texts that would facilitate the process of acculturation. It would be unfair to expect that the translators of that period were sensitive to the aspects of complex cultural negotiations, and such ideas as suggested in statements like "translation as a practice shapes, and takes shape within, the asymmetrical relations of power that operate under colonialism" (Niranjana 1992). In fact, if one takes a close look at the translation of literary texts of that period it will be found that translators were not unduly concerned about loyalty to the original text or they agonized much over a definitive version or edition of a text. Translations -- more specifically, literary translations -- were carried out more or less in the "fluent tradition" as Lawrence Venuti (1995) defines it in the context of the English translation of Latin American texts in North America, where translations often masqueraded as the original. Whatever that be, it can be asserted with reasonable certainty that we are what we are today in the realms of literature and language by virtue of the literary and cultural exchanges and negotiations that took place in the nineteenth century. Priya Joshi, in her essay, "Reading in the Public Eye: The Circulation of Fiction in Indian Libraries", mentioned earlier, studied the reading pattern of the people in the nineteenth century and concluded:

> …[T]he Indian world survived and succeeded by translation – not just the literal translation of reams of printed matter but also a symbolic and metaphoric translation in which the Indian world was carried forth from one state to another through the act of reading and interpretation. The encounter with British fiction generally and the melodramatic mode in particular helped Indian readers translate themselves from a socially and politically feudal order to a modern one; from cultural and political subjection to conviction; from consumers to producers of their own national self-image (Joshi 2004:321).

Thus, the project of nation-making was intimately connected to the wide dissemination of works in translation. The concept of the nation as the ‘imagined community’, as Benedict Anderson would have it, if it ever took shape in India, did so at this time through the publication of novels and the translation of novels, not only from English but also from and among Indian languages, and through publication of periodicals and other means of print capitalism.

Right in the middle period of the Indian colonial encounter with the West, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, translation between and among modern Indian literatures began. Translation from Bangla literature formed the staple diet of many readers in different Indian languages. Bankim’s novels, *Anandamath* (1882) in particular, were translated into most of the major Indian languages. B. Venkatachar (b.1845) was well-known for his translation of Bankim’s novels into Kannada. He acquired such a reputation for his craft that his translations are known as “Venkatachar’s novels”. Saratchandra Chattopadhay almost single-handedly made Bengali fiction the most attractive commodity for translators, publishers and reading public all over India (Das 1995:40). Sarat’s popularity was so phenomenal through several decades of the twentieth century that

Jainendra Kumar thinks his contributions towards the creation and preservation of cultural India are second, perhaps, only to those of Gandhi's. He sums up the role of translation and inter-literary relationship by asking the rhetorical question – "Saratchandra was a writer in Bengali; but where is that Indian language in which he did not become the most popular when he reached it?" (Kumar 1977:51). The enthusiasm for Bengali literature, some might rather call it 'hegemony' today, only increased when Tagore was awarded the Nobel prize in 1913, and later, writers from different parts of India gathered at Santiniketan to read Tagore in Bangla, and then, when they returned to their own language habitat, introduced him in their own languages. Tagore indeed strode like a colossus on the Indian literary horizon in the early decades of the twentieth century, but there were lesser writers too who had been freely translated into many regional languages. Dwijendralal Ray's plays which recreated the glories of the Mughal and the Rajput past were also very popular. *Bhisma*, a play based on the Mahabharata hero was translated into Gujarati in 1919, followed by *Mebar Patan* in the following year. At least six of his plays were translated into Gujarati during the independence movement. No less than thirteen plays were translated into Telugu. Translations did take place also from Subramanya Bharati, Premchand and other writers. In fact the first half of the twentieth century may be said to be the golden period of translation within Indian languages. Though the translations were done largely in the fluent tradition and the translators displayed a sureness of touch and a kind of confidence which emanates from sharing, more or less, the same cultural values and the same mythological universe, there is no room for complacency even here. Even if both the source and target texts are Indian language texts a comparison of the original and the translation often reveals asymmetry and a fair amount of cultural ignorance.[2]

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In the post-independence period we find a gradual attenuation of translation within Indian languages. The space that was open to translation between Indian regional literatures gradually shrank and English began to intervene. However, even though the postcolonial moment belonged to translation from Indian languages into English, the translation scene even in English was fairly desultory in the first three decades after independence. Aside from the Akademi, some significant translations during this period were those sponsored by UNESCO Collection of Representative Works. Foremost among them are: Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhay's Bengali novel *Pather Panchali: Song of the Road* (1968, trs. T.W. Clark and Tarapada Mukherji), known world-wide for its film version by Satyajit Ray; Manik Bandopadhyay's Bengali novel, *The Puppet's Tale* (1968, tr. S.L. Ghosh); Shridhar Pendse's Marathi novel, *Wild Bapu of Garambi* (1968, tr. Ian Raeside); Thakhazi Sivasankara Pillai's Malayalam novel, *Chemmeen: A Novel* (1962, tr. Narayana Menon), Premchand's Hindi novel, *Godan: The Gift of a Cow* (1968, tr. Gordon Roadermal) and Aziz Ahmad's Urdu novel, *The Shore and the Wave* (1971, tr. Ralph Russell). The absence of any dialogue among translators about their craft and the lack of any tradition of documentation of problems encountered by individual translators meant that they worked in a kind of vacuum, depending mainly on their instincts and their own resources. Omission and compression are the two basic strategies adopted by translators in this period, including the well-thought-out translation projects undertaken by the UNESCO. The translators added, deleted and reordered materials, often in an arbitrary fashion, the common plea being that they were trying to make the work more suitable to the target readership.

Fakir Mohan Senapati's Oriya novel, *Chha Mana Atha Guntha* (1902) constitutes a curious case in the history of translation of Indian fiction in English. It had three English versions published between 1967 and 1969 (Das, C.V. Narasimha 1967; Senapati B.M.

& Senapati A.M. 1967; Misra, Nuri 1969), one version differing radically from another in its presentation of the text. The translators of two versions have changed the title and presented their versions as 'rewritten' in English, and further, one translator presented it as a Victorian English novel, embellishing it with epigraphs in the form of quotations from English classics at the head of each chapter and including in the body of translation references to English literature which are absent from the original text (for a comparative study of the three translations, see Sherry Simon & Paul St-Pierre 2000:263-288). Further, the translator's nineteen-page "Introduction" tries to contextualise it in the tradition of the English novel of a certain period, robbing it of all anti-colonial resonance, and illustrating what it means to be translating into the language of power/former colonizer:

> I wonder sometimes why I did not choose to call my book "Man of Property" after John Galsworthy. That title would have been quite appropriate – as appropriate, I believe, as the one that *my book* actually bears now. So far as their passionate attachment to property is concerned, what is the difference between Soames Forsyte [sic] (that unhappy husband of Irene) and Ramachandra Mangaraj? I could similarly call my book by the alternative name of "A Book of Rascals" after Thackeray's "A Book of Snobs" (xiii).

Such a strategy of translation, which is closer to rewriting, raises crucial questions about authorship, loyalty and authenticity. The 'colonial cringe' demonstrated by the translator also acts against the very purpose of literary translation, namely, introducing a foreign text and culture to the readers in the target language. One hopeful thing, however, is that, located as we are, at the postcolonial

moment of stringent copyright laws, contemporary translators cannot do whatever they wish with an author's text.

The birth of Penguin Books India in the mid-1980s marked a significant moment in the history of Indian literature in English translation. When it began publishing Indian authors in English translation, mainly fiction, translated fiction attained a kind of visibility it never enjoyed earlier. Among the many success stories of Penguin the most notable are the short stories and novellas of Satyajit Ray from Bengali, beginning with *Adventures of Feluda* (1988), and then running into several other volumes, Bhishm Sahni's novel, *Tamas:Darkness* (1989) from Hindi, *Classic Telugu Short Stories* (1995) edited by Ranga Rao, all of which went on to become bestsellers and have registered steady sales ever since they were published. Penguin's foray into translation and their growing clout actuated others like Rupa & Company (which later tied up with Harper Collins) of Delhi, Seagull Books of Kolkata to expand their corpus in translation. Rupa's three-volume *Stories About the Partition of India* (Alok Bhalla (ed) 1997) which showcased 63 short stories in English translation from 9 Indian languages became an instant bestseller, as it came out bang on the occasion of the completion of fifty years of India's partition, a cataclysmic event that changed the complexion of the Indian sub-continent for ever. Seagull Books, Kolkata has been running a project of translating the entire corpus – including short stories and novels -- of Mahasweta Devi, of which nearly twenty volumes have come out so far.

The most ambitious and systematic project of translating Indian novels into English was launched by Macmillan India Ltd in 1996 in a series called 'Modern Indian Novels in English Translation.' By now, it has published more than 100 novels. These translations are accompanied by an elaborate editorial apparatus – a scholarly introduction by a critic of the original language, a Translator's Note and an elaborate (compensatory) glossing in

footnotes. Some of these novels have already been put on the syllabi of universities in India and abroad.

Translation into English sometimes acts as an instrument of empowerment of the marginalised sections of society – dalits, tribals, women -- giving writers who deal with the struggle of the disenfranchised in society greater visibility, and creating solidarities across the multi-lingual and multi-cultural Indian society. Foremost among such writers in India is, of course, Mahasweta Devi, who has been well-served by her translators in English. But there are others who have been writing with consistency and commitment for several decades, but were not known outside their linguistic borders because of the paucity of translations. When creative fiction about the lives of dalits and untouchables like R.R. Borade's Marathi novel *Fall* was translated by Sudhakar Marathe in 1998 or Bama's Tamil novel *Karukku* was translated by Lakshmi Holmstrom in 2000, or Darshana Trivedi and Rupalee Burke translated and edited the collection, *Tongues of Fire: Dalit Stories in English* (2000), they created considerable awareness about and interest in the lives of these people who have been living on the margins of society for centuries. These novels have now become part of courses on literature of the oppressed in India and abroad. The strand of feminist writing in India has been quite strong through the twentieth century, but this body of writing never attained the kind of primacy it deserved before it was available in English translation. The feminist publishing house, Kali for Women, started in 1984 with the objective "to make available – and visible – the hitherto little known work of women writing in different (Indian) languages" (Menon 1995:16). In particular it showcased a substantial body of works by two Urdu fiction writers – Ismat Chughtai and Qurratulain Hyder. Tahira Naqvi's translation of a selection of Chughtai's stories, *The Quilt and Other Stories* (1990), and a novel, *The Crooked Line* (1995) were immediately picked up by universities in India and abroad for inclusion in their syllabi. Hyder is an outstanding

example of self-translation. She has herself rendered most of her novels and short stories into English, and her own English ‘transcreation’ of her novel, *River of Fire* (1998) prompted T(imes) L(iterary) S(upplement) to place her ‘alongside her exact contemporaries, Milan Kundera and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, as one of the world’s major authors’. Stree, the feminist press from Kolkata, has published volumes such as *Cast Me Out If You Will: Stories and Memoirs* (1998) from Malayalam, a collection of Jyotirmoyi Devi’s stories from Bengali, *The Impermanence of Lies* (1998), and *The Stream Within: Short Stories by Contemporary Bengali Women* (1999), all of which deal with women’s spirited struggle with patriarchy. One remarkable feminist project edited by Susie Tharu and K. Lalitha was the two-volume anthology, *Women Writing in India* (1993), which showcased women’s writing, a substantial part of which is fiction, from 600 B.C. to the present. This project is also noteworthy as it had a specific translation policy, which is clear from the following:

> We have tried … in the translations (not always successfully) to strain against … reductive and stereotypical homogenization … we preferred translations that did not domesticate the work either into a pan-Indian or into a “universalist” mode, but demanded of the reader too a translation of herself into another socio-historical ethics. We have taken pains … to preserve the regional grain of the work … (ibid: xxxii)

Currently we are going through a boom in translation – mainly translation of Indian language literatures into English. Even though it is regrettable that literary translation within Indian languages has not shown any such resurgence, it should not make us apprehensive of translation of Indian literatures into English. As a link language, English has an important role to play and translation

into English can certainly foster the growth of a holistic view of Indian literature. It would also help dispel the impression one frequently encounters while travelling abroad that Indian literature is what gets written in English. However, we must be clear in our minds about the objectives of the translations that are being done, as they would determine our choice of the authors and texts that merit translation.

NOTES

1. The impact of the Indian story telling tradition and *Panchatantra* has been discussed eloquently by Amitav Ghosh. According to him, “Nothing that India has given the world outside is more important than its stories. Indeed, so pervasive is the influence of the Indian story that one particular collection, *The Panchatantra* (‘The Five Chapters’) is reckoned by some to be second only to the Bible in the extent of its global diffusion.”

2. I have dealt with this in considerable detail in my essay, “Tagore's *Gora* in Urdu Translation and the Questions of Authority, Legitimacy and Authenticity", *Viswabharati Quarterly, Santiniketan*, Vol. 10, No. 1, April-June, 2001.

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Translating Medieval Orissa[1]

Debendra K. Dash
Dipti R. Pattanaik

Abstract

This article is predicated on the assumption that the cultural history of a society can be constructed by examining the translated texts of the culture in question. On the face of it, this seems to be assuming too much, but in the context of medieval Orissa, this is probably both necessary and possible. This is necessary because of the paucity, and sometimes, of the contradictory nature, of historical material available on the subject to provide any coherent vision of cultural/linguistic evolution in Orissa. Since there is a definite and identifiable trajectory of translational practice in medieval Orissa, a genealogy of that practice can serve as a supplement to the available cultural historiography. Moreover, this is possible because translational practice in medieval Orissa can be translated as the index of socio-political forces in operation in the society.

While translating translational practice into indices of culture and political economy, we are aware of the very late emergence of what Daniel Simeoni (2002) calls the 'sociological eye' in Translation Studies, an epistemic displacement of attention that contextualizes translation activity rather than making a normative analysis of the same. We also hold with Simeoni that translations primarily are a fact of social praxis and a major component of social communication mirroring the ideological, argumentative or rhetorical principles with which the translators function and the tradition of construction and understanding of their nations in which they are implicated. In at least two essays on the

translation scene in Orissa (Pattanaik 2000, Dash & Pattanaik 2002), such ideological nature of the translation enterprise has been analyzed and the role of competing ideologies that are implicated in national/linguistic identity formation laid bare. The former presents a model of the ways in which translation had been used in Orissa as a tool of cultural affirmation in the past and articulates the apprehensions about surrendering those cultural gains by uncritical submission to the structures of colonial hegemony governing translational practices in the contemporary times. The second essay, which is more important in the context of the present essay, goes deeper into the analysis of the so-called cultural affirmation generated by the translational practice in medieval Orissa. It identifies four successive moments in the history of medieval Orissa: the denial of translation, subversion through translation, collusion through translation, and finally competition through translation. Various forms of hegemony trying to control the discursive site and the distribution of knowledge and power among caste and religious groups within the Orissan society were seen as the cause of those distinctive moments in the history of translational practice in medieval Orissa. The complexity of the translation scene, it was argued, was because of the complexity of the social matrix, which gave rise to those translations. The present essay seeks to test these insights by placing them against the texts actually translated (both manuscripts and published texts), and the various ideologies that were in operation in the society during that time.

If we agree with Dasgupta (Dasgupta 2000) that cognitive accountability is a condition of modernity and that translation is a necessary means through which knowledge is tested, recontextualised and submitted to critical scrutiny, then the earliest modern moment in the written discourse involving Orissa could be Sarala Das's translation/appropriation of Sanskrit texts *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana* and *Chandi Purana* in the 15th century.

With these texts, Oriya emerged as one of the dominant languages and it became a key constituent in the Oriya national identity-formation. During the following fifty years, various literary genres including prose literature were articulated in this language. The major prose texts of the period were *Rudra Sudhanidhi* by Narayana Abadhuta Swami, *Brahma Gita, Ganesha Bibhuti* and *Gyana Chudamani* by Balaram Das and *Tula Bhina* by Jagannath Das. That prose texts with such sophisticated conceptual thinking could be articulated in the Oriya language of that time is proof of the democratization of the episteme. This kind of democratization of discourse was possible because of the pressures of the Muslim presence. In order to protect their spheres of influence the Hindu ruling elite consisting of the Kshyatriya and the Brahmin castes tried to democratize some religious tenets and accommodate the subalterns in their fold. This resulted in the Bhakti cult, which in turn generated some religious diffusion and the translational process. The restrictions to the domain of knowledge and power (Dash and Pattanaik 2002) were automatically diluted and people belonging to various castes and religions participated in the production, consumption, transmission and diffusion of knowledge. The sphere of influence, and the extent of acceptance of the Oriya language was such that, even when the political formation that enabled this kind of emergence of language-based national identity collapsed after about hundred years, the language continued to unite people culturally. The resilience and accomodative capacities of Oriya enabled it to become one of the ideological formations that controlled the apparatuses of the states where the language was used.

Dash and Pattanaik (2002) discusses how the Oriya language had a rather dormant existence for around four hundred years after its emergence from Purva Magadhi. Though it was used widely in colloquial transactions and stray rock-edicts, there were not many written texts. Only after Sarala Das's translations/transcriptions (the word 'translation' has been used here

in its wider significance), voluminous written texts were produced in this language. We must remember here that Sarala's writings were in fact the cultural manifestation of a socio-political process, which sought to undermine the Brahminical/Sanskrit stranglehold over power-knowledge. The discourse generated by such a process, in its turn, brought about a reversal of social hierarchies. The knowledge, and so the power accruing from it which was hitherto under the control of the elites and the elite language Sanskrit was now under the appropriating grasp of the emerging castes and social groups. Translational praxis played a pivotal role in the process of appropriation and mutilation of earlier hegemonies and leveling down of the social playing field. In this context, the study of translational praxis as the index of socio-cultural dynamics is relevant and rewarding.

Translated Texts

Although the first translations are credited to Sarala Das, those are not translations in the sense in which we understand 'translation' today. Those are more a mutilation and reworking of the original texts (the ideological implications of such an exercise will be dealt with later). Translation, as it is understood today, began in the early sixteenth century with Balaram Das. From that time until the colonial translations (those by European missionaries, the natives and the bureaucratic variety) around hundred translated texts have been identified, out of which most are in the form of palm-leaf manuscripts. (A detailed list of the translated texts published/discovered so far is given at the end of this paper).

We must clarify here that the list given at the end is not exhaustive, since the search and discovery of fresh evidence of manuscripts is still in process. It has been prepared taking into account the evidence and information available so far in state

museums and manuscript collections in university libraries. Moreover, the dating of the manuscripts not accompanied by *puspika* (colophon) might not be accurate for several reasons. First, except for the writer-translators who were also kings, rulers, and some major writers like Balaram Das, Jagannath Das and Dhananjaya Bhanja, it has not been possible to trace the genealogy of most of the writers. Secondly, several writer-translators share the same names, which are often the names of the major writers/translators, which adds to the confusion. However, it can be claimed with certainty that all the translated texts mentioned here belong to a period before European colonization and were produced within fifty years before or after the dates mentioned against them.

Development of Translational Practice from 16th to early 19th Century

The long list of translated texts both in print and in manuscript form mentioned above proves that translational practice in medieval Orissa was an important cultural activity. Compared with the translations during this period, translational activity between 11th century (when written Oriya discourse consolidated itself) and early 15th century is almost negligible. That a literary tradition, which remained almost dormant during a four-hundred year time-span, should proliferate in such a manner during the next three hundred and fifty years indicates that a cultural upheaval of sorts had taken place in the interregnum. This cultural upheaval is related to the rise of a nascent language-based patriotism around Kapilendra Dev's consolidation of political power. While analyzing this cultural phenomenon K.C. Panigrahi (1986:289) states:

> A love for the Oriya language, literature and culture was therefore an inevitable consequence of the new ferment created by the strong and vigorous rule of Kapilesvara. Since the topmost of castes, particularly the Brahmins

> were still the devotees of Sanskrit literature and had perhaps an aversion to the spoken language and its literature, a man from the lower rung of the social ladder came forward to accept the challenge of the time. After Sarala Das all castes shook off their prejudice against Oriya Literature and conjointly contributed to its growth .

Language-based patriotism was not only consolidated by the direct intervention of a great literary genius like Sarala Das, but also by the indirect influence of the language policy adopted by the emperor Kapilendra Dev. The Ganga rulers of Orissa had so far adopted a mixed-language policy in their royal proclamations. However, Kapilendra issued proclamations only in Oriya (Sahu 1968:7). Such championing of the language by the ruling power created a base for the subsequent growth of the Oriya language, literature and nationalism. Thus, it is clear that literary/translational discourse during the medieval times is grounded on an identifiable social and political context. What follows is an analysis of this context that gave rise to the variety and volume of translated texts in medieval Orissa.

The social and political context of medieval Orissa was informed by a kind of religious eclecticism. This religious eclecticism was organized around the institution of Lord Jagannath[2] at Puri, who had almost assumed the status of the principal state deity. Various ruling dynasties irrespective of their original sectarian affinities were assimilated into the denominational polyphony represented by Lord Jagannath. For example, though the Somavanshis were Shaiva-Saktas, they tempered their sectarian edge to be accommodated into the cult of Jagannath who was principally a Vaishnav deity. Similarly, the Gangas, originally Shaiva by faith, consolidated the accommodative and tolerant practice of faith around Jagannath. By the time Kapilendra Dev came to the throne, this assimilative spirit had become so pronounced that he could

proclaim himself as Shaiva, Shakta and Vaishnava at the same time while he worshipped Lord Jagannath.

This spirit of religious assimilation could have been the basis of the Gangas' hold over power for so long and the ability of Kapilendra to build an empire. It was evident that the Gangas used their religious tolerance and language policy of issuing proclamations in three languages viz. Telugu, Sanskrit and Oriya as a tactical ploy to appease their Oriya subjects, for, outside the Oriya-speaking domains, they were neither devotees of Lord Jagannath nor staunch followers of Vaishnavism (Satyanarayana:1982). Kapilendra Dev also buttressed his empire-building enterprise with religious eclecticism and language loyalty. However, this strong language loyalty, which was an asset for Kapilendra when he organized the Oriyas for empire building, ultimately became a liability once the empire became expansive. The non-Oriya speaking areas of the empire could not be welded together culturally with the center of power. Thus, the vast empire had already been riven with internal contradictions during Kapilendra's lifetime. By the time Purushottama Dev ascended the throne, these contradictions had brought about a crisis for the state. This crisis was accentuated by a protracted economic mismanagement. Kapilendra spent the better part of his life raising an army and supporting it through the state revenue. During Purushottama's time, the state became unable to generate enough resources to maintain a huge army and administer the far-flung provinces of the empire. When Prataparudra ascended the throne, Orissa was a crumbling state. However, the central part of the empire was held together merely by religious, linguistic and cultural sentiments.

Thus, when Chaitanya came, Orissa was a failed state but a culturally vibrant linguistic unit. For the next three hundred years this phenomenon continued defying conventional logic that ascribes the cause of cultural vibrancy to the prosperity and growth of the

state. The vibrancy of the culture during that time can be discerned from the proliferation of written discourse and translational activity. However, the distribution of translated texts and creative works among the various Oriya speaking regions was uneven. This unevenness can be explained by the socio-political context that followed the fall of Gajapati kings. Most of the historians of medieval Orissa like B.C. Ray (1989) and M.A. Haque (1980) have failed to develop a coherent narrative of the context because of their inability to understand the regional dynamics within the Oriya-speaking people. The three main regions of Orissa had separate trajectories of socio-cultural growth because of the varying political–economic contexts.

At the beginning of the 16th century, the western region of Orissa was already under the control of Chauhan ruler. Their rule continued for more than four hundred years, unhindered even during the Muslim rule over the rest of Orissa. Only small parts of the region came under direct British administration after 1849. The socio-political character of western Orissa thus had a trajectory of growth different from that of the rest of Orissa. Of course the cultural affinities between the western and eastern segments established during the Somavanshi kings in the 10th century continued in some form, but the effect of the cultural upheaval after Sarala Das was not felt in these areas.[3] The difference between the spoken languages of these regions could be one of the reasons for the lack of growth of a uniform literary tradition across the various regions. The spoken language of western Orissa was derived from a different strain of Prakrit than the spoken language used in the eastern part.

Secondly, the Chauhan rulers claimed that they were of Rajput origin and had migrated from north India. They patronized Sanskrit and Hindi, which were popular in north India at the expense of Oriya. Therefore, before the 19th century we come across stray

texts like *Sashi Sena* by Pratap Ray, *Sudhasara Gita* by Chandramani Das, *Bharata Savitri* and *Kapata Pasa* by Bhima Dhibara and *Saraswata Gita* by Ratanakara Meher. *Adhyatma Ramayana* is the only translated text of the region during this pre-colonial era. Its translator Gopala Telenga was the court poet of Ajit Singh, the king of Samabalpur in the 18th century. That only one translated text was produced under the patronage of the court during all these years is proof of the apathy of the ruling establishments towards Oriya literature in general and translational practice in particular. So while discussing the development of translational activity in medieval Orissa, the western region can be conveniently put aside.

The importance of eastern/coastal Orissa in terms of the development of translation is not merely because of Sarala Das, but also because of the tradition of translation activity that followed him. The Pancha Sakhas belonged to this area and their sphere of operation was within the districts of Puri and Cuttack, which were close to the religious and administrative centers of power. Several translations of *Gitagobinda* were also undertaken in this region. With the possible exception of Jagannath Das's *Srimad Bhagabata* all these translation followed the model set up by Balaram Das with minor variations here and there. Translational activity was initiated by three texts of Balaram Das viz. *Jagamohan Ramayana*, *Bhagabad Gita*, and *Uddhab Gita*. *Bamana Purana*, another text ascribed to Balaram demonstrates translational strategies and other internal evidence, which are more common to an 18th century text. For example, an identity centered on Lord Jagannath, which was common to Balaram's text, is absent here. Moreover, the vocabulary seems to be a part of the 17th century practice influenced by Arabic and Persian languages. Thus, we encounter two models of translation in the 16th century coastal Orissa with their variants, one set up by Balaram and the other by Jagannath Das. Towards the 17th century, after this area came under direct Mughal rule, translation

activity seems to have dwindled. Mughal rulers' involvement with Orissa was confined to collecting revenue through their subedars. They neither participated in, nor contributed to, the cultural life of the people. Whatever translations we encounter in this region after the 17th century were therefore undertaken at the religious centres or the minor Gadajats or principalities under petty Oriya kings and zamindars.

The focus of translation shifted to the south after 17th century. The southern part of Orissa (from Chilika Lake onwards) had been occupied by Qutbsahi since the late 16th century. Two citations in Satyanarayana (1983) about the strategy behind the administration of Qutbsahi rulers in general and their greatest ruler Sultan Quli in particular, are worth quoting here:

> (The Qutbsahi kings) believed that it was expedient to allow a large measure of freedom to the Hindus who formed the bulk of the people subject to their rule, so that they might establish their power on firm and lasting foundations. This fact perhaps explains why they condemned the acts of intolerance perpetuated occasionally by some of their overzealous subordinates.

Further,

> Of all the Muslim dynasties that ruled India, the Qutbsahi of Golconda was the most enlightened. True, they plundered and destroyed Hindu Temples in the enemy's territory during the course of invasions, but within their own dominions the Hindus enjoyed a measure of religious freedom, not known in other Muslim kingdoms (516).

Because of the measure of freedom granted, and the influence of enlightenment, the chieftains of southern Orissa under Qutbsahi during 17th century, pursued a policy of patronizing the written discourse both in Sanskrit and in Oriya. This cultural practice continued in south Orissa even when it came under the Nizams of Hyderabad in the third decade of the 18th century and under the British colonial administration in the seventh decade of the same century. The cultural autonomy prevalent in this area was so resilient that it remained unaffected until the last decade of the 19th century despite various changes in the political domain and administrative set-up. This relative autonomy and a stable steady cultural atmosphere proved extremely fertile for translation activity. Translation of almost three-fourth of the texts mentioned earlier had been undertaken in this area during the three hundred years.

> In order to have an idea of the strategies and methods of translation obtaining in medieval times a detailed analysis of the major translated texts is called for.

Methods of Translation

Translational practice in Oriya did not have any authoritative methodological guidelines to fall back upon. The aestheticians of Sanskrit, the dominant language, were for the most part silent about the nature and mode of this genre. In an earlier essay (Dash & Pattanik 2002), we have hinted how Anandabardhana came close to the concept of translation/influence as we understand it today, in his explication of the idea of "sambada" or dialogue. The idea of dialogue implies a democratic exchange, within a particular language or between two languages, in a spirit of epistemic cooperation. However, the earliest works of translation in Oriya done by Sarala Das were born out of a contest between two antagonistic social forces trying to control the epistemological field.

Translation in Sarala's hands, therefore, was a tool of subversion not only of the text in question but also of the ideological structure represented by the texts and the social forces that were controlling them. Sarala ostensibly was not in favour of the Brahminic ideology that informed texts like *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. A lot of violence and mutilation has therefore accompanied his rendering of these texts into Oriya. Translation is more of a reshaping and reworking within a broad narrative framework, which is also an uncanny reflection of the redistribution of power among various social groups in the society of those times.

This dynamics of social processes and translational methodology seems to have continued in subsequent phases of translation giving rise to a methodological tradition, which is in essence an instinctive apprehension of the shifting social perspective. What follows is an analysis of that phenomenon by looking at a few representative translations across the ages. We must clarify here that the texts or passages from them have not been chosen at random because they also represent a pattern, a pattern of emergence from the various aesthetic practices in the dominant language Sanskrit and their assimilative appropriation into the practices of translation in the target language Oriya.

The Sanskrit aesthetic/scriptural practice of elucidation/interpretation had been dominated for a long time by the pronouncements of Jaimini, Kumarila, and Mallinath. According to Jaimini the three major axioms of interpretation are the autonomy of verbal meaning, its impersonality and the unity of meaning (Chari 1993:163). This formulation virtually closed the scope of translational practice, because any translation is bound to violate the autonomy and unity of a verbal structure. However, the scope of exegetical discussion was not fully closed down. Moreover, Mallinath claims explicitly at the outset of his commentaries on

Kalidasa's poetic works that "all this is being commented upon by me only by way of explicating the meaning of the text, I say nothing that is not in the text and not warranted by it" (trans. Chari 1993:193). He proceeds to find new significance in Kalidasa's text. This practice automatically opens up possibilities of reconstructing an alternative discourse and proliferation of exegeses. What happened on the Oriya translation scene is the exploitation of the scope of such exegetical proliferation albeit in a different language. Translators from Balaram onwards have internalized the traditional Sanskritic scriptural/philosophic practice in order to turn them against their own grain and have violated the so-called verbal autonomy of the original texts in Sanskrit. The borderline between tika ('commentary') and bhasya ('interpretation' with renderings of fresh significance) were often blurred when these were amalgamated into translational practice.

There was another parallel practice in Sanskrit, viz. that of retelling the same narrative from the point of view of a specific cult, which might have been appropriated as a method of translation in Oriya. For example, the story of Rama has been reshaped repeatedly from the perspectives of Jaina theology and epistemology, the practices of Vaishnava and Shakta cults. Jaina *Ramayanas, Adhythma Ramayana* and *Adbhuta Ramayana* stand testimony to this practice. When Sarala, Balaram, Achyuta and others have translated the text of *Ramayana*, they have done it from the perspectives of their own cult affiliations and ideological beliefs. While dealing with the development of translational practice in Oriya, we have to negotiate with this complex cultural inheritance.

The problematic nature of such complex inheritance can be discerned in Balaram Das's translation, *Jagamohan Ramayana*, the first text we have chosen for a detailed analysis. Balaram's cult-affinity is transparent from the very beginning of the text, whose first eighty couplets are eulogies not of Rama, the chief protagonist

of Valmiki's epic, but of Lord Jagannath, the presiding deity of Orissan kingdom and the then Vaishnav cult. For him Rama is important because he is the seventh incarnation of Lord Jaganath. His proposal to write about Valmiki's Rama is a surrogate activity to the real act of paying obeisance to his original inspiration, Lord Jagannath. Translation here is a religious activity, which leads to salvation.

There are also other ideological reasons behind the drastic difference between the beginning in Valmiki's text and that of Balaram Das's text. Balaram has dropped the first four chapters of Valmiki's epic, because Rama, according to him, is not merely the 'ideal man' (Purushottama) as conceived by Valmiki, but is the very embodiment of the Divine on earth. Moreover, while the story of *Ramayana* is, for Valmiki, a lived history, for Balaram, it is part of sacred mythology.

However, after reformulating the symbolic significance of Rama, Balaram proceeds to follow Valmiki's narrative closely with minor variations in detail. Of the three readings available on the original text his reading of Valmiki is based on the 'northern Indian reading'(Sahoo 2000:93-94). Valmiki's story of Rama and his ancestors begins from the fifth canto of the first book *Adi Kanda* and Balaram starts the same story from couplet no. 190. Balaram thereafter describes Ayodhya with minor changes in Valmiki's depiction of the locale (for a detailed comparison between Valmiki's text and Jagamohan Ramayana, See Sahoo 2000).

Overall, while retaining the main storyline, the broad division of books etc we see that Balaram has adopted various methods in his translation of *Ramayana* at different points including literal translation, the expansion of theme, excision of a few details, amalgamation of ideas and stories from other canonical texts like

Gita Gobinda and *Adhyatma Ramayana*. At least one difference between Valmiki's text and Balaram's which needs an elaborate analysis for purposes of this essay is the fact that Balaram's text is extremely indulgent while describing the sensuous details. For example in the tale of Rusyasringa, Balaram inserts eighty-five couplets to describe the history of his birth, which are not found in Valmiki. These eighty-five couplets are replete with erotic descriptions following the ornate Sanskrit poetry tradition. The echo of Sarala's grotesque imagination can also be heard when Rusyasringa is half-man and half-deer with horns on his head. Balaram's translation is ultimately a delicate balance between the erotic and the devotional, between the elite tradition of Sanskrit and subaltern Oriya ethos and between translation as subversion and translation as dissemination.

Srimad Bhagabad Gita, which belongs to the later phase of Balaram's literary career, is a continuation of that delicate balance and also an advance upon it. It is an advance in the sense that this is for the first time that a sacred philosophical text of very great importance incorporating the essence of Brahminic ideology is being rendered in the Oriya language. Because of the philosophically intricate nature of its discourse, which is not easily accessible to non-Brahminic castes, Sarala had refrained from incorporating this text, although it is commonly perceived as a part of the "Bhisma Parva" of the Sanskrit *Mahabharata.* For, Balaram too, the knowledge of *Gita* is "Brahma Gyana" meant exclusively for the Brahmins.However, with the advent of another order of knowledge dominated by Bhakti, or love in which the caste-hierarchies are leveled down by the extent of one's devotion, the knowledge of *Gita* becomes accessible to the real devotees irrespective of their castes. This ideology of devotion is a justification for a Sudra like Balaram, not only to access this privileged knowledge, but to disseminate it among the devotees of Lord Jagannath, one of whose incarnations Krishna the original preacher of *Gita* was. In order to provide this

justification of translation of the *Gita*, Balaram adds a postscript titled *"Gitabakasha"* to his translation of the original Sanskrit text. In the postscript, he also claims, with the blessings of Lord Jagannath, the originator of all knowledge, to have surpassed the genius of Vyasa, the first codifier of the divine speech. Along with the postscript, he has also added an introductory portion in the first chapter before coming to the actual translation of the text. However, the translation can be said to be literal in nature.The key concepts have been simplified for the Oriya audience and ethical and moral inflection has been added here and there. Thus, one can discern a simplification and a moral and ethical dilution of the philosophical rigor of the text during the translation process. Moreover, the *sambada* (dialogue) form of the original Sanskrit has been changed into Bhakti ritual in which the devotee has invoked the godhead by his question (*pidhabandha*) and the answer of the divine teacher has been given in the *Gitabandha.* The rhyme of the original was uniform but in the translation, several rhyme schemes have been used for various chapters. Despite its limitations as a translated text, including its dilution of the philosophical rigor of the original, this is a radical step forward in introducing abstract thought to the Oriya language through translational practice.

The articulation of abstract thought in the Oriya language was further tested in the translation of *Srimad Bhagabata* (especially in the eleventh book), which is both a philosophical and a devotional text. Subsequently because of its wide acceptance among the Oriya people, the translation of *Bhagabata* succeeded in institutionalizing abstract thinking in the hitherto Prakrit-oriented Oriya language. The parallels and variations between the original and the translated version of *Srimad Bhagabata*, have been elaborately dealt with by a number of scholars like Gopinath Nada Sharma, Ketaki Nayak, Krushan Chandra Sahoo, Bansihar Mohanty and Bansidhar Sarangi as Oriya *Bhagabata* by Jagannath Das is a central text of the Oriya

literary and theological canon. These scholars, however, have not identified the translational strategies adopted by Jagannath Das, the first Brahmin among the early translators in the Oriya language. Probably because of his caste affiliation, Jagannath Das demonstrates fidelity to the essence of the original, hitherto not seen in the earlier translations. In a manner of speaking, he was trying to replicate the Brahminic ideology within the broader spectrum of the Bhakti cult, as is evident from his repeated assertion of Brahmin identity. Moreover, the translation is directed by the commentary on *Bhagabata* by Sridhara Swami, a great Sanskrit scholar. The text of Jagannath has become at the same time, a translation, an explication and a commentary. While Balalram's translation tended to omit abstract philosophical concepts due to the unavailability of parallel terms in Oriya, Jagannath Das naturalized those Sanskrit terms in Oriya language. This translation transformed Oriya language into a meta-language parallel to Sanskrit, which was also a meta-language with a pan-Indian acceptance. Subsequently, the written literature in Oriya language tended to minimize the use of colloquial expressions resulting in a stagnation of the standard Oriya language and can be seen in the Oriya ornate poetry tradition. Another translational practice followed by Jagannath Das is the juxtaposition of the original Sanskrit verses with the Oriya rendering as has been done in the eleventh book of *Bhagabata*. It is well known that the eleventh book contains the most abstract philosophical ideas in the whole *Purana*. It seems as if Jagannath Das is apprehensive that the target language is not competent enough to internalize those dense philosophical formulations. Therefore, Jagannath Das on the one hand accepts the superior status of Sanskrit and is apologetic about the people's language, and on the other uses the people's language as a parallel to and alternative to the original language Sanskrit. This complex practice became one of the norms for subsequent translations into Oriya.[4]

The extent of abstraction to which Jagannath Das had moulded the Oriya language can be gauged from a subsequent text titled *Siba Swarodaya* by Jasobanta Das, one among the so-called Panchasakhas.[5] *Siba-swarodaya* is a translation of the Sanskrit text *Swarodaya Lesa.* The original text is divided into twenty-one small chapters. Jasobanta Das transformed the entire text into one single continuous discourse having four hundred and seventy three couplets. He justifies the undertaking of the task of retelling the text in Oriya on the ground that the wisdom codified in the text is actually meant for the people. Had it not been meant for the people, it would not have been articulated at all. Once it has been articulated, it should be transmitted into the language, which the common people can easily access. He does not therefore call it translation, but a manifestation, *Prakash*, coming out of some thing, which is latent. However, if the original Sanskrit text and the derivative Oriya text are compared, one can easily sense the closeness of the translated text to the original, a rendering of simple and lucid Sanskrit into standardised Oriya, which had started taking after Sanskrit, after Jagannath Das's *Bhagabata*.

Jayadeva's *Gita Gobinda*, which has been translated more than twenty times during this period alone, is the central text for an analytical understanding of the evolution and standardization of translational practice in Orissa. The popularity of this text can be gauged from the number of imitations it had spawned in Sanskrit within Orissa's geographical space. The lilting rhythm, the erotic theme and the epic structure, all contributed to its enormous popularity among various sections of the audience ranging from the common people to the royal courts. After Chaitanya adopted and eulogized this, it became the canonical text of the Vaishnav sect, which followed Chaitainya's teachings.

Among the translations available, Trilochan Das's *Gobindagita* is the earliest. By caste, Trilochan was a barber, a backward caste in the caste hierarchy, which normally had no access to the Sanskrit language. According to K.C. Sahoo, Trilochan was a translator belonging to the late 16th century (1981: 53), but there are a number of references in *Manibandha Gita* and *Kabikalpa Tika* by Achyutananda Das to this text and its author. Das's translational intervention was revolutionary in many ways. First, he conceives the text as being multi-layered in significance. For him, while the outer erotic surface is meant for the plebeian reader, the inner subtext of the core is metaphysical. Radha and Krishna, the amorous protagonists of the source text, become the 'Jiva' ('the essential created being'') and 'Parama' ('the supreme absolute') in the translated one. Therefore, we see a simultaneous literal rendering along with a kind of inverted Bhasya, which instead of simplifying the complex, transforms the ordinary into an abstract metaphysical discourse. This construction of a metaphysical discourse around *Geeta Gobinda* through translational practice unalterably afforded a secular text a spiritual significance and set the trend for all subsequent translations of the text. Though many subsequent translations confined themselves to the rendering of only the erotic outer surface, in the popular perception, this continued to be a sacred text. Moreover, this is the earliest instance of an 'iconic' translation (as characterised by Ramanujan). Ironically the translational strategy adopted by Das saves it from degenerating into pornography, the inevitable risk a translation runs when such a text is mediated in a people's language.

The next important translation of *Geeta Govinda* is Brindabana Das's *Rasabaridhi*. The title he chooses for his text is drawn from the Vaishnav aesthetics where Krishna is the embodiment of all the aesthetic pleasures. Any aesthetic enterprise having Krishna at its center is therefore full of 'rasa', the essence of aesthetic enjoyment. He calls his translation 'Rasabaridhi', which

literally means a 'sea of rasa' while the original title would mean 'a song for Krishna'. Here we see the predominance of Vaishnavite ideology in the Orissan society of the times. However, while Artaballav Mohanty (1973) claims that this is an early 15th century text, the later historians place it in the mid-16th century (Sahoo: 1981, Mishra: 1976). Its importance lies in the fact that this is probably the first translated text in Oriya, which mutes the revelatory nature of all creative enterprise. Although they were conscious of the authors of the source texts, earlier translators claimed a divine inspiration, or a revelation as the main motivating factor behind their attempt at mediating knowledge/wisdom in a Prakrit language. Brindavan Das is however courageous enough to ascribe the text to its human author, Jayadeva, and not to any metaphysical source, which is the repository of all knowledge. He explicitly owns up the "iconic" nature of his translational practice, despite adopting the age-old practice of the reconstruction of the text according to his own ideological predilections. He has even changed the title of the text and reworked its introductory portion. Moreover, he has succeeded in fashioning the rather expansive Oriya language, into some sort of pithy brevity, which matches Jayadeva's Sanskrit. Jagannath Das's linguistic model of a standard Oriya being populated heavily by Sanskrit diction seems to be followed by Brundavana Das with minor throwbacks to a few archaic native words and expressions.

Jagannath Mishra's *Geeta Govinda* is the first prose rendering in Oriya, in the form of 'tika' or commentary. Earlier most of the translations were only in verse form. Jagannath Mishra's prose rendering not only flattens the lilting musical quality of the original text, but it also uncovers the veil of sacredness imposed on it by the Vaisnav cult. It is instructive to remember here that Jagannath was a Brahmin by caste and had profound command over Sanskrit as is evident from the Sanskrit slokas he has composed as

an introduction to his translation. In deference to the rituals of Smarta Brahmins, he pays his obeisance to five sacred deities before embarking upon translational activity and the slokas begin with a prayer not to Krishna, but to Ganesha the auspicious hurdle-removing deity invoked at the beginnings of events. Like Jagannath Das who used both Vyasa's text and Sridhar Swami's commentary in his translation of *Bhagabata*, Mishra writes his Sanskrit commentary to Jayadeva's text and translates the text along with its commentary into Oriya. It is simultaneously a critical elucidatory and translated text, demonstrating Jagannath Mishra's scholarship and ability to use the genre of Oriya prose at a time when it was in a nascent form. This was completed on 6 August 1598 but could be cited as a precursor to standard modern translational practice anywhere in the world.

It is obvious that Mishra's work was not meant for a common audience. However, Dharnidhara Das's translation, produced around the same time, became extremely popular because of its musical quality, and because of the absence of intellectual pretensions. That it was the earliest printed text in Oriya is a proof of its continuing popularity. Though it is a classic example of the iconic translation, the translator claims that it is actually a commentary upon the Sanskrit original. It is significant that this text exemplifies the stabilization of the process of commentary as translational practice in Oriya language. The traditional desire of an Oriya translator to elevate, excise or expand the text, however, can be discerned at places in Dharanidhara's attempt, despite the iconic nature of his translation. For example, the first canto has been divided into three, while the seventh and eleventh have been divided into two each. This has been done often to maintain continuity or to mark a thematic wholeness.

After such texts like Dharanidhara's, it would be natural to expect that the entire translational practice in Orissa would settle

down to iconic translational practice that evolved during such a long period or would try to bridge the gaps, wherever they are, in such a method. Nevertheless, in practice, translational activity in Oriya continues to be a heterogeneous practice even hundred years after Dharanidhara's *Geeta Govinda Tika*. Bajari Das's *Artha Govinda* is an example of such heterogeneity, in which the translator seems to revert to the methods of the earliest translations. *Artha Govinda* was completed on 28 February, in the year 1673. His avowed claim in the text is to locate the meaning of the original more than its structure or rhythm. Therefore, the twelve cantos of Jayadeva's *Geeta Govinda* have been expanded into twenty-seven chapters in Bajari's translation, which adopts a single meter throughout the text. The secular and literary identity that this text had assumed in the hands of Jagannath Mishra and Daranidhara Das has been recast in a sacred mould, probably owing to Bajari's Vaishnav allegiance. Probably the religious and cult allegiance is more responsible for this translation than any other commitment. For, the translator reveals Bajari's inadequate command over the source language, which has resulted in misinterpretation in several places. Moreover, Bajari has taken recourse to archaic expression in Oriya while his previous translators had already put the language to sophisticated use. His translation is an example of how commitments other than literary can spawn translations, which misrepresent the intentions of the source text.

Haribansha by Achyutananda is a composite translation of several source texts in Sanskrit woven around the life of Krishna. The original *Haribansh.*consisting of three parvas viz. "Haribansha", "Bishnu", "Bhabisyata" is an appendix to Vyasa's Mahabharata and belongs to the genre of 'upapuranas' in Sanskrit. However, Achyutananda expands the text in a manner in which it assumes the shape of a Purana by amalgamating material culled from *Bhagabata*, Book X and Sarala's *Mahabharata* etc. Achyutananda's text is

divided into seven parts and is quite different from its Sanskrit original, even if we completely excise the Mahatmya portion. According to Natabara Satapathy (1990), the Oriya work excels more in its aesthetic quality, psychological insight, and coherence of structure than in its religious significance. Although the subversive edge of Sarala Das's Mahabharata is missing, like Sarala Das's *Mahabharata,* it is a restructuring of the original, catering to contemporary literary tastes in the name of translation.

Lanka Ramayana[6] by Siddheswar Das inaugurates another translational practice by choosing a part of the source text, *Adbhuta Ramayana,* which practice corresponds to his own belief system. Since the source text is a shakta one, it totally undermines the original *Ramayana* by Valmiki and valorizes the female protagonist Sita as the real slayer of the evil forces in the place of Rama. The novelty of such a formulation is quite attractive for the translator, which according to Grierson (1904), "is a comparative modern work","distinctly Shakta in character". But the subversive dimension is too combustible for the Oriya audience of those times. So Siddheswar begins the text from the seventeenth chapter of the source text and changes the ending in such a manner that it becomes a delicate balance between tradition and novelty, the Vaishnav and Shakta strains and the original *Ramayana* and *Adbhuta Ramayana*. The elements of other translational practices like excising, expansion are also present in this text. More than theological and literary intentions, the novelty of the story seems to be the main source of inspiration for this translation.

Ichhabati by Dhananjaya Bhanja is a purely imaginative literary text of the later part of the eleventh century, which incorporates the translation of two independent Sanskrit texts i.e. *Chaura Panchasika* by Bilhana and *Purva Panchasika* by an anonymous writer. Bhanja, a king of Ghumusara reworked the original literary creation of Banamali Das and then fused the iconic

translation of the said text with a reworked *Chata Ichhabati* by Banamali Das while the sixth and seventh cantos are the translation of *Purva Panchasika*. The eighth, ninth and tenth cantos are the translations of Bilhana's text. Minor adjustments have been made in the translation to adapt them to the original storyline. This is not only novel as a translational practice, but also attracts attention for being the first translation in Oriya of a purely secular text, unlike *Geeta Gobinda* which was more open to religious interpretation. Though Jagannath Das's *Bhagabata* was extremely popular among the public and set the trend for future translations in Oriya, the scholarly segment of the society frowned upon some of its translational strategies. In the 18th century, he produced his own translation, generally referred to as *Khadanga Bhagabata*, which was more faithful to the Sanskrit original. In order to counter the enormous prestige of Das's *Bhagabata*, and gain legitimacy for his own, he demonstrated his ability as a Sanskrit scholar early in his enterprise. In the subsequent chapters too, he incorporated Sanskrit epigrams summarizing the theme, which underlined his scholarship. Nevertheless, sometimes this scholarship became a hindrance to the easy flow and naturalness of expression despite his adoption of Das's innovative metrical form and the standardized Oriya language. His ideological compulsions and social location might have been responsible for such a scholarly attitude that came in the way of popular appeal. For example, he belonged to the Gaudia Vaishnav sect, which disapproved of Das's *Bhagabata.* Moreover, his status as a poet attached to the royal court made it contingent upon him to wear the scholarly garb. Valmiki's popular tale of Rama spawned various kinds of literary expressions in India, including translations into various regional languages, subversive texts in Sanskrit and their translations and so on. One major Oriya text on Rama in the ornate poetry tradition was *Baidehisha Bilasha* by Upendra Bhanja. In order to match the skills employed in the said text, Banamali Patnaik translated Bhaojaraja Suri and Laxmana Suri's text

Ramayana Champu that also belonged to the ornate Sanskrit poetic tradition. However, Patnaik's text *Suchitra Ramayana* written in 1754 abandons the style of the original, which combines both the prose and verse forms and the entire text, and is written in verse. He admits that though the theme he has undertaken is sacred, he is more attracted by the poetic skills employed in the original. In order to sharpen the poetic skill, that is part of the ornate tradition and to heighten the emotional content or rasa, he has deviated from the original at a few places. His text can be characterized as an iconic translation in which his faithfulness to the original sometimes causes artificiality of expression.

The last text taken up for consideration is the *Gita* by Krishna Singh, the king of Dharakot belonging to the latter half of the 18th century and the translator of the more popular *Mahabharata* and *Haribandha*. Like Dinabandhu Mishra he has tried to follow the original faithfully. In the introductory verses, he establishes his identity as a devotee of Jagannath, as done in his other translations like *Mahabharata*. However, unlike in the *Mahabharata*, he has faltered at places while interpreting the subtle nuances of the abstract philosophical formulations of the original *Srimad Bhagabata Gita*. Krishna Singh's translations are an example of the limitations of iconic translations of philosophical texts into the Oriya language.

This brief analysis of some representative texts belonging to a period spanning three hundred years, from the early 16th century to early 19th century, reveals a heterogeneous field in which various translational and interpretative practices coalesced. Barring a few texts towards the end of the period, most of the texts demonstrate the simultaneous presence of multiple strategies current at the time. However, most of the works do not designate themselves as 'translations' but as 'revelations'. By expressing their obeisance to some super human creative agency, they not only legitimize their creation/translation but also problematize the whole question of the

claims of authorship and ownership of texts. A deeper ideological analysis is called for to map the contours of the problematic field in question.

Section V: Texts and Ideologies

"The king of spirits said, 'there have been as many Ramas as there are rings on this platter. When you return to earth, you will not find Rama. This incarnation of Rama is now over. Whenever an incarnation of Rama is about to be over, his ring falls down. I collect them and keep them. Now you can go.' So Hanuman left."

This is how the story cited in Ramanujan's essay "Three Hundred *Ramayanas*: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation" ends. The story narrates how one day Rama's ring fell off, made a hole on the ground and vanished into the nether world. Asked to go in search of the ring, Hanuman arrived there and met the king of spirits. As the king of spirits was asking him to choose Rama's ring from amongst a bunch of identical rings, the time of that particular *Ramayana* was over. Then the king explained to Hanuman that since that particular *Ramayana* was over, by the time he returned, Rama would be gone. In addition, there are numerous Ramas as there are several *Ramayanas*. This story signifies the existence of multiple discourses around a single theme in the Indian mythological and epistemological tradition. This multiplicity of discourses not only challenges the contemporary notions of authorship and ownership of texts but also counters the traditional perception of classical Indian episteme as being conservative, stifling any kind of growth. There are at least four distinct literary traditions around the myth of Rama. The central tradition around Valmiki's text is apparently conservative with liberal strains here and there. Rama the protagonist is represented in this tradition, not as the ultimate Godhead but as the best among humans. The example

of the Brahminical discourse around Rama can be gleaned from such texts as *Yogabasistha Ramayana* or *Adhyathma Ramayana*. Rama is represented here either as "all knowledge" or as "divine incarnation" depending on the philosophical or spiritual thrust of the composition. The subversive treatises like *Adbhuta Ramayana* and Bimal Suri's *Pauma Chariya* belong to the third type of discourse. While the former represents sectarian or cult allegiance, the latter is heterodox in nature. In subversive texts, the character of Rama is subordinate to other higher forces like Shakti in the character of Sita or Ravana, the evil character in other traditional texts. Apart from these three, there are various kinds of recycling of the Ramayana tale in folk traditions. This multiplicity of representations performs several functions like spiritual and intellectual heightening, subversion or popularization of the 'original' text within a given episteme. Thus, it can be clearly seen that the domain of the original text was never authoritarian in the Indian translation tradition. This denial of the authority of the original or authorship is not only true of the Rama myth but of the entire tradition of Indian philosophy and its ideological underpinnings. Although narratives like those of Dr.S.Radhakrishnan have tried to create an impression that Indian philosophy is idealistic by concentrating on its orthodox traditions, later historians like S.N.Dasgupta and D.P.Chattopadhyaya give equal importance to all the four major philosophical strands i.e. the Vedas, post-Vedic systems, heterodox systems like Jainism and Buddhism and the Lokayata schools, including popular traditions. They counter the notion that the Vedic and post-Vedic knowledge under Brahmin hegemony constitute the only Indian method of philosophical discourse. The knowledge under the Brahmin hegemony is primarily metaphysical and exclusionary. It excludes the common people and their material location. They turn to the heterodox systems and popular experience across generations for a coherent worldview. Both the orthodox systems under Brahmin hegemony and the heterodox and Lokayata systems of popular participation have together given rise to complex textual practices in

ancient and medieval India. The 'grand' narratives were in perpetual tussle with the 'little' narratives.

The textual practices developed in India can be divided into three parts, i.e. the orthodox Brahminic (Sanskrit), the heterodox (subversive) and the folk (subaltern). The orthodox practice encouraged imitative and interpretative texts while the heterodox tradition gave rise to texts that subverted the hegemonic Sanskrit texts. It would be fruitful to invoke the Jaina Anekantabada in this context. According to Ramakrishna Rao:

> It (Jaina Anekantabada) is what might be called a view of reality as being pluralistic, many-sided or expressing itself in multiple forms. The result is that no absolute predication of reality is valid. Whatever we assert about reality must be probable or relative (Ramakrishna Rao 1975:94).

This relativistic and pluralistic notion about reality gave rise to a tentative attitude to texts. The Brahiminical concept of an absolute text was challenged by this notion and paved the way for subsequent subversion of textual practices. The folk discourse balanced the orthodox and heterodox elements in an unsystematic manner. All these textual categories were not very conducive for iconic translations. In other words the contemporary notion of translation was not prevalent in ancient or medieval India. (See also Dash and Pattanaik 2002). Though translation qua translation was not available, there were many retellings of the puranas in ancient and medieval India. The writing of *purana*s and *upapurana*s and their many retellings were due to a complex intellectual inheritance of this genre. Though *purana*s were written in the Sanskrit language by the Brahmin class, a design to disseminate knowledge among the common people was implicated within it. Knowledge was orthodox

metaphysics, but folk and heterodox narrative elements were amalgamated into its structure. Though *Ramayana* was initially a kavya and Mahabharata was an itihas (history) they came to the popular imagination in the form of puranas. This composite nature of *purana*s resulted in its many retellings. After the modern Indian languages evolved, these *purana*s came to be recreated in those languages, retaining their complex intellectual inheritance. The complexity of the field deepened further when various Bhakti cults/sects proliferated in response to the teachings of Ramananda, Kabir, Alwars and others during medieval times. The earlier Shaiva/Shakti cults had substantially transformed the character of the dominant Vaishnav *purana*s according to their own ideologies. Now the theological formulations of the saints were also incorporated into the discourse. Thus towards the later part of medieval times Indian society and the cultural practices therein had become truly composite.

In Orissa, however, the socio-cultural spectrum had been a composite phenomenon for a long time. Here the aboriginal and *lokayata* elements were in close proximity with the heterodox systems and had assumed a dominant position. The *lokayata* icons like the goddesses and Shaiva deities were worshipped along with Lord Jagannath the presiding deity, who was claimed by all the belief systems i.e. by the Sabara, Jaina, Buddhist and Vaishnav (=Brahmin) faiths. Brahminisation, which began towards the 10th century AD, continued till early 15th century during Somavanshi and Ganga dynasties. Brahmins captured the cultural-political space and assumed a hegemonic position during this period. The multi-cultural character of Lord Jagannath was repressed under Brahmin suzerainty. Lord Jagannath was reduced to a monocultural Vaishnav deity. Only in the 15th century, with the advent of Kapilendra Dev as the king of Orissa, the multi-cultural character of Lord Jagannath was restored. Hitherto marginalized forces and belief-systems again aspired for ascendancy during Kapilendra's rule and Kapilendra

allowed equal space for all of them in the power-spectrum as is evident from the Srisailam record:

> Kapilendra, in his Srisailam record called himself Purana Vaishnav, Purana Maheswar and Durgaputra. Thus, he was a Vaishnavite, a Saivite and a Shaktaite at the same time (Satyanarayan 1983).

Sarala's *Mahabharata* and other writings, which were produced during Kapilendra's rule, demonstrate the composite nature of the cultural and religious affiliation. Jaina and folk elements jostle to find expression within the predominantly Brahminical text, resulting ultimately in the subversion of Brahmin ideology. This cultural diversity had to face a challenge again from Islam during the 15th century. A major part of Orissa came under direct Muslim control in the second half of the 16th century. However, indirect influences of Islamic culture had already been felt in the earlier centuries because several parts of India had come under Muslim administrative control before the end of the 14th century itself. Before the Muslims came on the Indian scene, the role of the Indian states in the cultural life of the people had been minimal. The royal administration confined itself to maintaining a standing army, and collecting revenue for the upkeep of the same. In matters of ethics and morality, adjudication of the rule of the law etc. people enjoyed a lot of autonomy. Only during transitional phases between the decline of one dynasty and the rise of another, there was disruption in this kind of autonomy. Since the rulers and the people belonged to contiguous faiths and religious practices under the broad rubric of Indian composite culture, there was a common ritualistic bond between the people and the state. This weakened with the establishment of Muslim domination. The hitherto dominant Brahmincal ideology received a severe setback due to such a weakening. The subaltern heterodox voices, which were recessive during the Brahmin hegemony, became more audible.

The articulation of heterodox voices resulted in various new cultural phenomena. Several historians like Tara Chand (1976) and Satyaranarayan (1983) have analyzed the impact of Muslim presence in India and the resultant cultural practices. The Muslim presence according to Tara Chand had a bipolar character. As a religion and system of faith, Islam was monotheistic, and in its earlier phase it had a democratic organization not admitting any kind of hierarchy like caste, common to Brahminic practices. However, by the time it entered north India as the religion of the conquerors, its democratic character had been diluted and the fraternal impulse had given way to the logic of conquest. Thus, we witness two faces of Islam in India between 12th and 15th centuries – one preaching universal brotherhood and equality before religion and the other practicing the marauding rule of the sword and the silencing of dissent by extermination. That is precisely the reason why the character of Islam in the south where it was not primarily a religion of the conquistadors, is vastly different from that of the north. However, towards the last part of the 15th century the character of Islam even in the north underwent a change. Political compulsions fragmented the bonding within Islam itself. Now various groups professing Islam were struggling for power in the north and to a lesser extent in the south. There were victors and victims within the people professing the same religion and trying to retain their hold over power and subjects too. A new cultural practice of religious tolerance emerged because of these political compromises. The hitherto antagonistic religions began to accommodate each other at the ideological level. While some people professing Islam participated in the Hindu rituals, there were attempts at modification of Hindu religious practices according to Islamic tenets. The Satya-pira worship and the spread of the Bhakti cult are the results of such ideological accommodation. Because of its vantage geographical location, Orissa was privy to the accommodative ideological shifts taking place in both the north and the south. We have mentioned earlier that until the 15th century, the indirect influence of Islam was

felt in Orissa because its political contact was mainly with the south, and it was more or less a benevolent kind of Islam, as practiced in the south. By the time Orissa came under the direct Muslim rule of the powers of the north, it was again the influence of tolerant Islam, which encouraged heterogeneity. Thus, throughout Orissan history, there was an ambience of peaceful existence between the two religions. Therefore, the incidence of forcible conversion, seen in northern India, was rare in Orissa. Concurrently Brahminical Hinduism, which was more orthodox elsewhere, resulting in mass conversion like in Bengal and parts of Kerala, was less so in Orissa, accommodating subaltern groups within the Hindu fold. This fertile field of religious tolerance and accommodation both by the Islamic groups and Brahminical orthodoxy could be one of the reasons of Chaitanya's phenomenal success in Orissa compared with his native Bengal. The other reason of Chaitanya's acceptance in Orissa was the political disempowerment of the Gajapati Kings after Purushottam Deb (Sahoo 1968: 7).

Chaitanya's advent had a profound bearing on the ideology of translation in Orissa. However, the full significance of the role played by Chaitanya on the translation scene cannot be realized without having a glance as well at the relationship between political power and the languages implicated in the translational practice. It is common knowledge that written languages are intimately connected with structures of political power and are important sites of ideological struggle. With the rise of Muslim rulers to seats of political power in India, it is natural to expect that Persian or Arabic would assume the hegemonic position replacing Sanskrit. Nevertheless, because of the peculiar power equation in operation during that time, Sanskrit did not face a direct confrontation with Arabic or Persian. First, the Kshyatriya chieftains, who opposed the Muslim rulers militarily, were merely patrons of Sanskrit. They didn't know or identify with the language. The Brahmins who

identified with or in a manner of speaking, ‘possessed’ the language were prepared to shift their allegiance to the new power-establishments. The Muslim rulers also reciprocated by avoiding confrontation with the Brahmin caste and patronizing Sanskrit language for their own legitimacy. Thus, a complex relationship between Sanskrit on the one hand and Persian and Arabic on the other grew during medieval times. Shervani characterizes this relationship as non-existence of confrontation, mutual admiration and as a process of assimilation (Shervani 1968: 69-70). However, though there was no direct confrontation between Sanskrit and other languages imported by the Muslim invaders, we would like to argue that an indirect impact of Islam brought about a change in the status of Sanskrit as a language. Sanskrit literature, of course, had its usual growth in the changed scenario, but the Sanskrit language was no more the only language of theological and political eminence. This diminution of Sanskrit’s privilege and aura as a language revealed by the gods, resulted in the quick consolidation of regional Prakrit languages as a vehicle of theological exchange. People’s languages acquired the authority to confront textual wisdom directly. This phenomenon can be compared to preaching by various Bhakti cults during that time, which advocated the establishment of the individual’s direct relationship with god without the mediation of the priestly class. In this linguistic context, the message of Chaitanya’s cult of bhakti converged with the translational enterprise of the Pancha Sakha and others in Orissa. For example, after Chaitanya proclaimed *Geeta Govinda* as his favorite text, several translations into Oriya ensued. Even the literary-erotic significance of the text was undermined in order to project it as a sacred devotional text of the Vaishnavas. Vaishnavism, preached by Chaitanya, was adopted by several Oriya dynasties, and then many Vaishnav texts were translated into Oriya. Texts like *Geet Govinda* and *Adhyatma Ramayana* were translated several times. Jagannath Das’s translation of the *Bhagavata* was canonized as a major text after its adoption by the Vaishnavites as their sacred book. In a manner of speaking, it

can be argued that the ideology of the Bhakti cult was a major facilitator of translational practice. Brahminical ideology ensured the dominance of the priestly class in theological matters by recognizing Sanskrit as the only language of the scriptures. When Bhakti cult sought to dispense with the role of rituals and priests in the individual's relationship with god, it was quite natural to make the scriptures available to the common people in their languages. It is worthwhile to remember here that saint-poets like Kabir had not only expressed their disapproval of the priestly cult but also castigated the Sanskrit language. Balaram Das, the Oriya saint-poet and a contemporary of Chaitanya also claimed that, not the mastery of a language, but the cultivation of bhakti within one's own self is the real prerequisite for approaching god/wisdom.

As has been discussed earlier, Chaitanya's advent in Orissa coincided with the weakening of the Gajapati kings. The hitherto powerful Kalinga Empire fragmented itself into three major Oriya-speaking principalities. Once the central power lost political control, there was a social and economic chaos of sorts. The so-called centre was transformed into a mere ritual figurehead. The changed nature of relationship between the center and the margin can be perceived from the construction of Jagannath temples in smaller principalities. During the heydays of the Kalinga Empire, the construction of the Jagannath Temple was not allowed outside Puri and Cuttack. The rulers of smaller principalities not only built Jagannath temples but also maintained their own court poets and scholars. All those court poets and scholars were not necessarily writing in Sanskrit alone. They were also using the Oriya language. Toward and after the later part of the 16th century therefore a multi-lingual aesthetic-religio-political transaction became the norm, making the field of translation more fertile. This political equation between the centre and the margin was replicated in the relationship between the dominant and the subaltern segments of the society too. The confrontational

relationship between various segments gave way to a collaborative one, within the framework of the courts of the small principalities. This collaborative relationship was the springboard for many translations. However, the subaltern groups, which were outside the periphery of the court, continued their own translational enterprise. It is fruitful to remember here that these groups were instrumental in the subversive translational practices in Oriya in the initial phase. Thus there was in the changed political atmosphere a contest of sorts within the subaltern groups to establish their own hegemony over written discourse in Oriya. The proliferation of parallel translations of a single text was a manifestation of this assertion of identity by various subaltern groups both within and outside the court. This identity-assertion through the Oriya language is among the important factors driving the growth of Oriya nationalism. This language-based Oriya identity was also a troubled one because after the 16th century the Oriya-speaking populace remained divided among three major political centers of power located outside Orissa. These three power-centers were either apathetic or indifferent to the growth of the Oriya language. The apathy of the centre of power for the Oriya language was very much pronounced in the eastern segment. Coupled with this apathy, there was rampant economic exploitation of the people as well. The local chieftains did not have any surplus wealth to patronize cultural activity. The literary discourse and translational practice thus survived precariously on the strength of nascent linguistic nationalism and Vaishnav religious impulse. Translation, mainly of the Vaishnav religious texts during this phase, is an indication of such a phenomenon. After the shift of centre of power to Murshidabad in the last part of the 7th century, even this activity declined. Only *Mahatmyas,* which catered to the religious sentiments of rural womenfolk, continued to be translated from Sanskrit.

Similarly, the western part of Orissa had a dominant aboriginal population that was not conversant with organized

economic activity. Due to lack of surplus wealth and support of the ruling dynasty, there was virtually no growth of Oriya literature. Only three to four translations into Oriya can be identified as having been produced in this area during a time span of almost hundred years (Sahoo: 1969). Consequently, the Oriya-speaking populace became merely the receivers of the texts produced in the eastern and southern segments in the wake of Bhakti movement, and not participants in a vibrant literary/translational culture.

However, southern Orissa continued to be a site of literary and translational activity. The Qutbsahi rulers who occupied the south in 1574 were very liberal, They patronized the Telugu language and literature. The local Oriya chieftains also encouraged translation and literary activity in Oriya. The same state of affairs continued even after the Mughals occupied the region and it was ruled by the Nizam of Oudh. Therefore, whatever systematic development of Sanskrit and Oriya literature and translation activity we do come across can be located in the southern part of the province. Most of the palm-leaf manuscripts of translated texts discovered so far can be traced to this area.

The Bhakti movement and the political dependence of Oriya people on non-Oriya centers of power had a cumulative effect on literary and translational discourse. Earlier all the translational activity in Oriya was confined to the source language of Sanskrit. There were of course subversive translations of Sanskrit texts, but the dominant position of Sanskrit was implicit in that practice. The contact with contiguous languages like Telugu and Bengali had not been made popular. After the diminution of the status of Sanskrit and the loss of political independence of the Oriya-speaking people, translation activity from Bengali, Telugu and Hindi gained momentum in the later part of the 18th century. For example, Sadanand Brahma, a noted Sanskrit scholar himself, translated a

Sanskrit text through the filter language of Bengali. In his *Brajalilamrita Samudra* he admitted that it was a translation of *Radhakrishna Lila Kadambe,* the Bengali rendering of the Sanskrit *Bidagdha Madhaba.* Dinabandhu, a poet of southern Orissa of late 18th century, translated the Telugu text *Dahramanga Purana* as *Patibhakta Purana*. Towards the early 19th century, Tulsi Das's *Ramayana* written in a Hindi dialect was translated several times into Oriya. Moreover, some major Oriya writers of the period like Brajanath Badajena also started writing in languages contiguous with Oriya. Oriya writers like Pindika Srichandana and Shymasundar Bhanja demonstrated their mastery over contiguous languages by translating some Sanskrit texts like *Gita Gobinda* into Bengali. In order to gain access to a wider discursive practice, some other writers translated their own Oriya texts into Sanskrit. It was believed that through a Sanskrit translation a text could have a wider reach and gain acceptability in an elite circle. All these traits of translation are a sign of identity crisis within a social space fractured by political instability discussed earlier.

However, two trends in translation ran counter to this identity crisis. Firstly, the Oriya writers tested the strength and resilience of their language by translating a number of technical books like *Kama Sutra*, *Aswa Sashtra*, *Jyotisha Sashtra* etc. Moreover, for a long time they resisted the translation of the canonical literary and aesthetic texts in Sanskrit into Oriya, barring some exceptions like *Gita Gobinda*. On the one hand, through the translation of technical texts, they expected Oriya to graduate from a colloquial language into a more 'complete' language, and on the other by resisting translation of the literary texts; they expected Oriya literature to evolve such texts on its own.

The appropriation of scientific information and technical knowledge from other languages and evolving indigenous literary forms and expressions went hand in hand till the British occupation

of Orissa. The ideological structures and cultural practices under European colonization spawned various other translational practices in the Oriya language. Those cultural practices also resulted in new crises of identity and new forms of consolidation. The Oriya language and literature along with the translational practices became a contested field in which those crises were articulated and fresh consolidations were imagined. The politics of language and of translation practices occupied a predominant position in the imagined Oriya community that ultimately combined the majority part of the Oriya-speaking population with all the segments mentioned above of modern day Orissa.

Conclusion

We have so far given a chronology of translation in late medieval Orissa i.e. from the first decade of the 16th century to the early decades of the 19th century. In a historical perspective, these years constitute a period of social turmoil and political fragmentation in Orissan history. However, the impact of this period on Orissan culture has not been properly dealt with except for some isolated instances like in *Odiya Kavya Kaushala* by Sudarshana Acharya. Most of the histories have imposed the northern model of communal history, which sees the Muslim invasion as a main destabilizing factor that undermined all the healthy cultural structures at that time. Nevertheless, as all cultural transactions demonstrate, a new challenge to the established and traditional cultural modes, is not necessarily negative in its impact. The Muslim challenge to the existing Oriya socio-cultural situation was rather too complex to admit the prevalent simplistic and reductionist historiography, which is not only deficient in its conceptualization of Orissa, but also rather unsystematic in apprehending the cumulative significance of a fragmentary political situation for cultural life. First, the available histories do not deal with all parts of Orissa, like western Orissa, for

example, which was never under Muslim rule, where the Oriya language was used. In this essay, we have tried to train our attention on all these fragments, as much can be gained from a look at the context that surrounds texts translated into the Oriya language. This is a rather humble attempt, in the sense that it employs a novel method of constructing history, but is constrained by a paucity of factual evidence because of the very nature of methodology and enquiry.

We have tried to limit our enquiry to the system of knowledge-production and dissemination in medieval Orissa. This society was not very literate, if being literate meant having access to institutionalized knowledge, which was codified in Sanskrit. In such a society, translation has played a more important role than the so-called creative literature, catering solely to aesthetic enjoyment in mediating various types of knowledge and its dissemination within a very short span of time. Contrary to popular perception, we have demonstrated that much before Macaulay's time, a people's language was already privy to a vast body of knowledge that had been under the control of the elite only because of the intervention of translation as practice. Translation truly democratized the episteme.

Since ideology plays a crucial role in the institutionalization of knowledge, we have tried to unearth the ideological basis of translational practices in the Orissan society of the period under study. It is apparent that translational practice in Orissa has not been artificial or bureaucratic in any sense--- there have not been many instances of translation undertaken by learned men in various royal courts. It is rather, in Vazquez's words, a "creative praxis", enriching the social self (for a distinction between bureaucratic praxis and creative praxis, see Vazquez 1966: 200-214) and catering to social needs.

While fulfilling its social self, translational praxis simultaneously institutionalized a generalized way of looking at translation as an act, a generalized approach to it although it has not been consciously theorized anywhere. Dash & Pattanik 2002 hinted at the absence of such a theory even in Sanskrit aesthetics. When the process of translation began in Oriya, it started mainly as an institution of subversion of the hegemony of the Brahmin caste and the Sanskrit language. Towards the 16th century, other activities like annotation and explication were added while retaining the subversive dimension of translation in response to specific societal needs. The same societal needs also gave rise to actual literal translation in the 17th and 18th centuries. We have thus varieties of the translational process operating at the same time answering to specific needs of the society. Moreover, Sanskrit as the source text and the source language gave way to other neighboring languages gaining political and religious importance at various points of time.

We need at this point to remind ourselves that the variety of translational strategies employed in the praxis have consolidated the naturalness of the Oriya language for several reasons. First, translators, barring a couple of exceptions, belonged to the target language and were adept at using the language with some facility. Moreover, since the praxis was determined by the social need, there was an instinctive desire to reach out to the colloquial character of the Oriya language without doing much violence to its naturalness. Translational praxis has rarely targeted the so-called creative writing perhaps due to an instinctive realization that translation should fill in the gap in the knowledge base, rather than be a competing discourse of creative writing. Various creative art forms in Oriya language thus proliferated during this time, along with the translated texts. Many major writers who were great Sanskrit scholars themselves never undertook to translate Sanskrit art forms, though they often incorporated stylistic features of those art forms.

NOTES

1. Following the Hegelian model, conventional historiography divides Indian history into three periods: ancient, medieval and modern. For their administrative convenience, imperial historians highlighted medieval Indian history as a chaotic period. Although we retain such a traditional division for narrative convenience, we do not attach the same negative connotation to the medieval period. Beginning from James Mill, most of the historians have classified Indian history into three periods basing their argument on scant historical material. It seems the models of European historiography were imposed on a colony to perpetuate colonial control by positing colonial rule as modern, progressive and beneficial compared with the unwieldy chaos of medieval times. Subsequent discoveries of historical material by nationalist and subaltern schools have rejected this model. Medieval period in the history of Orissa can be divided into two phases, viz. early and late medieval. Like the other regions of India, state formation, development of architecture, literature etc. reached a state of maturity during this period in Orissa history. For a number of socio-political reasons Oriya emerged as a vehicle of literature and higher conceptual thought in the later phase of medieval Orissa. This might be considered a chaotic period from the point of view of political instability, but it did not hamper the growth of Oriya language or identity formation.

   The construction of the notion of Orissa proper or what was known as Cuttack was started only after the British occupation of the region in 1803. The various tracts of the Oriya- speaking people were under different administrations throughout Orissa's history. A separate Orissa province was carved, only in 1936, out of the southern, central and Bengal provinces under the British rule. It became the first Indian state to be constituted on a

linguistic basis. The norm of linguistic province became more widespread subsequently.

2. Various scholars like Nilakantha Das, B.M.Padhi, S.N.Das and K. C. Mishra trace the origin of the Jagannath cult to aboriginal, Jaina and Buddhist sources. However, towards the 11th century Jagannath was worshipped as mainly a Vaishnav deity.

3. If the dates ascribed to Chaitanya Das by J.K. Sahu (1969:46) are to be believed, there were instances of literary activity in the Oriya language in this region during Sarala's time. Chaitanya Das, who flourished during Prataparudra Dev-I of Patnagarh, Bolangir between 1470 and 1490, was the author of two voluminous Oriya theological texts titled *Nirguna Mahatmya* and *Bishnugarbha Puran*. Like Sarala he had come from a backward caste and his works were neither translations nor adaptations. His concepts like "sunya", "nirguna" etc. were developed later by the writers of eastern and central Orissa, but there was no concurrent development in the western Orissa.

4. A number of palm-leaf manuscripts containing the text of *Mahabharata* are available in Orissa State Museum. These are ascribed to Jagannath Das. R.N. Ratha of the Satyabadi Press, Cuttack, has also printed this set of Mahabharata between 1927 and 1928. Nevertheless, the most curious thing is that, historians of Oriya literature like Suryanarayana Das, Bansidhara Mohanty and Surendra Mohanty are silent about the existence of such a text.

   While editing the minor works of Jagannath Das, Bansidhara Sarangi and Kunjabihari Mohanty, have classified Jagannath das's writings into three categories viz. works that have been conclusively proved to be written by Jagannath, works that are probably by him and works that are definitely not by him. According to them, this *Mahabharata* belongs to the first

category. In *Jagannath Dasanka Rachanabali* (36) they opine that this *Mahabharata* belongs to one Jagannatha Das of Jaipur who is a 19th century poet. Moreover, as per a footnote in the text, information offered is contradictory and the source text that has been indicated does not yield any conclusive information whatsoever.

The language of *Bhagabata* and the mode of Bhanita (self-identification of the poet) there, are exactly replicated in this text. One of the early commentators of Jagannath's writings, Chintamani Acharya has accepted this text as Jagannath's without, however, offering any critical justification for the same. We do not find any reason either to support or contradict Achrya's claim. The claim of Sarangi and Mohanty is therefore rejected summarily as it is unreliable.

This *Mahabharata* is not a verbal translation of Vyasa's text. Though Das has divided Mahabharata into eighteen books on the lines of Vyasa, he has abridged the narrative part. He calls it a 'Sutropakhyana'- a brief story. In chapterisation and description, Das has taken much liberty. For example Vyasa's "Bana Parva", renamed as "Aranya Parva" by Jagannath, starts with the chapter relating to the exile of Pandavas into the forest and the treatise on "Golaka" or the abode of Vishnu, whereas in Vyasa's epic a long introduction has been given before the narration of the story of the exile.

5. Panchasakhas are five saint-poets of Orissa namely Achyutananda, Balaram, Jagannath, Jasobanta and Ananta. They lived between the late fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth century. Balaram was the eldest of the group and Ananta was the youngest. This history is based upon Achyuta's *Sunya Samhita*, Dibakara Das's *Jagannath Charitaamruta* and Ram Das's *Dardhyata Bhakti*. With the advent of modern historiography historians like Shyamsundar Rajguru, Mrutunjaya Ratha, Nilakantha Das and Artaballav Mohanty went along with this

view. During the last fifty years Chittaranjan Das in his *Achutananda O' Phansakha Dharma*, *Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature of Orissa*, *Santha Sahitya* and *Balaram Das* reinforced the thesis that all the saint poets were contemporary and they consolidated the Oriya identity through their writings, bringing literature, society and religion on the same plane. However citing historical inaccuracies, contradictions Sachidananda Mishra provided an alternative viewpoint that the concept of the panchasakha is a myth, and does not stand the test of rigorous historical scrutiny. Later on Natabara Samantaray published two books titled *Sakhahina Panchasakha* and *Panchasakha Parikalpana* wh ich tried to prove that those saint poets in question were not contemporaries and there could be a gap of two hundred years between Balaram and Jagannath on the one hand and the other three on the other. There has not been any further study refuting the theses put forward by Mishra and Samantaray. Another historian Krushna Charan Sahoo puts forward an argument that there were several poets bearing the same name across these times, so the texts ascribed to each one of them could be doubtful. However, basing an argument on those doubtful texts alone, the entire concept of Panchasakha should not be discredited. For the present discussions, we go along with the view put forward by the latest one by Sahoo (Sahoo 1999-2001).

6. Most of the scholars of Oriya literary history have ascribed this text to Sarala Das because *Bilanka Ramayana* is by Siddheswar Das, which happened to be the original name of Sarala before he was blessed by the Goddess Sarala. In *Chandi Purana* Sarala declares that the *Ramayana* was his first work. Until the seventh decade of the 20th century, since no other version of *Ramayana* had been ascribed to Sarala, this text was commonly accepted as having been written by Sarala. In the seventies Satchidananda Mishra discovered a palm-leaf manuscript titled *Bichitra*

Ramayana having the Bhanita of Siddheswar Das. Its archaic language, subversive tone, and ethnic representation were closer to Sarala's style. He then argued that *Bichitra Ramayana* and not *Bilanka Ramayana,* was the text produced by Sarala. K.C. Sahoo has also argued that *Bilanka Ramayana* could not have been by Sarala because its source text, *Adbhuta Ramayana* was written only between the last part of 14th and the first part of 15th century, which is close to Sarala's own time. His second argument is that *Bilanka Ramayana* was influenced by *Jagamohana Ramayana* in more than one way. The language, style and syntax of *Jagamohana Ramayana* are more archaic than those of *Bilanka Ramayana*. Therefore, he places the text at the last part of 16th and the early part of 17th century (Sahoo: 1995 pp. 62-64). Snehalata Patnaik, the editor of the authoritative text of *Bilanka Ramayana*, is also of the same view. Hence, the scholars now seem to have reached a consensus that *Bilanka Ramayana* was not authored by Sarala but by someone having a similar name.

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Appendix: Names of Translated Texts

Sl. No.	Title of the Translated Text	Name of the Translator	Period	Remarks
1	*Abhinaya Darpan*	Jadunath Singh	Late 18th Cen.	A work of dramaturgy
2	*Abhinava Chintamani*	Dinabandhu Harichandan	-do-	A work on Ayurveda
3	*Adhyatma Ramayan*	Damodar Das	Early 17th Cen.	…………..
4	*Adhyatma Ramayan*	Suryamani Chyau Pattanayak	1773-1838	…………..
5	*Adhyatma Ramayan*	Gopal Telenga	18th Cen.	He belongs to Western Orissa
6	*Adhyatma Ramayan*	Gopinath Das	18th Cen.	…………..
7	*Adhyatma Ramayan Tika*	Haladhar Das	17th Cen.	It is a translation with implication
8	*Adhyatma Ramayan Tika*	Narahari Kavichandra	Early 19th Cen.	…………..
9	*Amarusatak*	Srinibas Rajamani	Early 19th Cen.	…………..
10	*Arsa Ramayan*(*Ayodhya Kanda)*	Krushanachandra Rajendra	1765-1786	…………..
11	*Arthagobinda*	Bajari Das	17th Cen.	Translation of Gitagobinda
12	*Ashadha Mahatmya*	Mahadev Das	Early 17th Cen.	…………..
13	*Baidya Jivan*	Dinabandhu Hrichandan	Early 18th Cen.	Books on Ayurved.
14	*Baidyasarasvat*	Dinabandha Hrichandan	Early 18th Cen.	-do-
15	*Baisakha Mahatmya*	Rama Das	Early 18th Cen.	…………..
16	*Baisakha Mahatmya*	Jagannath Mardraj	18th Cen.	…………..
17	*Baisakha Mahatmya*	Madhusudan	Jagdeb	…………..

		Harichandan	18th Cen.	
18	*Baisakha Mahatmya*	Bipra Madhu Das	17th Cen.	…………..
19	*Baisakha Mahatmya*	Mahadeb Das	Late 17th Cen.	…………..
20	*Baisakha Mahatmya*	Haraprasad Das	Late 18th Cen.	…………..
21	*Baishnav Aldhiri Tika*	Harisebak Samantray	18th Cen.	Prose translation of Gobindalila mruth by Krushnadas Kabiraj
22	*Balabodha Ratnakaumudi*	Trilochan Mohanty	Late 18th Cen.	It is a book on Astrology.
23	*Balabodhini Tika*	Basudeb Rath	18th Cen.	…………..
24	*Baman Puran*	--------	Early 12th Cen.	…………..
25	*Baman Puran*	Balaram Das	18th Cen.	…………..
26	*Baman Puran*	Krushna Chandra Pattanayak	18th Cen.	…………..
27	*Batris Sinhasan Katha*	---------	From early 18th Cen.	This book of Sibadey has been translated by different persons in different areas in Oriya Prose
28	*Bedanta Ratnavali*	Ramachndra Birabara Hrichandan	18th Cen.	…………..
29	*Betala Panchavansati*	Mukunda Das	18th Cen.	…………..
30	*Bhagabat Gita*	Parameswara Das	Late 17th Cen.	…………..
31	*Bhagabat Lahiri*	Bipra	18th Cen.	…………..

	Harivansa	Achyutananda Das		
32	*Bhagavat* (*Balacharit*)	Gateswar	18th Cen	…………..
33	*Bhagavat*	Srushnacharan Pattanayak	Early 19th Cen.	…………..
34	*Bhagavat*	Goura Chandra Gajapati	18th Cen.	Only 10th book is ornate poetry
35	*Bhakti Ratnavali*	Bhim Das	………..	A part of Parasar Samhita has been translated
36	*Bhakti Ratnavali*	Chandrasekhar Das	18th Cen.	…………..
37	*Bharat Harivansa*	Sarala Chandidas	16th Cen.	A free translation/ adaptation of Hrivansa
38	*Bhaswati*	Trilochan Mohanty	Late 18th Cen.	A book on astronomy
39	*Bilanka Ramayan*	Siddheswar Das	Late 16th Cen.	A part of 'Adbhuta Ramayana' has been translated.
40	*Bilanka Ramayan*	Baranidhi Das	17th Cen.	-do-
41	*Bishnu Dharmattar Puran*	Dwija Gangapani Mohapatra	Early 19th Cen	…………..
42	*Bishnukesari Puran*	Mahadev Das	Late 17th Cen.	…………..
43	*Bishnu Puran*	Padmanabh Das	17th Cen.	…………..
44	*Bishnu Puran*	Prahlad Das	Early 19th Cen.	…………..
45	*Bishnu Puran*	Ballabh Narayan Behera Mohapatra	18th Cen.	…………..

46	*Brahmasanhita*	Sridhar	18th Cen.	…………..
47	*Brajalilamruta Samudra*	Sadananda Kavisurya Brahma	18th Cen.	The original text is 'Nidagdha Mahava' in Sanskrit which has been translated into Bangali as 'Radhakrushna-lila-kadamba'
48	*Chanaky Nitisar*	…………	18th Cen.	A prose translation
49	*Chandi/Durga Rahasya*	Madhusudan Harichandan Jagdev	18th Cen.	…………..
50	*Chikitsamanjari*	Dinabandhu Harichandan	Early18th Cen.	A book on Ayurveda
51	*Charaka Datta*	Dinabandhu Harichndan	Early 18th Cen.	-do-
52	*Damodar Puran*	Gouranga Das	18th Cen.	An adaptation/free translation of Bhagabat
53	*Dwadasi Mahatmya*	Mahadeb Das	Late 17th Cen.	…………..
54	*Ekadasi Mahatmya*	Harekrushna Chitrakar	Late 17th Cen.	…………..
55	*Ekadasi Mahatmya*	Dwija Hari	18th Cen.	…………..
56	*Ekadasi Mahatmya*	Dinkrushna Das	18th Cen.	…………..
57	*Ekadasi Mahatmya*	Jagannath Das	Late 17th Cen.	…………..
58	*Ekadasi Mahatmya*	Dibakar Das	Late 18th Cen.	…………..
59	*Ganga Mahatmya*	Purushottam	17th Cen.	…………..

		Das		
60	*Garuda Puran*	Dwija Gangapani Mohapatra	Early 19th Cen.	…………..
61	*Garuda Puran*	Ghnashyam Pattanayak	18th Cen	…………..
62	*Gitagovinda*	Uddhab Das	Ealy 16th Cen.	…………..
63	*Gitagovinda*	Jagannath Mishra	17th Cen.	…………..
64	*Gitagovinda*	………….	Early 17th Cen.	Known as keshb manuscript
65	*Gitagovinda/Govindagita*	Trilochan Das	Late 16th Cen.	It is a metaphysica l interpretatio n and translation
66	*Gitagovinda Tika*	Ananta Rath	Early 18th Cen.	…………..
67	*Gitagovinda Tika*	Dharanidhar Das	Late 16th Cen.	…………..
68	*Gitagobinda Tikasara*	………….	Early 18th Cen.	…………..
69	*Gitaprakasha*	Binayak Ray	Late 18th & early 19th Cen.	A book on music
70	*Gitarthasar Tika*	Bipra Janakiballabh a Kar	2nd half of 18th Cen.	A translation of Srimad Bhagavat Gita. The translation belongs to Medinapur
71	*Govinda Lilamruta*	Jadunandan Das	18th Cen.	…………..
72	*Govinda Lilamruta*	Haribansa Ray	18th Cen.	…………..
73	*Grahachakra*	Maguni Pathi	Early 19th Cen.	A book on Astrology
74	*Harsaduta*	Hari Baisya	Late 17th	…………..

			Cen.	
75	*Harsaduta*	Chintamani Mohanty	Early 19th Cen.	…………..
76	*Hanuman Natak*	Kishoricharan Das	18th Cen.	Translation of 'Mahanataka' in verse
77	*Harsaduat*	Achyutananada Das	16th Cen.	More an adaptation than translation
78	*Harsaduta*	Krushna Singh	1739-1788	…………..
79	*Harsaduta*	Bipra Nilambar Das	Late 17th Cen.	…………..
80	*Harsaduta* (I & II)	Bipra Narayan Das	18th Cen.	…………..
81	*Harivansa* (Vol. III)	Balaram Das	18th Cen.	…………..
82	*Harivansa* (*Swayambar Khanda*)	Bipra Gopal	Late 18th Cen.	…………..
83	*Haribhakti Kalpalata*	--------	18th Cen.	Translated from Sanskrit and the title is unchanged
84	*Haribhakti Ratnamala*	Bipra Nilambar Das	Late 17th Cen.	Kriyaogasara 'a part of Padmapuran' is translated
85	*Hitopadesha*	Gatiswar Mishra	18th Cen.	A translation of Panchatantra in Oriya verse
86	*Itihas Puran*	Krushna Chandra Das	18th Cen.	…………..
87	*Itihas Puran*	Kapileswer Narendra	18th Cen.	…………..
88	*Jagamohan Ramayan*	Balaram Das	Early 16th Cen.	A free translation

				with additional new stories
89	*Jatakalankar*	Trilochan Mohanty	Late 18th Cen.	A book on Astrology
90	*Jyotishasarasangraha*	Trilochan Mohanty	-do-	-do-
91	*Kalagnyana*	Tripurari Das	18th Cen.	-do-
92	*Kalagnayana*	Hari Das	Early 19th Cen.	-do-
93	*Kalki Purana*	Krushnachandra Pattanayak	18th Cen.	…………..
94	*Kamashastra*	Narayan Mohanty	Early 19th Cen.	…………..
95	*Kapilasamhita*	Nilakantha Das	18th Cen.	…………..
96	*Kartika Mahatmya*	Purushottam Das	18th Cen.	…………..
97	*Kartika Mahatmya*	Dayalu Das	18th Cen.	…………..
98	*Kartika Mahatmya*	Gobinda Das	Early 19th Cen.	…………..
99	*Kartika Purana*	Mahdeb Das	Early 17th Cen.	A translation of 'Kartika Mahatmya'
100	*Katapaya*	Bhubaneswar Kabichandra	Early 19th Cen.	A book on Astrology
101	*Katapaya*	Tripurari Das	18th Cen.	-do-
102	*Keraladasa*	Tripurari Das	-do-	-do-
103	*Keraladasapurana*	Jadumani	Early 19th Cen.	-do-
104	*Keralasutra*	Maguni Pathi	Late 19th Cen.	-do-
105	*Krupasindhu Jnana*	Krushna Das	Late 18th Cen.	Translated by the author from Oriya to Sanskrit
106	*Ksetra Mahatmya*	Balabhadra Mangaraj	18th Cen.	…………..
107	*Kestra Mahatmya*	Maheswar	Early 18th Cen.	…………..
108	*Kestra Mahatmya*	Jayakeshari	17th Cen.	…………..

		(Jaya Singh)		
109	*Laghusiddhanta*	Chaitanya Mohanty	Early 19th Cen.	…………..
110	*Lilavati*	Dhananjay Dwija	18th Cen.	…………..
111	*Lilavati*	Damodar Mohanty	Early 19th Cen.	…………..
112	*Lilavati Sutra*	Krushna Mangaraj	18th Cen.	…………..
113	*Magha Mahatmya*	Krushna Singh	1739-1788	…………..
114	*Magha Mahatmya*	Gopi Das	18th Cen.	…………..
115	*Magha Mahatmya*	Mahadeb Das	17th Cen.	…………..
116	*Mahabharata(Drona Parva)*	Jayakeshri (Jaya Singh)	17th Cen.	…………..
117	*Mahabharat*	Jagannath Das	16th Cen.	Abridged
118	*Mahabharat*	Krushna Singh	1739-1788	…………..
119	*Mahabharat*	Kapilesh Nanda	Early 19th Cen.	…………..
120	*Mahanataka*	Purushottam Das	18th Cen.	…………..
121	*Margasira Mahatmya*	Kripasindhu Das	18th Cen.	…………..
122	*Markandeya Puran*	Mahadeb Das	17th Cen.	…………..
123	*Markandeya Puran*	Pitambar	Early 19th Cen.	…………..
124	*Markandeya Puran*	Narasingha Das	18th Cen.	…………..
125	*Mitaksara*	Srinibas Rajamani	Early 19th Cen.	…………..
126	*Mukalatabali*	Srinibas Rajamani	-do-	A portion of Bhagabat has been translated
127	*Mukundamala*	…….	18th Cen.	Translation of Rajadhairaj Kulasekha

				written by the anonymous translator
128	*Nabagraha Dasaphala*	Trilochan Mohanty	Late 18th Cen.	…………..
129	*Natyamanorama*	Gadashar Das	18th Cen.	A book on dramaturgy, translated in Oriya prose
130	*Nrushingjacharita*	Yuga Das	Late 17th Cen.	…………..
131	*Nrushingha Puran*	Pitambar Das	18th Cen.	…………..
132	*Padma Puran*	Mahadeba Das	17th Cen.	…………..
133	*Padma Puran*	Bipra Nilambar	17th Cen.	………….
134	*Panchasayak*	Kabisekhar Narayan Das	18th Cen.	A book on Erotics
135	*Patibhakta Puran*	Dinabandhu	Early 19th Cen.	The title of the text in the source language Telugu is 'Dharmanga na Puran'
136	*Prachi Mahatmya*	Trilochan Das	Early 18th Cen.	…………..
137	*Prnab Byahruti Gita*	Bipra Jambeswar Das	17th Cen.	The writer himself is the translator. Early specimen of Oriya Prose
138	*Premakalpalatika*	Sadanada Kabisurya Brahma	18th Cen.	Translated from a Bengali text with the same title, which in

				turn is a translation of Sanskrit text 'Gobindalila mruta'
139	*Purana Ramayana*	Keshav	Early 19th Cen.	…………..
140	*Purushottam Mahatmya*	Trilochan	Early 18th Cen.	…………..
141	*Ramayana*	Krushna	Early 19th Cen.	…………..
142	*Rasabaridhi*	Brundaban Das	16th Cen.	A translation of Gitagobinda
143	*Rasadipika*	Ramachandra	18th Cen.	A translation of 'Gitagobind a in prose'
144	*Rutusambhav*	Nidhi Rath	18th Cen.	…………..
145	*Sakuntala Chhanda*	Balaram Keshri/ Ananta Rath	Late 18th Cen.	A translation of drama 'Abhijna Sakuntalam' in verse
146	*Salihotra*	Dhanjaya Bhanja	17th Cen.	Translated from a Sanskrit book `How to Maintain Horses'
147	*Salihotra Roganidan*	Dinabandhu Harichandan	17th Cen.	…………..
148	*Sangitaramayan*	Sadashib	18th Cen.	This book on music was written by an Oriya author, Gajapati Narayan

				Deb
149	*Siba Puran*	Bipra Manobodha Das	18th Cen.	…………..
150	*Siba Puran*	Bhagirathi Das	18th Cen.	…………..
151	*Siba Puran*	Dwaraka Das	1656-1736	…………..
152	*Siddharatna Brudusara*	Tripurari Das	18th Cen.	A book on Astrology
153	*Siddhantasara*	Krushna Patra	Early 19th Cen.	-do-
154	*Sivaswarodaya*	Jasobanta Das	Early 16th Cen.	Translation of 'Svarodaya'
155	*Smarasastra*	Kabisurya Brahma	Probably early 19th Cen.	Translation of 'Kamasastra '
156	*Srikrushnachaitanyacharitramruta*	Sadananda Kabisurya Brahma	18th Cen.	Bengali transation of Chaitanya – chritamruta by Krushnadey Kabiray
157	*Srimad Bhagavat* (Eleven Books)	Jagannath Das	Early 16th Cen.	…………
158	*Srimad Bhagavat* (Twelth Book)	Mahadeb Das	Late 16th Cen.	Completed the work of Jagannath Das
159	*Srimad Bhagavat*	Dinabandhu Khadanaga (Mishra)	18th Cen.	…………..
160	*Srimad Bhagavat* (13th Book)	Dwaraka Das	1656-1736	…………..
161	*Srimad Bhagava*	Bipra Janaki Ballabha Kar	18th Cen.	…………..
162	*Srimad Bhagavat Gita*	Balaram Das	Early 16th Cen.	…………..

163	*Srimad Bhagavat Gita*	Jaya Keshari (Jaya Singh)	17th Cen.	…………..
164	*Srimad Bhagavat Gita*	Krushna Singha	18th Cen.	…………..
165	*Srimad Bhagavat Gita*	Trilochan Das	Early 18th Cen.	…………..
166	*Srimad Bhagavat Gita*	Sanyasi Madhusudan Puri	18th Cen.	…………..
167	*Srimad Bhagavat Gita*	Sadhcharan Das	18th Cen.	…………..
168	*Srimad Bhagavat Gita*	Gopinath Rajaguru	18th Cen.	…………..
169	*Srimad Bhagavat Gita*	Harisebak Das	18th Cen.	…………..
170	*Srimad Bhagavat Gita*	Narayan Das	18th Cen.	…………..
171	*Srinivas Dipika*	Bhubaneswar Kabichandra	Early 19th Cen.	…………..
172	*Sripati Paddhati*	Nimbadeba	Early 17th Cen.	…………..
173	*Sriradhakrushna Vilas*	Gouranga Das	18th Cen.	An adaptation of ‘Gobindalila nruta’
174	*Sriram Bhakti Ratnavali*	Balaka Ramadas/Sebadas	18th Cen.	The original text is written by his teacher Ramday
175	*Suchitra Ramayana*	Banamali Das	18th Cen.	Translated from original Sanskrit ‘Ramayan Champu’ by Bhoja and Lakshman Suri
176	*Suchitra Ramayana*	Hari Baisya	18th Cen.	The book of

				Kalidas Chayan of Orissa
177	*Suddhi Chandrika*	…………	Early 19th Cen.	The source text is by an oriya author Srinivas
178	*Shuddhilipika*	………….	-do-	-do-
179	*Surya Puran*	Dina Narayan	18th Cen.	…………..
180	*Suryasiddhanta*	Nimbadeb	Early 17th Cen.	A prose translation
181	*Swarasarani*	Krushnasura Harichandan	18th Cen.	A book on Astrology
182	*Swarnadri Mahodaya*	…………..	18th Cen.	………….
183	*Uddhava Gita*	Balaram Das	Early 16th Cen	A part of Bhagavat was translated
184	*Yogavasishtha Ramayan*	Lakshmana Rath	Late 18th Cen.	The poet belongs to Sambalpur.

Translation Practices in Pre-colonial India: Interrogating Stereotypes

V.B.Tharakeswar

Abstract

This present paper examines two assumptions that prevail in the current understanding of pre-colonial language/translation situation in India.1 Translations of this period are seen primarily as empowering the vernaculars to become literary languages. It is also claimed that the vernacular languages were able to successfully negotiate the hegemony of Sanskrit through translations. Secondly, the scholars of 'Bhakti' movement hold that the "high texts" which were available only in Sanskrit were made available in vernaculars, and this move enabled certain sections of society (women and others) who were hitherto kept away from these texts to get direct access to divine teachings in their own languages. Thus, it is held that these "Bhakti" period translations democratized religion during that period. In this paper these two commonly held opinions would be examined in the context of pre-colonial translation practices in Kannada.

Translation practices of pre-colonial India are studied in four basic ways:

1. Looking at what the old grammarians have to say on the nature of language and drawing possible inferences from it for a theory of translation (See for example Gopinathan 2000- where he discusses implications of Bhartrhari's concept of *sphota* ['bursting forth'] for a theory of translation).

2. Looking at the question of identity-formation of a language and its relation to translation (See for example Kaviraj 1992, Pattanaik 2000 and Dash & Pattanaik 2002).

3. Analyzing the actual translations of the period, both textual analysis as well as placing them in a context (See for example Gopinathan 2000; Pattanaik, 2000 etc.), linking it to the questions of state, standardization of language, emergence of literature etc. (See for example Nagaraju 1995 and Pollock 1998 etc.).

4. Looking at the metaphors/phrases used by the authors while describing their indebtedness to earlier text(s)/author(s) and theorizing it (See Devy 2000, Mukherjee 1981 etc.).

It is not that these methods are mutually exclusive. The second and the third overlap considerably. And often in an article we might find these methods being juxtaposed in various combinations.

I will look at only the second and third kind of work to point out how the existing literature on pre-colonial translation practices does not apply to translations from and into Kannada and/or writing practices in what we call Karnataka (Kannada-speaking regions).

Discussing the relationship between identity formation of a language and religion, Sudipta Kaviraj remarks that during the Bhakti period the vernacular languages saw a gradual development and produced literature by slowly separating from the allegedly 'high' Sanskrit tradition. This development was very gradual and subtle. Kaviraj has characterized this development thus:

> [V]ernacular literatures (Bhakthi literature) and poetic traditions began an undeclared revolution.2 Within the formal terms of continuity with classical traditions in terms of narratives, forms and texts, these 'translations' (the new literatures that were emerging in vernacular

> languages were based on certain well-known Sanskrit texts) in vernaculars were hardly passive cultural creations; and they gradually produced an alternative literature which told the same stories with subtle alternative emphases to alternative audience (Words in parenthesis are mine, Kaviraj 1989: 35).

In a similar manner while surveying the translations into Oriya, Pattanaik says:

> What is so significant about endotropic translation into Oriya is that it has always aligned itself with the attempt to formulate a distinct identity of the Oriya-speaking people. Endotropic translation has also acted as an instrument of democratization, consistently subverting the power bases of the elite religion and political groups (Pattanaik 2000: 72-73).

Discussing translations from Sanskrit into Oriya as social praxis in medieval Orissa, in another context, Dash and Pattanaik say:

> The attempts at translations of deba bhasha (Sanskrit) texts in medieval India countered this divine origin theory of texthood by placing texts in a more public domain and by problematising the notion of authorship. Mediation between languages ultimately meant a shifting in social power-equations, because such transfers dealt a deathblow to the linkage of language with knowledge….
> …non-Brahmins revolted against Brahmin hegemony by subverting texts written in Sanskrit. Translation activity was an expression of the desire on the part of the hitherto excluded social groups to appropriate a cultural space which had been denied them (sic) (Dash and Pattanaik 2002: 76).

But at a later stage they also add that the vernacular begins to emulate the hegemonic structure/language.

From the above quoted passages it is clear that two themes are identified in the context of translations in medieval India[3]. One is that translations which were hitherto not permitted in the direction of Sanskrit into Indian vernaculars did take place. And the other is that this challenged the hegemonic order/language, and was a democratic move.

A look at the translation practices in Kannada literature around 10th century onwards will warrant a reformulation of these two arguments.There are certain assumptions that work behind these arguments, and the aim of this article is to critically examine these assumptions and articulate doubts before laying out some future lines for research. To begin with, the emergence of Bhakti literature and the emergence of Indian language literatures don't coalesce in the context of the emergence of Kannada and Tamil literatures.[4]

Scholars such as S. Nagaraju and Sheldon Pollock, who have worked on the socio-political context of the emergence of Telugu and Kannada literature, point out that a certain kind of agrarian economy led to formation of states, and emergence of chieftains. These developments in turn enabled vernacular languages, making them capable of expressing complex issues. It also gave rise to literary production. Pollock characterizes the emergence of the language of Kannada literature in such a context as giving rise to a cosmopolitanism in the vernacular because these languages emulated the cosmopolitan vernacular (Nagaraju 1995 and Pollock 1998). These scholars have laid emphasis on state and class formations. I argue here that the role of religion cannot be undermined in the emergence of literature in Kannada and both state-formation and religion have to be taken into consideration.

Another problem that is haunting us, Translation Studies scholars is that of the language-culture overlap or equating class, caste and language. This is also due to the fact that we generally look at literary histories chronologically and not at their spatial spread (topos) and we take a single language/literature as a unit of construction of its history. We only grudgingly acknowledge its link with other languages or literatures. If those who are looking at translation practices firmly base their analysis on empirical data, this problem could be overcome. But for such an analysis, Translation Studies has to, as a precondition, look at the spatial spread of literature that maps literature not only chronologically but also spatially. If we don't do it, then we would apply certain theories which would tell us that translations from Sanskrit was from an alien land/culture; which was high culture and it was imposed on us; and through our subversive practices (i.e. mainly through translation) we negotiated the hegemony of Sanskrit and developed the vernacular literatures and democratized certain non-available religious texts into them.

Let me explain this with translation practices in pre-colonial Karnataka. Let me begin the story from second or third century B.C. According to well-known traditions, Jainism entered South India in a major way in 300 B.C. When there was a twelve-year famine, a large group of Jains headed by Srutakevali Bhadrabahu, accompanied by King Chandragupta, left Madhyadesha and came to Kalbappu (Shravanabelagola). Another small group moved towards Tamil country. But there is evidence of the existence of Jainism in Sri Lanka and in the Tamil region from around 6th century B.C. That is a different issue altogether. It is enough to understand that there were two streams of Jainism that came to South India at different points of time. In Tamil also we find that many of the early texts are Jaina texts. Authorship and its relation to religion are contentious issues. Still I would like to quote some of the texts claimed by Jaina scholars as Jaina texts: For example, *Tolkaappiyam* (450 A.D.),

Tirukkural (600 A.D.) *Silappadikaaram* (800 A.D.)[5], *Jivaka Chintamani* (1000 A.D.) etc. (Khadabadi 1997: 208-209, and for more details on Jaina literature in Tamil, See Chakravarti 1974).

The impact of Jainism on Malayalam literature or Jainism in Malayalam is not much discussed. It might be due to the fact that by the time Malayalam emerged, the hold of Jainism in South India was on the decline. But still there are "points of contact" between Prakrit and Malayalam languages (Nair 1995).

We focus here on the aftermath of the entry of later stream of Jainas and their settling down in Shravanabelagola, which is in Hassan district of present-day Karnataka.

The Jaina group that came and settled down in Shravanabelagola had brought along with them the oral knowledge of Jainism. The knowledge was passed on orally from generation to generation. The teachings of Mahavira, which were in the Ardhamagadhi language and were in circulation in oral form, were put into script form around 5th century A.D., following Shwetambara and Digambara traditions. Most of it, except certain portions of the 12th and fifth agama, is lost; but whatever remained was put into the script by Pushpadanta and Bhutabali in Jaina Sauraseni Prakrit around 1st and 2nd century A.D. Even other canonical literature of Digambara Jains was composed in Jaina Sauraseni.

The translation of these canonical literatures appears not in the form of independent texts but in the form of commentaries of varied types written mainly in Maharastri Prakrit, Sauraseni Prakrit and also in Sanskrit. Only after these commentaries do we see original works in Sanskrit by Jaina teachers and scholars, along with works in Prakrit. The reasons for this could be two-fold:

1. As scholars like Khadabadi say, it was “to convince and propagate their religious tenets in Sanskrit-knowing circles and also to expand their influence over rival groups and others.” (Khadabadi 1997: 207).

2. As scholars like Pollock have argued, Sanskrit was gaining currency during this period, the middle centuries of the first millennium, because of a certain kind of state structure obtaining across South Asia and its dependence on Sanskrit as a language. I too argue that it might have become inevitable for Jains to translate as commentaries their canonical texts as well as compose secular texts in Sanskrit that might have been of use to the state.

There was also a moment when Sanskrit was preferred to Prakrit by Jainas. “The revolt in favour of using Sanskrit” says K.M.Munshi, “as against Prakrit, headed by Siddhasena Divakara (C.533 A.D.) was an attempt to raise the literature and the thought of the Jainas to the high intellectual level attained by those of the Brahmins. This revolt naturally met with considerable opposition from the orthodox Sadhus.” (quoted in Khadabadi 1997: 207).

The commentaries are a form of translations of this period and an important one. These have not been looked at by Translation Studies scholars. Commentaries are basically explications, interpretations in the same language or in a different language. How the meaning/interpretation of a text differs from time to time; whether the presence of different sects/sub-groups in a cult/religion can explain the differences or whether the differences in various commentaries constitute the different sects; whether the need for commentaries in the language of the original, is due to the language of the original composition being no more current in the language today - these are some of the questions that Translation Studies as a discpline has to address. Neglecting such an important area of investigation could be due to our leaning towards a certain notion of

literature that excludes what is generally called Shastra literature, which is also closely associated with religion.

Jaina tradition has four different kinds of commentaries - Choornis, Niryuktis, Bhashyas and Tikas. A study of these would in itself form another interesting research project. Niryukti is a genre peculiar to Jaina literature. Niryukti explains the meanings of the words in the original text and also gives details about references to other sects/religions, ethics, logic, arts, science etc. They contain stories that explicate a particular philosophical proposition. In order to explain the words that come in Niryukti and the detailed descriptions of the stories that are mentioned, Bhashyas came into existence. It is difficult to find out the difference between Bhashya and Niryukti as both are written in Prakrit in *Gaaha* prosody. Niryuktis contain references to the story and Bhashyas narrate them. Relatively speaking, Bhashyas are simpler to understand than Niryuktis. Similarly Choornis are simpler than both Bhashyas and Niryuktis. Choornis are basically bilingual texts written both in Sanskrit and Prakrit. Choornis review each and every word that occurs in Bhashyas and Niryuktis. Tikas are basically written either in Sanskrit or in languages such as Kannada, Tikas contain the original text in Prakrit as well as their explication in Kannada or Sanskrit (See Sannayya 1976: 100-101for more discussion).

A cursory look at the catalogues of manuscripts found in the Jaina math at Shravanabelagola, now kept in the National Institute of Prakrit Studies and Research, would reveal the extent of practice of tika tradition in Shravanabelagola. Volume two of the catalogue, which describes the details of Prakrit manuscripts, contains 146 entries. Volume one has 455 entries and lays out details of Kannada manuscripts. This volume includes details of original Kannada texts as well as Kannada tikas on Prakrit and Sanskrit texts. These tikas contain the original texts as well. There are 146 Prakrit language

manuscripts that are found in Kannada scripts. Volume five contains Sanskrit texts, some of which also have Kannada tikas, volume three and four are updates to volume one giving details of Kannada manuscripts (Sannayya and Seshagiri 1997, 1998, 2003 and 2004). Even when we look at the ten volumes of catalogues published by Karnatak University, Dharwad, giving details of the manuscripts preserved in the Institute of Kannada Studies there, we find that more than 25% of the entries are either tikas or satiku (commentary with the original text) (Kalburgi 1992).

Kapil Kapoor talks about different ways of the renewal of texts that existed such as 1. commentary (tika) 2. recension (a creative revision) 3. redaction (a re-arrangement) 4. adaptation 5. translation 6. popular exposition ('katha pravachana parampara') and 7. re-creation (Kapoor 2006: 3).

Today many texts, which are not available but are mentioned in earlier texts, are recovered through their commentaries. One such text is the sacred Jaina text *Shatkandagama* (twelve Agamas), the commentaries of which are called *Dhavala, Jaya Dhavala and Maha Dhavala*. These commentaries were not known to the world till the end of the 19th century. The copies of these commentaries were in the Kannada script but the language was Prakrit. It took another 60-70 years to copy them to Devanagari script and translate it into Hindi before publishing in book form in 39 volumes.[6] The Hindi translation was edited by Hiralal Jain, a Jaina scholar. Thus the foremost scripture of Jaina religion was preserved through a commentary in Prakrit but was in the Kannada script. Now it is available in Hindi translation, and a mega-project of translating it into Kannada has been on since 1998.

Such stories are not a rare phenomenon. When texts were preserved through palm-leaf manuscripts and the later generations did not know how to read them, they just worshipped them. In such

cases, commentaries have kept them alive and what Walter Benjamin calls the afterlife of a translated text is true both metaphorically and literally.

Coming back to the story of textual production in Karnataka, the centers of textual production in that period were mainly two: 1. Jaina mutts (mainly in Shravanabelagola) and 2. The royal courts. These centers didn't merely patronize textual production in Kannada but they produced texts in multiple languages.

In Shravanabelagola we find mainly puranic and shastra texts being produced in Prakrit, Kannada, Sanskrit, Apabhrahmsha languages. Though none of the Apabhrahmsha writers was born in Karnataka, they composed their texts in Karnataka. The two important writers of Apabhrahmsha were Svayambhu and Pushpadanta and they got their patronage in Karnataka. Svayambhu, in the words of Prem Suman Jain, was the first "known writer of eminence who selected Ram and Krishna for composing the Prabhandha-Kavya in Apabhrahramsa literature" (Jain 1977:155). His main works are *Paumachariu* and *Ritthanemichariu*. His influence on subsequent writers in Apabhrahmsha and the Hindi language is well noted by scholars. Svayambhu's *Paumachariu* is dated by scholars as belonging to the middle of 8th century A.D. (See introduction to Vimalasuri's *Paumachariu* by Kulkarni).[7]

Then Pushpadanta is seen as a genius of Apabhrahmsha literature. His patron was Bharatha and his son Nanna who were in the court of Krishna III of 10th century A.D. (for details on this issue, see introduction to *Mahapurana Vol.1*, Pushpadanta, 1979). Three works are credited to him: 1. *Mahapurana*, 2. *Nayakumaracharіu* and 3.*Jasaharachariu*. It is said that he exerted great influence on later writers of Marathi, Gujarati, Hindi etc.

In a similar manner most of what became canonical literatures of Jainas later, such as the works of Acharya Kundakunda, Vattakera (both 1st century A.D.), Sivarya (2nd century A.D.), Yativrsabha (6th century A.D.), Acharya Nemichandra (10th century A.D.), Maghanandi (13th century A.D.) have composed texts in Karnataka in Jaina Sauraseni Prakrit (Khadabadi 1997b).

Similarly many Sanskrit texts have been written in Karnataka. *Mahapurana* is an important puranic text in Sanskrit. It served as a source text for various epics in Kannada, Sanskrit, Apabhrahmsha, Prakrit etc. *Mahapurana* is a text jointly composed by Bhagavajjinasenacharya and Bhavdgunabhadracharya (if you leave the honoric prefix Bhagavad and the suffix acharya, the names would be Jinasena and Gunabhadra). It is said that Jinasena could not complete the entire Purana on his own, by the time he came to the 4th poem of the 42nd chapter of the first volume, i.e. *Poorvapurana*, he died. Then his disciple Gunabhadra completed the *Poorvapurana*, i.e. the remaining poems of the 42nd chapter and five more chapters (*Poorvapurna* contains 47 chapters). Gunabhadra also wrote *Uttarapurana*. Thus this text is referred to not only as *Mahapurana* but also as *Poorvapurana* and *Uttarapurana*. Jinasena was a guru of Amoghavarsha, the Rashtrakoota king. Historians have fixed the date of Amoghavarsha's rule from 815 A.D. to 877 A.D. So, Jinasena must have been around that time, i.e. between 8th and 9th century. *Harivamshapurana* by Jinasena (a different Jinasena acharya) refers to Jinasena of *Mahapurana* and his guru Veerasena and the date of that text is fixed as 783 A.D. Jinasena of *Poorvapurana* must have written his other two works *Jinaguna Stotra* and *Vardhamanapurana*, which figure in *Harivamshapurana.* (See introductions written by Shantiraja Shastri in Jinasena and Gunabhadra 1992).

As no earlier puranic texts are available in the Jaina tradition, some of the scholars have said that *Mahapurana* of

Jinasena and Gunabhadra is the first Jaina puranic text. But internal evidence in this text refers to a text by Kavi Parameshti as a source text. Even though some of the Kannada epics also refer to Kavi Parameshti, whether they do so because Jinasena's text claims so or these later poets had seen Kavi Parameshti's text is not known. It is the usual tradition that while writing the epics these poets employ a technique of saying that though there is an individual talent in their composition, the original story had a divine origin, and is retold by several revered Acharyas to claim a certain kind of sanctity for what they are composing. It is through this ploy/technique that they would combine both individual talent and collective or shared tradition.

The canonical classical Kannada literature is full of epics composed based on *Mahapurana*; it has triggered the imagination of several later poets/scholars.[8] *Mahapurana* narrates the purana related to 24 Thirthankaras, 12 Chakravartis, 9 Balabhadras, 9 Narayanas and 9 Pratinarayanas. Later epics have expanded a particular story of a Thirthankara or summarized the *Mahapurana* entirely, but focussed on one or two Thirthankaras/Chakravartis or others. Each later epic not only consults *Mahapurana*, if we go by the claims of the poet in the opening stanzas of the epic, but also other epics that have come in Kannada, Prakrit and Sanskrit. Only a thorough textual analysis would reveal whether they simply named the earlier texts/poets or they have taken them as source texts.

For example, the story of Yashodhara is retold by many. According to A.N Upadhye, who has written an introduction to Vadiraja's *Yashodharacharitra* (a Sanskrit epic of early 11th century) with a Sanskrit commentary by Lakshmana, and edited with an English translation in prose by K. Krishnamoorthy. There are important epics on the same theme before the *Yashodharacharitra* of Vadiraja. They are Prabhanjana's work (which is not available and hence the title is unknown), Somadeva's *Yasastilaka* (959 A.D.) and

Pushpadanta's *Jasaharachariu* (around 965 A.D.), the latter two being the most significant. (See Vadiraja 1963). Kannada *Yashodhara Charitre* by Janna was composed in 1209 A.D.[9] Except Prabhanjana, about whom I don't know much, all other writers lived in Karnataka. Pushpadanta, who I have discussed earlier, lived in Karnataka although he was an Apabhhmsha writer.. Similarly Vadiraja's activities were patronized by Chalukya kings and he lived both in what are today called Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Janna was a Kannada poet. Only a comparative study of these various texts would help us to know which the original source is. And whatever be the original source, all the texts were composed here, in this land, so it was not an alien land or culture that poets like Janna were translating.

Most of the poets of that period were well-versed in many languages. They could compose poetry in a language learnt later in their lives.[10] For example Chavundaraya, a tenth century writer, has written both in Kannada and Sanskrit. His *Trishashti Lakshna Mahapurana* is also known as *Chavundarayapurana*, it is an abridged prose version of *Mahapurana* mentioned earlier. Chavundaraya has also written another Sanskrit text called *Chaaritrasara*,[11] which is basically a conduct book for jaina saints, based on the earlier shaastra literature found in both Prakrit and Sanskrit. He was the one who built the Gommateshwara statue in Shravanabelagola, and was a minister in Ganga dynasty (for details about Chavundaraya, see introduction to Kamala Hampana and KR Sheshagiri (eds) 1983). Chavundaraya's Kannada text has been helpful in fixing the dates, and the authorship of many Sanskrit texts (See Shastri 1977:39-41).

Chavundaraya's case is not an isolated instance. There were many who have written in more than one language during those days. Many of the poets of this medieval period have claimed that

they were *ubhaya bhasha kavis* ('bilingual poets') or others have called them so.

A further point about Sanskrit textual production in Karnataka is that, many of the Tikas or Vyakhyanas available today on Jaina canonical literature in Sanskrit were composed during this period in Karnataka or, to be precise, in what historians call 'Deccan'.

Even a cursory look at the patronage given to literature by various dynasties that ruled Karnataka or Deccan would tell us that they provided patronage to writers of all languages, though there might have been differences in proportions either due to their own religious/language inclination or due to larger general factors which might have been beyond their control. Kadambas were the first ones to patronise Jainas. Gangas, who ruled from Talakadu, were the first to openly encourage Jaina literature (middle of the first millennium). Many of the kings during this period were also writers. Durvinita, who gets mentioned in Srivijaya's *Kavi Raja Maarga* might be the Ganga king Durvinita who ruled around 500 A.D. Another king of this dynasty Shivakumara (780-814) has written *Gajastaka*. Ereyappa (886-913) of this dynasty had patronised Gunavarma, who has written *Shudraka* and *Harivamsha*. Chavundaraya, who has already been broached earlier, was a minister with Rachamalla, the Ganga king. It is said that this dynasty was established with the help of a Jaina guru (Nagarajaiah 1999).

Similarly Rashtrakutas extended patronage to literatures in all languages.Writng about the condition of education and literature during the Rashtrakutas whose kingdom included even Gujarat, Altekar says that during this period Canarese literature (=Kannada literature) had begun to flourish in Karnataka (Altekar 1967:406). He also says that it was during this period that kavya or classical

style of writing established its grip in the Deccan. *Kavi Raja Maarga* composed by the Rashtrakuta king Amoghavarsha, is the first work of poetics in Kannada and is also the first available text in Kannada, although it is an adaptation of Dandi's *Kaavyadarsha*. During the reign of Krishna II many Sanskrit texts were composed. Altekar says that although "Hindu Sanskrit writers, having any composition of permanent value to their credit, are indeed few" in this period, the contribution of Jainism to Sanskrit literature is considerable (Altekar 1967: 408-409).

Rastrakutas who ruled from Malkhed extended their patronage to Sanskrit literature, Kannada literature and Prakrit literature. According to Nagarajaiah who has looked at this issue, "the literature of this age, in whichever language it may be, not only mirrors the religious liberalism, but also reflects the military strength, immense wealth, religious catholicity, cultural opulence, literary affluence, and love of art and architecture" (Nagarajaiah 2000:61). Ravikirthi (early 7th century), Kaviparamesthi (750 A.D.), Jinasena I and Jinasena II, Gunabhadra (already mentioned); Srinidhi (the author of *Mahapurana*), supposed to be the preceptor of Ugraditya (770-840 A.D.) who has written a treatise on the science of medicine called *Kalyanakaraka*; Kuchibhattaraka - all of these people contributed to writing *Mahapurana*. Bhatta-Kalankadeva (720-80 A.D.) is seen as someone who defeated Buddhists in the discussion on logic at the court of Pallava king Himasitala and drove them to Ceylon. He was a dialectician of unequalled eminence. He has authored basic texts on varied subjects including Jaina epistemology, logic and metaphysics like *Tattvartha-Rajavarthika, Astasati, Siddhiviniscaya Pramana-samgraha*; Swami Virasena has authored three important works on Jaina philosophy touching upon the science of computation, cosmography and ksetra ganita; Dhananjaya (late 8th century) is known for his lexicon and an epic *Dvisandhana Mahakavya*; Vadiraja (already mentioned); Vidyananda (900-950 A.D.) composer of *Tattvartha-sloka-varttika*,

Astrasahasri, *Yuktyanusasanalankara* etc.; Palyakriti Sakatayana (840 A.D.), a court poet of Amoghavarsha composed the grammar *Sabdanusasana*, he also wrote a commentary for his own work; Mahaviracharya (850 A.D.) was a protégé of Amoghavarsa-I and composed *Ganitasara-samgraha* (a mathematical book); Indranandi (930 A.D.), author of *Samayabhusana*, *Srutavatara*, *Nitisara*, *Srutapanchami* and *Jvalamalini-kalpa* was a resident of Manyakheta. He seems to have written an auto-commentary for his *Jvalamalini-kalpa* in Kannada. Somadevasuri is known for his *Yasastilaka*, a work commissioned by Baddega II (955-965 A.D.), a subsidiary of Rashtrakutas. Somadeva also flourished as a court poet of Calukyas of Vemulavada.

During the Chalukya period also we find many Sanskrit writers, Prakrit writers and Kannada writers. Chalukyas supported Vaidic literature, that too Shastra literature of a secular nature. On various subjects we find Shastra literature such as Jataka Tilaka, Grammar, Lexicons, Govaidya (Veterinary science), and Mathematics. As we have just seen, even the Rashtrakutas promoted shastra literature. The Chalukyas were ruling from Kalyana and they were known as Kalyana Chalukyas. Someshwara III (1127-1139) has authored *Manasollasa*. This text is seen as an encyclopedic work, a guide book to ruling, and the knowledge contained in it is a must for a king.[12] Even during the Keladi dynasty period as late as 1709 A.D., Basavaraja, the king composed an encyclopedic work, which is also one of the rare texts that gives a lot of historical facts (though not coherently narrated, but scattered), called *Sivatattvaratnakara*. The history of the dynasty is interwoven with different branches of knowledge (Chitnis 1974: 5-6 and 213-221). Another important text that was composed during the Kalyana Chalukya period in Sankrit is *Mitakshara* of Vijnanesvara, which deals with the constitution of court of justice, the grades of courts, the branch of judicial procedure, the origin of ownership, the transfer

of ownership, the topic of possession as the basis of the title, the subject of partition and inheritance etc. This text has several commentaries: Apararka, a Silahara king ruling in the 12th century, has written a commentary called *Yajnavalkyadharma-sastranibandha*.

After Rashtrakutas and Chalukyas, Seunas of Devagiri (also known as Yadavas) ruled the Deccan and South India. They also supported all languages and literatures. I will not elaborate on it. Hoysalas supported Jainism. Later on with the conversion of Bittideva into Vaishnavism, they also supported it. At the time of Seunas of Devagiri, Veerashaivism had made its presence in this region, so they also generously supported this new religion/sect.[13] Prakrit literature continued even during the time of Hoysalas - commentaries both on earlier canonical Jaina literature and puranic epics. Textual production in Sanskrit continues to dominate Prakrit hereafter, though the production of Jaina literature didn't stop in Kannada and Sanskrit.

The intent of this long story of textual production in Prakrit, Sanskrit, and Kannada in this period is to show that Prakrit and Sanskrit were not translated from a distant culture to Kannada. Texts were produced simultaneously in all the languages. Translations into Kannada and Sanskrit from Prakrit Jaina literature begin almost simultaneously. The foundation for Apabhrahmsha (Hindi), Marathi Prakrit (Marathi) and other north western languages might have been laid during the Rashtrakuta empire which extended from the south to Gujarat. Even the production of Jaina literature might have taken place in Shravanabelagola. Acharyas like Kundakunda, who wrote in Prakrit, were in charge of Jaina religion in the Tamil country. So it was a multilingual metropolis (both religious as well as political city-towns) that we are talking about. If a Jaina writes a text in Sanskrit and also writes a commentary for it in Kannada, I don't think it can be seen as negotiating the hegemony of Sanskrit.

Translations and textual production gradually shifting from Prakrit to Sanskrit and other Indian languages is one way of coming to terms with the ascendancy of Sanskrit in secular matters pertaining to state.

As far as the question of translations making a 'god-spoken' tongue accessible to the vast majority of the populace is concerned, the Jainas targeted only the first three varnas. They certainly didn't touch the Sudras and those who were outside the varna fold.

We now move to textual practices and translations during the Veerashaiva period and Dasa literature (Vaishnava) period.

What is called 'Bhakti movement' is an amalgamation of different movements/ formations and expansions of sects/religions/cross-religious churnings that happened in various places across India and also across a time span ranging from the 9th century to the 18th century. In the Kannada context, the emergence of Veerashaiva sect/religion is seen as part of the Bhakti movement, and literature (both oral and written) associated with it is also named by some as Bhakti literature. When Jainas were engaged in textual production/translations in Kannada they were targeting (if at all that was the motive) only the first three varnas of the varna hierarchy. It was the Veerashaiva movement that tried to embrace as many people as possible across caste/varna/occupations. During this period, a certain kind of decentralization of worship of a particular god, Shiva, happens. It is during this period that in the form of vachanas[14], a literature that was not directly linked with an institutionalized sponsorship either of a monastery or of a royal court began emerging. But that was only in the 12th century for a brief period. Later on this cult got institutionalized and produced puranic texts of the cult as well as Shastra literature, although in some of the vachanas there are anti-Sanskrit statements.

But again if we look at the cases of "Bhakti literature", unlike in other cases, there were no translations linked with the Veerashaiva movement in the initial stages though some of the early Vachanakaras like Allamaprabhu and others were well versed in Sanskrit and were aware of the major debates in philosophy.[15] After a century of the beginning of the movement in the 12th century in Kalyana, institutionalization of this religion/sect begins. Harihara writes a new form in Kannada called *ragale*[16] in which he writes the history of Old Shaiva devotees. The source of this composition is recognized as the 11th century-end or early 12th century text *Periyapurana* of Shekkilar. This is the only recognizable translation. That too happens in the 13th century after a gap of nearly 50-100 years of what is called 'Vachana movement'. Later Veerashaiva poets also produce epics on the heroes of the 12th century such as *Basavapurana* of Bhima kavi written in Telugu, later translated into Kannada and also Sanskrit; Padmananka on Kereya Padmarasa, Chamarasa on Prabhudeva (Allama Prabhu), Virakta Tontadarya on Tontada Siddalinga and Palkurike Somanatha; Chennabasavanka on Akka Mahadevi; Bommarasa on Revanasidda; Virupaksha Pandita on Chennabasavanna; Adrisha Kavi on Prauda Devaraya; Parvatesha on Revanasiddha, Marulasiddha, Ekorama etc. Epics get created not only in Kannada but also in Sanskrit, Telugu, Tamil and Marathi; and most of these were translations from one to another. Epics were not created in Sanskrit, but only translated into Sanskrit from Telugu and Kannada.

Later the vachanas were put into textual form, and they were arranged according to Shatsthalas, and a lot of Shastra literature was constructed around it. Some of it was in Sanskrit. *Siddantha Shikamani* is an important text that was composed in Sanskrit by Shivayogi. Sripati Pandita writes *Srikara Bhasya*, Svaprabhananda writes *Shivadvaitha manjari*, Mayideva writes *Anubhava Sutra*, Palkurike Somantha translates Basavapurana as *Basavarajiya* etc. Later on commentaries get produced on these shastra texts as well as

vachanas in Sanskrit and Kannada. Some of them get translated into Telugu, Tamil and Marathi languages much later on.

So what scholars identify as 'Bhakti movement' in Kannada didn't come up as a result of translations but gave rise to translations from Kannada and Telugu into Sanskrit. Many of these writers were also bilingual writers. With the ascendancy of the Marathi language in Northern Deccan, some of these texts get translated into Marathi or the copies of the Kannada texts are available in Marathi script.

When we come to Dasa Sahitya which was a product of Vaishnava philosophy, we find translation of Sanskrit texts into Kannada as well as Dasa literature into Kannada. Dasa padas were also in oral form and they were also later on found in Marathi, Tamil, and Telugu. Only this could match to some extent the characteristics of translations during Bhakti literature that other scholars whom I have quoted earlier discuss.

Thus the translations and textual practices of the first millennium and early part of the second millennium of Christian era need further empirical work and this article is just a pointer towards it. The existing theoretical understanding does not seem to hold in the case of translation practices in Kannada or Deccan region (or what we today call as Karnataka) or even South India in general. Pan-Indian theoretical models derived from a faulty notion of 'Bhakti movement', which puts several movements under a single rubric may not take us far.

NOTES

1. A note on the term 'pre-colonial': I am using the term 'pre-colonial' as a time marker to periodize translation practices in India. Certain objections could be raised against such a periodization as it would privilege the moment of colonial intervention on our translation practices and also look at our past from that coloured angle. The term 'pre-modern' can also be used, as the dawn of modernity coincides with colonialism in India. It would undoubtedly be better to periodize Indian translation practices based on the characteristics that can be discerned during a particular period than to put them together as 'pre-colonial period'. But in the absence of studies that characterize the translation practices, I am using the term just as a period marker without implying any ideological stance. The term was used by other scholars who have worked on the notions of translation during pre-colonial days and I have argued elsewhere that employing such binaries would not take us too far (Tharakeshwar 2005).

2. Kaviraj seems to be using emerging vernacular literatures of the medieval period and Bhakthi literature interchangeably here.

3. 'Medieval' is the term used in the discipline of history. Indian history is divided into three phases, 1. Ancient period 2. Medieval period and 3. Modern period. In my analysis I have not used the word 'medieval'. Instead I have put both ancient as well as medieval together and called it 'pre-colonial' emphasizing the colonial intervention, as stated earlier. Although I am looking at the period from 10th century onwards, which is designated as the medieval period in historical studies, I would be keeping in the background the kind of textual production that happened in what we today call

Karnataka since around the beginning of the Christian era, which falls in the ancient period.

4. This point I have made elsewhere in a more detailed manner (See Tharakeshwar 2003).

5. The English translation of this text named *The Cilappatikaram: A Tale of an Anklet* based on the Tamil scholar's opinion mentions the date as 5th century A.D. (See Atikal 2004).

6. The story of copying the manuscript from Moodabidri Jaina matha itself is a fabulous story filled with several years of labour of many scholars, opposition to take it out from the mutt, stealthily preparing copies, etc. and would be worth looking at from the point of view of Translation Studies, especially that of translating religious scriptures and the taboo associated with it, as well as History of Religions.

7. This text by Svayambhudeva is edited and published (See Svayambhudeva 1977). For more details on Svayambhu, See Jain 2004: 262-265.

8. I have a list of more than 150 such published epics with me. Around 50 texts are going to be reprinted by Kannada University, Hampi in 25 volumes in the coming year. The list, if it includes Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhrahmsha etc., would be even greater than this and might even outnumber the epics in Indian languages composed keeping *Ramayana* and *Mahabharatha* as source texts.

9. A major part of this text in Kannada has been published (See Janna 1994).

10. In that sense many of the poets of the Sanskrit texts of this period have written in a newly learnt language (assuming that by this time Sanskrit was not a spoken language at home).

11. This Sanskrit text, edited by Hiralal Jain, is published in Mumbai's Jaina Grantha Mala Series-9 in 1917. In this introduction Jain also mentions another work by Chavundaraya but it is not available. Based on this text (i.e. *Veeramattandi*, which is not available today) Todarmal has written a text called *SamyaJnana Chandrika* in Hindi according to Hiralal Jain.

12. I have looked at the Kannada translation of this Sanskrit text (Someshwara 1998).

13. For details of patronage of literature by Seunas, See the section on Education and Literature in Ritti, 1973.

14. Vachanas literally mean 'sayings' with no metrical restriction of any sort or any prescription. They were composed and sung mainly in oral form. Only after a gap of 2-3 centuries textualization of vachanas happens in the form of edited anthologies, where the vachanas are arranged and linked with the comments by the editor into a coherent narrative.

15. Some scholars have tried to argue that vachanas are translations from Upanishads, retold in simple folk-friendly manner.

16. A kind of blank verse form.

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Processes and Models of Translation: Cases from Medieval Kannada Literature

T.S. Satyanath

Abstract

Contrary to the iconicity associated between the original and its translations as conceived in the West, medieval Indian literature provides examples of multiple tellings and renderings (Ramanujan 1992) of texts that are radically different from their so called 'originals', implying an altogether different type of interrelationship among texts. It has been further observed that medieval Indian translations are actually tellings, renderings and cultural transactions. In order to understand these phenomena in medieval India, we need to interrogate the nature of texts, the types of intertextual spaces, the way communities defined the role of such texts based on linguistic, religious, professional (caste) and other criteria, the construction of texts as databases of the community's knowledge and information systems and lastly, the processes of mutually sharing such knowledge and information systems.

Taking instances from medieval Kannada literature, the paper interrogates different modes of tellings, renderings and cultural transactions to map out different models of translation strategies used by communities, in order to translate and culturally transact knowledge and information. A vrat-kathā model of cultural transaction has been proposed as one of the models on which medieval Indian texts are rendered from one language to another. It has been suggested that categories such as gender, caste, religion, sect and language not only interconnect each other but at the same time, insulate and protect the communities' rights over their knowledge and

information systems and make telling and rendering activities, an exclusively in-group activity meant for the consumption of the rightful owners of knowledge and information systems. Thus despite the fact that different groups share a pluralistic epistemology which enables them to mutually understand each other's knowledge systems, their group-specific right over knowledge and information remains protected through multiple tellings, renderings and transactions on which they could retain their monopolistic control.

1. Introduction

1.1 The issue of what translation meant to traditional civilizations such as India has become the subject matter of two international conferences held recently. If translation is a concept that represents an activity of the age of mechanical reproduction of texts, then how traditional cultures of Asia dealt with transfer of knowledge and information from one language to another in their long literary tradition is not only a matter of curiosity but also a matter of significance for understanding traditional modes of cultural transaction. The present paper is an attempt to continue the current debate about the dynamics of what is called 'cultural' translation and the diverse translation discourses in Asia.

1.2 To start with, within the modernistic framework literature and translation are directly connected with literacy, writing systems, creativity, intellectuality, and are individualistic in nature. But literature is radically different if one looks at medieval literatures of India. Literature was typically oral, despite being in a scripto-centric format, and often existed only in performance. In this sense, it was not just a mere text; it also bore medieval knowledge and information systems. In the majority of the cases, literary texts also become a part of ritualistic worship. Thus by being sectarian and ritualistic in nature, different tellings and renderings provided

access not only to the legitimate users of such knowledge-base but also prevented them from being accessed freely by others.

1.3 In a recent study (Satyanath forthcoming), taking the specific episode of Kirāta Śiva and Arjuna from the *Mahābhārata*, from scripto-centric (writing/manuscript tradition), phono-centric (oral tradition) and body-centric (ritual performing tradition) renderings of the episode from medieval Karnataka, it has been pointed out that categories such as gender, caste, religion, sects and language not only interconnect each other but at the same time, protect their exclusive rights over their knowledge and information systems. This makes telling and rendering activities, be they scripto-centric, phono-centric or body-centric, an exclusively in-group activity meant only for the consumption of the rightful owners of knowledge and information systems. Thus despite different groups sharing a pluralistic epistemology, which enabled them to understand each other, their group-specific right over knowledge and information remained protected through multiple telling and rendering systems over which they retained a monopolistic control. In this paper, a further attempt has been made to understand the processes of such cultural transactions and to identify the models through which such tellings and renderings operate in a community.

2. Ritualistic Context of Tellings and Renderings

2.1 One of the issues that concern us with regard to medieval tellings and renderings in Karnataka is the religious and ritualistic context in which a majority of the Kannada texts have been set. A survey of Kannada literature during the period from the ninth to nineteenth century C.E. and its links with other Indian literatures clearly suggests that Kannada might have interacted with several literatures, not only with Sanskrit, Pali, and Prakrit but also with Tamil, Telugu and Marathi. As many medieval Kannada poets

have claimed to be poets with bilingual proficiency (‘*ubhaya-kavi*s’), the movements of texts, of cultural transactions rather, are of bidirectional nature. It is also interesting to know that these possibilities of translation were made possible because of the multilingual populations that Brahminical Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Bhakti religions had encountered among their followers in medieval Karnataka. The multidimensionality of interaction of Kannada with different sectarian and linguistic communities can be schematically conceptualized as shown in Figure 1. Such a complex scheme of cultural transaction is crucial for understanding the processes of telling and rendering in medieval Karnataka.

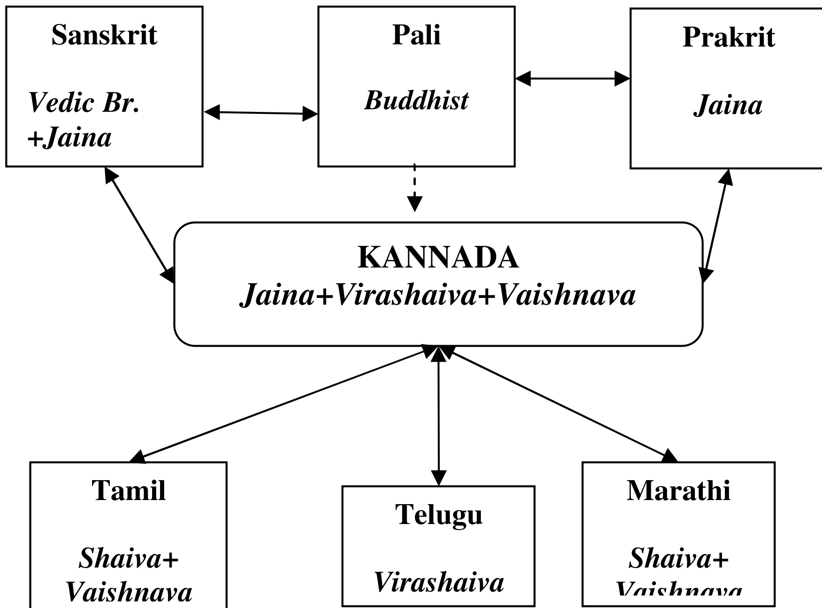

Figure 1: Schematic Diagram Showing Various Possibilities of Translation among Different Sectarian and Linguistic Communities.

2.2 In order to understand the processes and models that operated behind different sectarian tellings and renderings, we have to look into Jaina, Vīraśaiva, Vaiṣṇava traditions, the commentary (*ṭīkā*) tradition and the folk tradition of tellings and renderings. In a recent paper, Tarakeshwar (2005) has attempted to understand certain issues of translation processes that were prevalent during the ninth-tenth century C.E. in Kannada. This has been further explored here, taking a closer look at the processes and models operating behind the religious and ritualistic aspects of tellings and renderings.

To start with let us consider the text *Vaḍḍārādhane* ('The Worship of Elders', *vaḍḍa* < *vṛddha* Skt.), a text that has been claimed to have been written by Śivakōṭyāchārya during the early part of the tenth century (c. 920 C.E.). Kannada scholars have pointed out that this is an anthology consisting of nineteen life-stories of legendary Jaina holy men. The text also has an alternative title *Upasarga-kēvaligaḷa-kathe* ('The Story of Holy Men Who Overcame Obstacles'). It has also been noted that the stories in this text are common to the Prakrit *Bhagavatī-ārādhanā* by Bhrājṣṇu and the Sanskrit *Bṛhatkathā-kośa* of Hariṣēṇa. Considering the formulaic *gāhe*s (< *gāthā*) that appear before the beginning of each story, it has been suggested by scholars that *Vaḍḍārādhane* might have been based either on a Prakrit commentary (*vyākhyāna*) of *Bhagavatī-ārādhanā*, or on *Bhagavatī-ārādhanā*, also a Prakrit text.[1]

It is important to note that the manuscripts of the stories in *Vaḍḍārādhane* end with the colophon *vaḍḍārādhaneya-kavachavu-mangaḷam* ('the sacred shield of *Vaḍḍārādhane*, blessings to everyone'), suggesting that the text needs to be considered as a ritualistic shield. Similarly, the beginning of some of the manuscripts starts with the statement *kavachārōhayāhi* ('the beginning (hoisting) of the shield'), suggesting the Prakrit formulaic *gāhe*, its commentary in Sanskrit/Prakrit and the subsequent

expansion of the formulaic *gāhe* into a life-story, was probably meant as a story to be recited for the benefit of the Kannada-knowing Jaina laymen as a part of the performance of the ritual. Moreover, the term *ārādhane* 'worship' which is part of the title of the text and the tradition of the existence of such texts in the Jaina literary tradition further suggests that the reading or recitation of the text might have been intended as the concluding part of a ritual worship similar to the story recitation of a *vrata-kathā* among the sectarian communities of medieval Hinduism.

Structurally, the stories in *Vaḍḍārādhane* start with a Prakrit *gāhe* that tells the story line in a synoptic manner. In certain stories, *gāhe*s could also be found in the middle of the story and occasionally towards the end. In some stories, along with the *gāhe*s, Sanskrit *śloka*s and Kannada verses could also be found in the narrative part of the story. It has been estimated by scholars that about 142 verses have been thus incorporated into *Vaḍḍārādhane*. Ignoring the repetition of certain verses, there are in all 62 Prakrit *gāhe*s, 57 Sanskrit *śloka*s and 10 Kannada verses in the text.

The stories in *Vaḍḍārādhane* describe the details of the ritual deaths, viz. *samādhi-maraṇa* and *sallēkhana* that the followers of Jaina holymen observe. This is made clear at the beginning of the text after the implicatory verses:

> Having done namaskāra to śrī vīra-vardhamāna-bhatārakar (Mahavira), I narrate the stories of great people who achieved salvation and went to sarvārtha-siddhi, after having won the four upasargas (the agency that causes the obstacles for penance), namely, god (dēva), human (manuṣya), animal (tirik, tiryaka), non-living (acētana), having tolerated the trouble from the twenty-two body-linked requirements (parīṣahas), having won over the five senses (indriyas), having discarded the external temptations, having excelled in twelve types of

meditations (tapa), having done the sanyasana (leaving the mortal body) by prāyōpagamana, and having destroyed all the encrusted karma.

The recitation and listening of the stories not only constitute a sacred ritualistic narration but also act as a *kavacha*, a (sacred) shield that protects the listeners against all types of evil and sin that attempt to threaten the maintenance of the Jaina path. The multilingual nature of the text and the renderings that take place from one language to another within the text itself provides the model of translation and cultural transaction. I have called the model *vrata-kathā* or *nōmpi-kathā* model, as not only *Vaḍḍārādhane* and several Jaina texts use such a model but also its variants could be found in many Indian languages, both at popular and folk levels. Thus *mantra*, ritual and narration of the ritualistic story in the language become the characteristic structure of such cultural transactions. The interconnections among different linguistic codes and their functions can be diagrammatically visualized as shown in Figure 2.

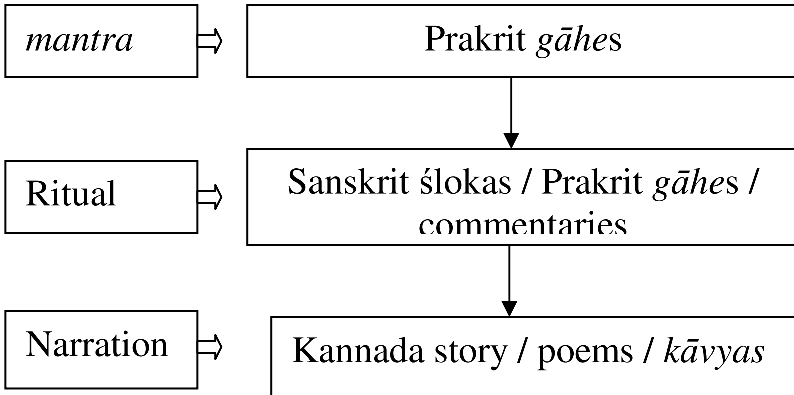

Figure 2: Schematic model of the translation process for the life-stories in *vrata-kathā* or *nōmpi-kathā*.

2.3 Mention has already been made of the ritualistic aspect of the life-stories of *Vaḍḍārādhane* and the recitation of the Kannada part of the story as the story narrated during a *vrata-kathā*. Incidentally, Jains have several *vrata*s of this sort. They have been called *nōmpi*s 'vow'.[2] In the body of the text of *Vaḍḍārādhane* itself there are several references both to *vrata*s and *nōmpi*s. The two terms appear to complement each other and overlap in their meaning, although their exact meanings are not clearly evident. The names of the vows are given below and the page numbers refer to Narasimhachar's (1971) edition.

pancha-mahā-vrata (p.6)
aṇu-vrata (p.13), (*pancāṇu-vrata*)
having vowed the eigith-day (p.33), (*aṣṭamiyam nōntu*); refers to *jīvadāyaṣṭami nōmpi.* Used here as a verb, 'vowing'.
aṣṭāhnika-mahime (p.33): a festival vow observed for eight days starting from the eighth day to the full moon day of the full moon cycle in the *āṣāḍha, kārtīka*, and *phālguṇa* months.
phālguṇa-nandīśvara (p.106): a festival vow observed for eight days from the eighth day to the full moon day of the full moon cycle in the *phālguṇa* month.
ācāmla-vardhanamemba-nōmpi (p.66): a vow performed for the well-being of the body.
puruṣa-vrata (p.112): celibacy, abstinence from sex, could be observed by both men and women.
brahmacharya-vrata (p.116): refers to *puruṣa-vrata*.
guṇa-vrata (p.127): daily restrictions that the Jaina monks impose on themselves, *dig*

(direction), *deśa* (region) and *danḍa-virati* are the three types of vows.

śikṣā-vrata (p.127).

simhaniṣkrīḍita-nōmpi (p.172) an 80-day fasting vow in which the follower keeps fast for 60 days and eats interspersingly for 20 days.

2.4 It is important to note that the observation of a vow is more like a ritual performance and ends with the recitation of the relevant story associated with the ritualistic vow. One of them, *jīvadāyaṣṭami-nōmpi* ‘the vow of showing kindness (compassion) to animal life’ is accompanied by the recitation of the story of *Yaśōdhara-carite* (Raghavachar 1941). One of the renderings of the texts has been called *jīvadāyaṣṭami-nōmpiya-kathe* (‘The Story of the Vow of Kindness to Animal Life’) (16th century C.E.). It starts with formulaic poems and the story of Yaśōdhara. It is worth noting that medieval Karnataka used to treat multiple renderings of a text, whether it was in Sanskrit, Prakrit or Kannada, as texts or *kṛti*s of equal significance. One of the introductory verses of *Yaśōdhara-carite* (1.2) elucidates this as follows.

> In this world, this *kṛti* has been rendered into Kannada based on the earlier *kṛti*s in Sanskrit and Prakrit, rendered by earlier poets. Let their wisdom provide support to me in the art of poetry.

Table 1 provides details about the popularity of *jīvadāyaṣṭam-nōmpi* as well as the story that used to be recited at the end of the ritual. All these suggest that the Jaina tellings and renderings of Prakrit stories were ritualistic texts usually narrated in regional languages like Kannada, Tamil, Gujarati and Hindi as part of ritualistic worship. There are at least eighteen tellings of the text available, out of which five renderings are in Kannada, four each in Sanskrit and Gujarati, two in Apabhrahmsha and one each in Prakrit,

Tamil and Hindi. The details of these texts are given in Table 1. This suggests the high popularity of the vow, its ritual enactment and narration, and the model of translation suggested earlier. The vow of *jīvadāyaṣṭami*, its ritual and narration of the story in Kannada together constitute the entire ritual of the vow. *Yaśōdhara-carite* (1.3) makes this point clear.

> During the fasting of the followers (śrāvaka-jana) in the vow of jīvadāyaṣṭami, this story (vastu-kathana) is feast to the ears; having thought like this, kavibhāla-locana ('Janna') composed this text.

Text	**Author**	**Language**	**Period**
Samarāiccha-kahā	Haribhadra	Prakrit	8th C
Triśaṣṭilakṣaṇa-mahāpurāṇa	Jinasena	Sanskrit	9th C
Tisaṭhṭhi-mahāpurisa-guṇālankāra	Pushpadanta	Apabhrahmsha	10th C
Jasahara-cariu	Pushpadanta	Apabhrahmsha	10th C
Yaśastilaka-campū	Somadeva	Sanskrit	10th C
Yaśodhara-carite	Vadiraja	Sanskrit	11th C
Yasōdara-kāppiyam	?	Tamil	11th C
Yaśōdhara-carite	Janna	Kannada	12th C
Yyaśōdhara-carite	Padumanabha	Kannada	15th C
Yaśōdhar- carite	Chandravarni	Kannada	15th C
Jīvadayāṣṭami-nōmpi	?	Kannada	16th C
Yaśōdhar-carite	Jinachandra Suri	Gujarati	16th C
Yaśodhara-carite	Devendra	Gujarati	16th C
Yaśodhara-carite	Lavanyaratna	Gujarati	16th C
Yaśōdhara-carite	?	Kannada	16th C
Yaśodhara-carite	Manohara Dasa	Gujarati	17th C
Yaśodhara-carite	Lakshmi Dasa	Hindi	18th C

Table1: Table showing the details of multilingual renderings of *Yaśodhara-carite* in Indian languages.

2.5 In order to demonstrate that the *vrata-kathā* or *nōmpi-kathā* model of ritualistic tellings and renderings was not confined to

Jainism but was a wide spread practice among other sectarian groups as well, we can look at Vīraśaivism. If we consider the cases of the Nāyanārs of Tamil Nadu and the Vīraśaiva Śaranas of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, the hagiographies depicting the life-stories of these saints were as sacred as, if not more than, the Purānas depicting the sixty-four *līlā*s of Śiva. In Tamil, Kannada and Telugu, the hagiographies of these saints were written not only before the compilation of the *Śiva-purāna* but also have remained as popular as, if not more popular than, the Purānas. Let us look at the case of Ciruttoṇḍar, a Nāyanār among the sixty-three saints from Tamil Śaivism whose story has been retold several times in Tamil, Kannada, Telugu and Sanskrit and in literary, popular and folk versions.

Ciruttoṇḍar 'little servant' who is called Siriyāla in Kannada and Telugu, Sirāl Seṭh in Marathi and Seṭh Saguṇ Shah in Gujarati, was historically known as Paranjyōti. He was the Commander-in-Chief for the Pallava king Narasimha Varma. He is said to have been responsible for the fall of Vatapi, the capital of the Chalukya king Pulikeshi II in 642 C.E. Though rudimentary versions of his life are revealed in verses composed by Sundarar (c 850 C.E.) and Nambiyāndḍār Nambi (c 10th cent. C.E.), it was Śēkkiḷār (1064 C.E.) who wrote the first detailed hagiography of Ciruttoṇḍar. Nearly twenty retellings of his story could be seen in Kannada and Telugu. At least one text in Marathi and an oral version in Gujarati have been reported. In addition, in Karnataka there is a vow (*vrata*) known as *siriyāḷa-seṭṭiya-vrata*. There are also folk versions of the ritual in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The tellings and renderings of the story of Ciruttoṇḍar in Tamil come to an end with Śēkkiḷār. However, the Kannada and Telugu hagiographers provide multiple renderings of the story during the subsequent period. As Vīraśaivism gradually spread over Maharashtra, the Marathi renderings of the episode came into existence. In addition, the folk versions of the

renderings could be found in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh (*Palnāṭi-vīruni-kathā*), the popular renderings could be seen in *Siriyāḷa-seṭṭi-vrata- kathā*.[3]

The story of Ciruttoṇḍar had become a ritual enactment by 10th century C.E. By the time the Tamil hagiography got composed, the story of the sacrifice of the only son by Ciruttoṇḍar and his wife had become worthy of worship resulting in a folk temple cult as pointed out by Dahejia (1988).

> Independent shrines to the saint and and his blessed son Sirala were constructed in the 10th century as we know from an inscription recording gifts for lighting of lamps in the shrines. In the year A.D. 998 three small copper images of the Siruttondar family was dedicated to the Tanjavur temple…Siruttondar festivals were celebrated yearly and an inscription in the year A.D. 1003 tells us of the image of Sirala being carried in procession from the Sirala shrine to the Siruttondar temple. Later records detail the laying out of a special route for his procession, and inscriptions also speak of festival to mark the occasion when Siva gave salvation to Siruttondar.

Existence of similar cultic rituals in other parts of South India has been observed by Pālkurki Sōmanātha in his *Basava-purāṇa*, a Telugu hagiographic work belonging to 1220 C.E. Sōmanātha notes that the stories of the saints of the Vīraśaiva cult had become popular among the devotees and used to be enacted and narrated in the homes of the devotees and that he has put together those stories to compose *Basava-purāṇa*. The meter and style of the text suits singing and narration of the text to the gathering of devotees and the actual recitation of the text is said to be still continuing to this day. We can notice here the Vīraśaiva hagiographic tradition itself has been based on a *vrata-kathā* or *nōmpi-kathā* model discussed earlier. The dynamics of the complex

interactions between linguistic and social categories that was discussed for the episode of Ciruttoṇḍar is diagrammatically represented in Figure 3.

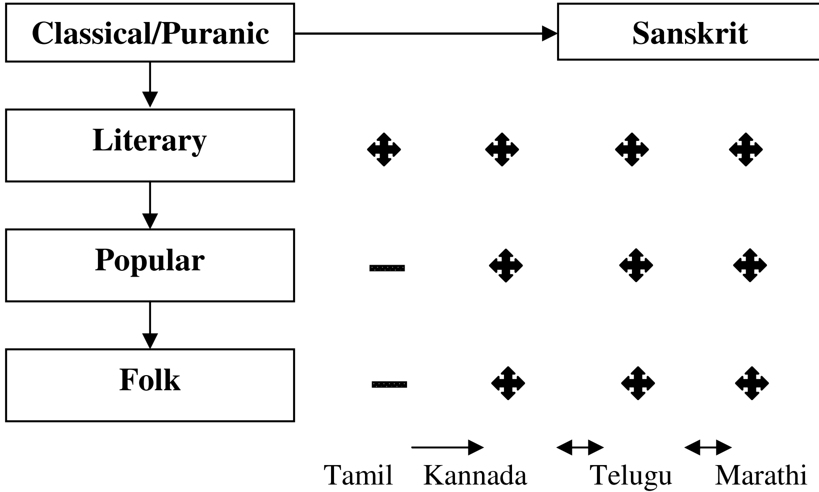

Figure 3. Diagrammatic representation of the complex interactions between linguistic and social categories in the *vrata-kathā* model.

2.6 We also have to understand and problematize the nature of the written text, the oral recitation of the text as a ritualistic part of the vow, and the performative dimensions of the texts during the period of medieval Kannada literature. The written versions of the Jaina texts, the Vīraśaiva hagiographies, or *Kumāravyāsa-bhārata* (16th century C.E.) and *Torave-rāmāyaṇa* (17th century C.E.), the most popular religious texts of Brahminical Hinduism in Kannada, were all available in plenty on palm leaf manuscripts but the texts were in use more through oral recitation performances called *gamaka-vāchana*. A text's sectarian ritual connotation as a vow, its musical recitation done orally without using a written text and

sometimes accompanied by an oral interpretation (*vyakhyāna*, *ṭīkā* ‘commentary’) in a dramatic dialogic format constitutes a typical traditional ritual vow performance. Although palm-leaf manuscripts of the two above-mentioned Brahminical texts are available in plenty, their oral transmission has continued even to this day through *gamaka-vāchanas* and folk plays.

The lack of a distinction between scripto-centric and phono-centric texts on the one hand and the crucial role of body-centric performative traditions in shaping and determining the nature of performing texts on the other has played an important role, both at the conceptual and performative levels. This eventually shaped the construction, composition, sustenance and transmission of textual, oral and performing traditions of Karnataka. Above all, their ritualistic nature in the form of vows, as *vrata*s and *nōmpi*s, is very crucial to the existence, continuation and transmission of texts as tellings, renderings, and more generally, as cultural transactions. These salient features of medieval Kannada literature appear to have continued in the folk plays and performances till the nineteenth and twentieth century, when the print media and its mode of mechanical reproduction changed the paradigm of knowledge, its documentation, construction and retrieval among the educated population of the country. The complex interaction of different forms of texts that we noticed in medieval Karnataka not only contests the neatly generalized definitions of scripto-centric, phono-centric dichotomies proposed for documentation of knowledge on the one hand and the concept of translation on the other but also demonstrates the need for understanding and reconstructing the processes and models of cultural transactions such as tellings and renderings.

2.7 The *vrata-kathā* or *nōmpi-kathā* model that has been proposed for capturing the processes involved in medieval tellings and renderings has significant implications for similar cultural

transactions in other Indian literary traditions. Although a systematic study has not been attempted, a cursory look at the Purānic and ritualistic aspects of the medieval Bengali ritual cult, *dharma-pujā*, prompts us to extend the proposed model for other linguistic, regional and sectarian traditions as well. Though Ferrari (2003) refers to *'the uselessness of translation in the Bengali Dharma-pujā'*, it is important to note here that the utilitarian aspects are of no significance in ritualistic traditions such as *Dharma-pujā.*[4]

> As a matter of fact all of the mantras uttered on occasion of rituals *have* to be inaccessible to devotees, yet at the same time – given the low origin of the *pandits* – they have lost significance for the performers themselves (ibid. 2003).

It is important to note that the meaning or utterance of the *mantra*s have a ritual significance like the Prakrit *gāhe*s that we noticed in the case of *Vaḍḍārādhane* and are an integral part of the *vrata-kathā* or *nōmpi-kathā* model of tellings and renderings. Ferrari appears to be perplexed by questions like why neither priests nor devotees care about knowing their meaning, why it is felt that translation is not necessary and what represents 'the word' in Dharma ritualism'. The answer to such questions lies in the fact that the *mantra*s are like the seeds and constitute an integral part of the rituals on the one hand and tellings and renderings in regional languages on the other. What is more significant for our purposes is that these lines which suggest how multilingual texts are sustained in the *vrata-kathā* or *nōmpi-kathā* model even in the absence of the comprehension of multilingual codes, thereby making cultural transactions such as telling and rendering activities a process of translation.

NOTES

1. The summary of opinions given here is based on Nagarajaiah (1999), Narasimhachar (1971), Shivarudrappa (1975) and Upadhye (1943).
2. The occurrence and meaning of *nōmpi* well attested in all the south Dravidian languages: *nōnpu* (Tamil), *nōmpi* (Kannada), *nōmpu* (Malayalam and Tulu), *nōmu* (Telugu) have meanings such as 'ceremonial fasting, abstinence, penance' etc. (*DED,* 3147).
3. For details see Satyanath (1999).
4. Ferrari's position quoted here is based on an abstract available on the website.

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Disputing Borders on the Literary Terrain: Translations and the Making of the Genre of 'Partition Literature'

Nikhila H.

Abstract

The present paper examines the claim, made on behalf of 'partition literature', that it is a more comprehensive account of partition than social-historical accounts. That it is non-partisan and humane. Through the readings of Alok Bhalla's three volume collection titled Stories about the partition of India (1994), it is shown how in the process of translation and genre-formation, certain texts are 'communalized' and rejected or accepted after constructing an elaborate structure of justification. The paper shows how literature too partakes in the symbolic drawing of nation and community boundaries. Literary genres take shape not only to sift literature but to influence the social, political and other realms as well.

In recent years, History has fallen into disfavor in studies of Partition[1] as the discipline that has suppressed the trauma of Partition in constructing the triumphalist narrative of the nation-state. Instead, these studies take recourse to myth, memory and literature to draw attention to "the other face of freedom".[2] The assumption here is that myth, memory and literature bring people together while History is said to be divisive. While the universalist and liberal-humanist claims of British Literature have been questioned by Postcolonial Studies, Literature in general continues to be seen as the repository of universal human values. The literary presentation of Partition has come to be seen as a more 'comprehensive' account of Partition than

the historical representation; it is said to be ‘unique’, ‘non-partisan’ and ‘humane’; it is seen variously as ‘social document’, ‘people’s history’, ‘voice of the silenced’.[3] It is these qualities associated with the ‘literary’ in the context of ‘Partition Literature’ that I subject to scrutiny in this article. The article argues that the literary is as much a terrain of demarcations and disputed borders as is the political terrain.

The last two decades have seen a spate of translations mainly of short stories and novels set in the context of Partition. So large are the number of individual novels, anthologies of short stories and new editions of earlier translations of literary writings on Partition that today they constitute a significant body of literature that goes by the name of ‘Partition Literature’, taught and studied as such today in many universities in India and abroad. This body of literature includes translations from a wide array of Indian languages – Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, etc.- into English, and writers who belong to present-day India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. If ‘Partition Literature’ appears as a site of confluence of literatures from different linguistic and national backgrounds, I want to draw attention to the uneasy relationship between the texts/translations that are being so brought together to constitute a body of literature. The journey of the texts from vernacular languages into English, from ‘provincialism’ to ‘cosmopolitanism’, from national into supra-national context is fraught with tension. An uneasy relationship and tension prevails, as the translations are imbued with contentious present-day concerns about nation, society and polity. The attempt of literature of bringing together and into English, a variety of texts to ‘resolve’ these issues and debates is what I call in this paper ‘Genre politics’. I argue that in the process of forming what I call the ‘genre’ of Partition Literature, criteria for selection and omission of texts/translations are being evolved; protocols for reading the texts/translations are being set in place, both in the metacommentaries on the translations (Preface /Introduction

/Foreword /Essays) and in the actual translations - criteria and protocols that are not necessarily of the literary realm. Looking specifically at two translations – Alok Bhalla's (1994) and Muhammad Umar Memon's (1998) - of the same short story by Ahmed Nadeem Qasimi called *Parameshwar Singh*, which is set in the context of Partition, and also at the Preface/Introduction that frames the two translations respectively, and Bhalla's discussion of "the politics of translation", I cull out the debates and disputes over borders and boundaries, this time happening in the terrain of literature.

Not all texts are equivalent, and in the first section of this paper, I look at a particular principle of hierarchization of texts within the genre of Partition Literature. In the second section, I look at the two translations of the short story *Parameshwar Singh* to see how this principle of hierarchization imbues the translation, and in the last section, I look at how a text that may not fit the genre according to the given criteria is reinterpreted and worked into the genre.

I

The Alok Bhalla-edited anthology of Partition stories is among the first of recent well-known anthologies on Partition. Bhalla's anthology is a 3-volume collection titled *Stories about the Partition of India* (1994). It is not as if other anthologies of Partition stories have not been published before. But this has been among the first anthologies coming with the "boom" in Partition studies in the mid-90s. It is a collection of 63 stories. All except one which is originally in English are translations from various languages of the subcontinent such as Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, Hindi, Sindhi, Malayalam, Dogri and Marathi.

In his Introduction to the anthology, Bhalla states that he finds most histories written on either side of the border too ideologically driven, written as they are “either by the apologists of Pakistan or by its bitter opponents” and hence these histories read either “like incantations” or “like old demonologies” (1994: xii). He turns to literature, he says, because “[c]ontrary to the communal histories, the stories about the Partition have more to do with the actualities of human experience in barbaric times than with ideologies…” (p. xiv). He sees any attempt to historically study the causes for the formation of Pakistan as a vindication of Pakistan (p. xiii). Though he does question the Hindu Right’s sole claim over India, he is dismissive of any narrative of discrimination of Muslims in India today.[4] He also sees no differences or inequalities between communities because the balance sheet of Hindu-Muslims shows both sides to be equal.[5]

Bhalla seems to posit some values as inherent in Literature as opposed to History. But it is not as if he approves of *all* literary writings on Partition. He goes on to classify the various categories of stories on Partition and in doing so gives us an idea of the basis of selection of texts that should go into the making of the genre of Partition Literature. He classifies Partition Stories into four categories: 1) Stories which are communally charged 2) Stories of anger and negation 3) Stories of lamentation and consolation and 4) Stories of the retrieval of memories. Regarding this categorization Jill Didur says: “While this may seem to suggest that Bhalla identifies a variety of responses to the events of Partition, in actuality, he speaks about each of them in a progressive, hierarchical relation to each other, as if the modern national citizen-subject author eventually transcends more primitive and illogical states of being in direct relation to his/her correct remembrance of Partition” (http://www.carleton.ca/caclals/chimodir/Chimo32-web.htm). While Didur goes on to show Bhalla as a conservative-nationalist, the point I’m trying to make is that Partition Literature is not simply a

descriptive label or an all-inclusive category, but it is a *genre* that is constructed through a process of grading, sifting and selection.

Let us look at the first category – stories which are communally charged - because that seemed to have been the crucial criterion for selecting stories for the anthology (Bhalla 1994: xviii). It is not as if Bhalla's anthology has no stories under this category of which he is severely critical. In fact his analysis of three stories that he sees coming under this category are pointers to why he is dismissive of the category. So these stories are part of his anthology more as an example of what should not constitute the genre of Partition Literature. Before we look at Bhalla's reading of one of the three stories,[6] Ahmed Nadeem Qasimi's *Parmeshwar Singh* which Bhalla discusses elaborately, to see what his criteria for selection are, here are the bare essentials of the plot of *Parameshwar Singh.*

Akhtar, a boy of little over five years in age, separated from his mother, and a part of a foot convoy to Pakistan in the wake of its creation is saved by Parameshwar Singh from fellow Sikhs who want to kill the Muslim boy in their midst. Parameshwar Singh's son, about the same age as Akhtar, it turns out, had been kidnapped on the other side of the border from where Parameshar Singh and his family had come a month ago. The rest of the story traces Parameshwar Singh's attempt to get Akhtar accepted by his community and family without riding rough shod on the young boy's sentiments. The story ends with Parameshwar Singh realizing the futility of his attempt, given the narrow-mindedness and hostility of his family members and therefore accompanying Akhtar to the border to restore him to his mother. Parameshwar Singh accompanies Akhtar to Pakistan, not because Akhtar "naturally belongs" there but because people around him make him feel that he is an alien and is unwanted. Parameshwar Singh's daughter Amar Kaur is unambiguously hostile and cannot accept Akhtar at all. " …

Amar Kaur always looked at [Akhtar] as though he were an imposter, who at any minute would discard his turban and comb, and disappear reciting *Qul huwa'l-Lah"* (Qasimi, 1998:127). Further, Parameshwar Singh decides to take Akhtar to Pakistan after his wife and daughter unequivocally say that they can never forget their lost son and brother respectively, implying that Akhtar cannot be a substitute for their affections.[7]

Bhalla however finds this story "not only a bit disingenuous, but … also cynically manipulative" (1994: xvi). He sees a halo around the Muslim child while Parameshwar Singh, he says, is treated as a caricature. Bhalla reads the story as the triumph of a young Muslim boy whose natural piety and inherent religiosity renders futile any attempt to keep him in a Sikh family/community and, he says that "[a]t the end of the story, Akhtar walks towards Pakistan, in the direction from which the morning azan rises into the sky – his mother, his nation and his true spiritual home await him there" (p. xvi). The question that arises here though is who sees Pakistan as Akhtar's spiritual home – Akhtar, Qasimi or Bhalla?

Bhalla's discussion of *Parameshwar Singh* in this fashion draws attention to the criteria adopted in literary selection – those stories seen as "communally charged", i.e. tilting the balance for one community against another are to be excluded from the genre of Partition Literature. The "communal" principle, so to speak, becomes the principle for ordering the texts.

II

If one reads the translation of *Parameshwar Singh* in Bhalla's anthology (translated by Viswamitter Adil and Alok Bhalla) and also reads Bhalla's discussion of the short story in his Introduction, it might not take long to be convinced that such stories which are communally charged should not be part of the genre of

Partition Literature. But *Parameshwar Singh* is translated and anthologized in more recent collection of Partition Stories as well titled *An Epic Unwritten: The Penguin book of Partition Stories* (1998) and *The Resthouse: Ahmad Nadeem Qasimi's Stories* (2000) both edited by Muhammad Umar Memon. Interestingly, talking in his Preface to *An Epic Unwritten* about what propelled him to take up this task of putting together yet another collection of Partition Stories after so many had already been published in recent times, Memon says:

> I felt that the ideological underpinnings articulated in the learned introductions to the earlier selections worked as a sort of distorting filter against the material presented. In other words, I found them too intrusive for my comfort. Hence my decision to steer clear in my own presentation of any such narrowly nationalistic aspirations on the one hand, and of a kind of mealy-mouthed, neo-Gandhian mumbo-jumbo on the other (preface, 1998: xiii).

Although Memon does not name Bhalla, it is not hard to guess who he is talking about here because Bhalla's Introduction is full of invocations of Gandhi.[8] But more importantly from the point of view of furthering our analysis of Bhalla's reading of *Parameshwar Singh,* Memon says that he finds many of the translations in these anthologies inaccurate and distorting and one of the stories he mentions as an example of such distortion is *Parameshwar Singh* (xiii). I compared the translations of *Parameshwar Singh* in the two anthologies – Bhalla's and Memon's, not from the point of view of finding out which is aesthetically better, or truer to the original[9], but to find out what differences there are between the two translations and to see if it is possible to account for them.

While no two translations may be exactly alike and would invariably have differences, I found one instance of variance from each other on comparing the two texts particularly significant. When Parameshwar Singh, after pleading and rescuing Akhtar from his fellow community men, takes Akhtar to his wife, her surprise turns to hysterical anger when she realizes that her husband has brought a Muslim boy home and is pleading for his acceptance in the place of their lost son Kartar. She refuses to allow a Muslim boy in. People form the neighborhood rush and prevent Parameshwar from beating up his adamant wife. It is at this point that the discrepancy between the two translations occurs. I will give the two translations below. First, the translation in Memon's collection:

> The people reasoned with her: Parameshwar Singh was doing a good thing. Making a Musalman into a Sikh was not an everyday occurrence. If it were the olden days, Parameshwar Singh would already have become famous as a 'Guru'. That gave her some comfort… (1998: 134).

Now the translation in Bhalla's anthology:

> Everyone tried to reason with Parameshwar Singh. His intentions were noble, they agreed. In olden times, he would have been regarded as a saint. But now it wasn't easy to teach a Muslim to become a Sikh. His wife was emboldened by their talk (1994: 164).

As is evident, in the first translation, people approve of Parameshwar Singh's extraordinary action and reason with the wife, but in the second translation, people find his action an aberrant in the circumstances and futilely reason with him. Thus in the second translation, Parameshwar Singh's action is seen and evaluated as the action of a mad man rather than seen as an action of an individual who rises above the circumstances of hate and hostility prevalent. In fact "Parameshwar Singh" is not the only story of this kind. There

are innumerable stories of this kind in the genre of Partition Literature that show how individuals rise above narrow community considerations to help and rescue people belonging to the 'other' community. In fact such stories form the strongest basis for claims that Partition Literature is humanist and not narrowly communal. But Bhalla, it seems, denies such humanist renditions of *Parameshwar Singh*. In his analysis of the story in the Introduction, Bhalla sees Parameshwar Singh as "a bit dim-witted" (p. xvi). He accuses Qasimi of creating a caricature of Parameshwar Singh and in fact goes on to say, "… the sarcasm directed towards him, given his name, is always a little heavy-handed" (p. xvi). If one were to read *Parameshwar Singh* in Memon's anthology, one would probably find no irony at all in the title, which would point towards a more literalist reading – Parmeshwar Singh as someone who acted like a God rising above the pettiness of his fellow human beings. Parameshwar Singh's wife and children would then not appear as "hysterical representatives of their tribe", representing "the ancient antagonism between the Sikhs and Muslims" as Bhalla would have it (p. xvi), but as ordinary people shaped by the dominant discourse around them and thereby setting off Parameshwar Singh's extraordinariness, given the circumstances.

In Bhalla's anthology the category of communally charged stories that *Parameshwar Singh* is said to be a part of, is characterized as simplistic and one-sided. But the reading of the text above shows that *Parameshwar Singh* could just as well be read as a humanist text. But why is this reading eschewed? Bhalla, in the Introduction, says:

> Qasmi (sic) refuses to acknowledge that in the 1930's and 40's inhumanity wasn't the exclusive right of any one community. He should know this well, since he was the first editor of the progressive Urdu journal *Savera* and had written angry editorials against the Partition.

> Immediately after the Partition he changed his stance and wrote a poem entitled "Battle Cry of the Kashmiri Freedom fighter" (p. xvi).

Then does Bhalla's reading of *Parameshwar Singh* as a "communally-charged story" have to do with its writer Qasimi's going over to Pakistan, and his changed stance on Partition? Does Qasimi's going over to Pakistan make him communal? Can a Pakistani writer get included in the genre of 'Partition Literature' only by decrying the formation of his nation? – these are questions that arise when we read Bhalla on Qasimi. We can also see here how the translation renders the text 'communal', which then becomes the ground for its inferiority and an instance of what should be excluded from the genre of Partition Literature.

III

Are there some stories that automatically merit inclusion in the genre of 'Partition Literature'? Let us take the case of Sada'at Hasan Manto. In an article titled "The Politics of Translation: Manto's Partition Stories and Khalid Hasan's English Version" (2001:19-38), Alok Bhalla critiques Khalid Hasan's translation of Manto's short stories brought out as a collection titled *Mottled Dawn: Fifty Sketches and Stories of Partition* (1997). To begin with, Bhalla finds two serious problems with the translations: "One, its translations are highly inaccurate and disfigure the original. Two, it has no recognisable editorial policy" (2001: 20).[10] According to Bhalla, "[t]he greatest damage [Khalid] Hasan does to Manto is to communalize him. He does so systematically, with design and in bad faith." (2001:27). Thus having established Khalid Hasan as not only an incompetent translator, but also as irresponsibly manipulative, prejudiced, racist and communal, Bhalla turns to the discussion of Manto's story titled *Yazid* which Khalid Hasan has translated as "The Great Divide" (1997:32-142).

The plot of the story goes like this: Karim Dad is the protagonist of *Yazid* who has lost his father in the riots accompanying the creation of Pakistan. His village has seen killings and destruction as a result of which the villagers are full of sorrow and anger, but Karim Dad realizes that life has to go on and soon marries Jeena whom he had set his sight on before the killings began. Jeena herself has lost her brother, killed when he was saving her from being abducted. But Karim Dad sees no point in endlessly mourning the dead. Soon the village gets the news that India is planning to dam the rivers to prevent them from flowing to Pakistan and thereby make barren their village lands. While this news is received with helpless anger by the villagers, Karim Dad remonstrates with his fellow-villagers for endlessly complaining without thinking of means and strategies to counter the moves made by India. He taunts them saying that one resorts to abuse only in helplessness, when one has run out of options. When he is asked what option there is, he points out that he cannot answer on behalf of thousands of others who will also be affected by the catastrophe. In this mood he receives the news of the birth of a son to Jeena and to Jeena's horror decides to call him "Yazid". Yazid is a Judas-like figure to the Muslims who apparently denied water to Hasan, Hussain and their followers in Karbala by damming the river. But why does Karim Dad decide to call his newborn son "Yazid"? When a shocked Jeena asks Karim Dad, "But do you know whose name that is?", his reply is, "It is not necessary that this little one here should be the same Yazid. That Yazid dammed the waters; this one will make them flow again." (1997:142). These words suggest that if Yazid is a hated figure for the Muslims, because he dammed and denied water to Hasan, Hussain and their followers, this Yazid, by making the water flow again and thereby removing the very cause for hatred will deprive the potency of the image of Yazid. A Yazid who acts favourably can no longer remain Yazid, the hated figure.

Manto seems to have written *Yazid* in the early years after Independence and after Manto's own troubled move to Pakistan from India. The immediate provocation for the story seems to have been a threat to dam the rivers flowing from East Punjab, now in India, into West Punjab, Pakistan and the complicated river-sharing negotiations that were then underway between the governments of the two countries. Manto seems to have been moved at the human tragedy that the damming of rivers would lead to, and in fact, has conveyed his anguish more directly in his *Pandit Manto's first Letter to Pandit Nehru:* [11]

> … I was surprised to learn that you want to stop the rivers from flowing through our land. Panditji, you are only a Nehru [a settler on the riverbank]. I regret that I am just a measuring stone weighing one and a half ser [earlier in the letter, Manto points out that in the Kashmiri language, Manto means "munt", a measuring stone weighing one and a half ser]. If I were a rock of thirty or forty thousand maunds, I would have thrown myself into the river, so that you would have to spend some time consulting with your engineers on how to pull it out (2001: 88-89).

Here is a clear indictment of the intended act of cruelty on the part of the Indian government. This does not however mean that Manto began to support Muslims/Pakistan or turned against Hindus/India. Yet Bhalla belabors this point in his discussion of *Yazid*, as if in anxiety to purge Manto of any "communal" intent:

> Manto … wants to suggest that Yazid is not out there in a community whose faith is different from the Muslims, but a part of each of us, Hindus, and Muslims alike – that we are Yazids when we refuse to take responsibility for our actions or when we dream of killing as a way of proving our holiness; and, that the history of relations between the Hindus and the Muslims was as complicated a mixture of harmony and antagonism as is the case with any group of

> people who have lived together for ages. Thus, he uses Yazid, not to strengthen the historical or religious claims of a few survivors of the riots in Pakistan, but to replace the language of religion by the practice of a mode of analysis which is concrete, moral and psychological, and in the service of community-making (2001: 30).

It is debatable whether Manto's Yazid signifies the Yazid (= the evil, the irresponsible and the bloody-minded) in each of us, as Bhalla suggests. Such a reading, for instance, cannot explain why Karim Dad would choose to give his beloved son such an unflattering name with the connotations still unchanged and negative. Such an interpretation diffuses and draws attention away from the evilness of the action of damming the river on the part of Indian powers, an act Manto neither condoned nor wished away. *Yazid* does not seem to talk about the evil in all of us or the evil actions that we all perform which may make us Yazids. Instead, the story suggests that Karim Dad would like to make Yazid undo this action, so that he no longer remains Yazid or a metaphor of hate.

Bhalla's interpretation of Manto's *Yazid* takes place in the course of his dismissal of Khalid Hasan's translation of Manto as a "communal" one. Bhalla's attempt here is to purge the "communal" taint from Manto and recover him for the genre of 'Partition Literature'. So we see a playing down of Manto's critique of India's ill-intention and a turning of Manto's social and political criticism into moral criticism, as socially and politically motivated threat is reinterpreted as an abstract and diffuse 'evil-in-all-of-us'.

I took up for study Bhalla's critique of Khalid Hasan in order to show how a text is worked on and around to fit into the genre of 'Partition Literature'. In this case, first, the translator is shown as incompetent, unreliable and communal; next, the reading leavens the text to fit into the genre; finally, the iconic figure of the

genre emerges hewed and straightened out to meet the requirements of the genre. My tracing of this process is certainly not to suggest that Sa'adat Hasan Manto is a 'communal' writer.[12] It points to how any association/imagery with regard to religion especially Islam automatically translates itself into the 'communal'. And therefore the anxiety to keep a writer like Manto free from being sullied by this posited 'communalism'.

Thus in the process of translation and genre-formation, certain texts are 'communalized' and then either rejected or accepted after constructing an elaborate structure of justification. The genre of Partition Literature is created in the process of reading 'communalism' into certain texts and paring out the hint of it in others.

The discussion here makes the general point that literature too partakes in the symbolic drawing of nation and community boundaries, and that literary genres take shape not only to sift literature but are themselves shaped by, and also influence, the social and political realms.

NOTES

1. The formation of two nation-states, India and Pakistan, with the end of colonial rule in 1947, the conditions that gave rise to their formation, and the various interests that worked to bring about the two nation-states are all well-documented history. These historical events began to be revisited as the study of "Partition" in the 1990s. The resurgence of interest in Partition came from various quarters – feminists who wanted to see how Partition impacted women, revisionist historians who were unhappy with the existing triumphalist narrative of nation-state formation, who now wanted to study Partition as an instance of people's suffering due to the formation of nation-states, Western

academics doing Postcolonial literary studies who taught and studied "Partition Literature" under the broader rubric of South Asian Literature, etc.

2. This is the sub-title of the 3-volume anthology of short stories edited by Mushirul Hasan (1995).
3. For an elaborate discussion of how literature is privileged in the context of Partition, see Chapter III of my Ph.D. dissertation, *Communalism and Women's Writing in Independent India: A Case Study of Writing on Partition* submitted to Bangalore University (2002).
4. See for instance, his dismissive analysis of Gulam Abbas' short story, "Avtar: A Hindu Myth" in the Introduction to the anthology under discussion. Abbas' story is set in a refugee camp, which years after Partition continues to remain a camp, with its inhabitants kept isolated from the villages around. It highlights the discrimination that Muslims continue to face in Independent India - the lack of opportunities, victimization, targeting in riots, etc. It then uses the image of Kalki, a Hindu Avtar, but in a twist in the story Kalki comes to deliver Muslims from oppressive Hindus. Bhalla of course cannot brook such a perception by the Muslims and therefore dismisses it as a communally charged story in his Introduction (1994: xvii).
5. Bhalla's is critical of Gulam Abbas' short story because while it shows up Hindu discrimination, "there is no hint of the history of massacres by the Muslims" (1994: xvii).
6. The two other "communally charged" stories which are included in the collection are as mentioned before Gulam Abbas' "Avtar: A Hindu Myth" and Krishna Sobti's "Where is my mother?" But only "Parameshwar Singh" is subjected to elaborate analysis in this category.
7. In this article, for my analysis, I have consulted the translation of Qasimi in three anthologies, one *Stories about the Partition of India,* Vol. I (1994), second, *An Epic Unwritten: The Penguin*

book of Partition Stories (1998) and third, *The Resthouse: Ahmed Nadeem Qasimi's stories* (2000).

8. The Introduction is prefaced by two quotations from Gandhi and in his analysis too Bhalla makes out as if Partition happened because the people who were earlier under Gandhi's spiritual-moral leadership suddenly gave in to irrational, unnatural impulses.
9. Post-structuralist theories of translation have problematized the notion of original as source text and translations as versions. So I was not looking for fidelity to the original here.
10. Bhalla is not alone in making this critique of Khalid Hasan's translations. Aijaz Ahmed too makes this criticism of Khalid Hasan based on the 1991 edition of Hasan's translations of Manto titled *Partition: Sketches and Stories* (New Delhi: Viking, 1991). Ahmed says: "Khalid Hasan's editing is at best lamentable, but even his translations are not entirely reliable. He changes words, sentence structure, even titles of stories without any explanation whatever" (1996: 193n).
11. This "letter" is part of an anthology called Translating Partition, edited by Ravikant and Tarun K. Saint (New Delhi: Katha, 2001). It was apparently first published as a Foreword to one of Manto's novels in 1954 (ibid. 91 n).
12. In fact Manto is hard to capture under labels. He shared the social concerns of the Progressives dominant in Urdu literature of his time, yet was severely critical of other progressives like Krishan Chander. (See Ismat Chugtai's "My friend, My Enemy" in the book of the same name - *My Friend, My Enemy: Essays, Reminiscences, Portraits* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 2001). He migrated to Pakistan in 1948 after agonizing over the decision (Hasan 1997:xvi-xvii). In Pakistan, for a time, he co-edited with Muhammad Hasan Askari, who was then promoting the idea of a distinct Pakistani literature the literary periodical Urdu Adab (Memon 1998:365). It is often said that his unhappiness with the new dispensation drove him to drink and

despair. About *Siyah Hashye*, his bleak pen sketches on Partition, he wrote: "For a long time I refused to accept the consequences of the revolution, which was set off by the Partition of the country. I still feel the same way; but I suppose, in the end, I came to accept this nightmarish reality without self-pity or despair. In the process I tried to retrieve from this man-made sea of blood, pearls of rare hue, by writing about the single-minded dedication with which men had killed men, about the remorse felt by some of them, about the tears shed by murderers who could not understand why they still had some human feelings left. All this and more, I put in my book, *Siyah Hashye*" (quoted in M. Hasan, 1995: 89)

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Translation and the Indian Tradition: Some Illustrations, Some Insights

Priyadarshi Patnaik

Abstract

In the context of the spotlight on translation in the post-colonial context, it is interesting to note that in the Indian tradition there are many instances of what can be termed 'translations' since very early times, yet there is hardly any theorizing in our tradition about them. The paper focusses on one instance of such an activity. Around 16th century AD poet Jagannatha Dasa of Orissa wrote an Oriya Bhagabat which has virtually the exact chapter and canto arrangement as that of the Sanskrit Bhagabat. Yet there are variations here and there which are insightful. Similar is the case with the verses and the narratives which follow the Sanskrit Bhagabat systematically at many places and deviate at others. A close look at and comparison of the two texts leads to interesting observations. The paper uses a short extract each from the two works (Sanskrit Bhagabat with English translation, Oriya Bhagabat with my translation into English) to draw comparisons and to analyse some finer points of Indian translation in the pre-colonial days.

Introduction

At first glance, Indian tradition has nothing to say about translation. For that matter, there is hardly any theorizing anywhere in the Sanskrit scholastic or literary tradition about the translation of texts. Was it because there was no translation of texts in this tradition?

Since very early times translation has been a very significant activity in India. The Chinese came to India, took Buddhist texts back and translated them. Many Pali and Prakrit texts of the Buddhists were translated into Sanskrit. In the medieval period a number of popular Sanskrit works, especially *Rāmāyana*, *Mahābhārata* and many *Purānas* were translated into regional languages.

I subscribe to the view that translation has been an almost unconscious activity in the Indian tradition, something which has happened in this context effortlessly without fuss and hassles and, hence, has not received much critical attention. There are certain important components like the ‘original text’, ‘author’, ‘cultural transference’, etc., which were perhaps not problematized in the ancient Indian context, and hence, have drawn little critical attention. In the Western context as well, theorizing about translation is fairly recent, although the act of translation itself is at least as old as the Bible.

Today, a very important question comes to one’s mind, and that is: is there anything distinctive that we can say about translation in the Indian context? As I pointed out above, one has very little critical text to go by which directly deals with translation. However, one can learn from the examples, from oblique references to the problem and even the way that the different art forms in our culture have evolved. For instance, one can look at translations among the different Indian languages that had taken place prior to colonization. One can look at *Mimāmsa* or the interpretative tradition for rules to be followed for interpretation; assuming that interpretation and translation have certain things in common. One can seek inspiration in the Jaina concept of *anekāntavāda* where reality can never be grasped in its totality (as any translation is always one of many possible translations of an ungraspable original). One can look at the way different art forms explored the same myths and legends – to what extent “translations” into different forms were parallel or used

common principles. However, such an exploration would be a full-length study in itself. What can be and are attempted here are some illustrations and pointers, with the hope that somebody would find them worthwhile starting points for detailed exploration.

I shall take up for close analysis a passage from *Srimad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāna* and its translation into Oriya. I shall then attempt to show that Indian aesthetics does give certain insights into the process of translation.

Section I

Medieval India saw the "translation" of many popular Sanskrit works into the regional languages – especially religious and didactic works to which the masses, who did not know Sanskrit, sought access. In Orissa *Bhāgavata Mahāpuran* was translated into Oriya sometime around the 15th-16th century A.D. by the eminent *Santha* poet Jagannātha Dāsa. The translation is remarkably popular even today and in Orissa hardly anyone reads the Sanskrit text. Almost all public readings in villages are from the Oriya *Bhāgavata*.

What I have attempted here is a comparison of a short passage from the 11th canto of both the texts. However, before that, I would like to point out that in terms of metre, the two texts are very different. The Oriya text used a metre with nine syllables known as *nabākshyari chhanda* which is very popular in the Orissan tradition and is eminently readable over long stretches. This is also a metre which is easy to remember. The poet, thus, has chosen a metre which is not necessarily close to the original metre (the Sanskrit text was written mostly in *anustuv* metre), but one which, in its own cultural context, is the most appropriate. Since the *Bhāgavata* is a long work and yet is supposed to be read in a matter of a few days, in Oriya, there is no other metre which is as lucid and easy to recite as the *nabākshyari*.

Culture provides certain insights into how a work is looked at. In the Oriya tradition, it is never felt that Jagannātha's *Bhāgavata* is a translation of Sanskrit *Bhāghavata*. I believe this is common to the Indian context. We talk of Valmiki's *Rāmāyana* and we also talk of Tulsi's *Rāmāyana* or Kamban's *Rāmāyana*. It is never felt that one is the original and the other is a copy. It is as if the story of Rama exists somewhere in the Indian tradition and each poet has made it his own. Within the tradition, it is cultural property. Anybody can pick it and use it. Ownership of the story belongs to no individual but to a collective tradition. Often scholars use the expression "transcreation" to look at such works.

While Jagannātha's *Bhāgavata* fits this category, it is also remarkably close to the structure of the original. The numbers of cantos in both the texts are identical. The chapters are usually of the same number and each chapter deals with identical subject matter. Seen in this light, the Oriya text comes very close to what we call 'translation' today. This is one reason why it is a good example to take up here.

What I shall attempt now is a comparison of the two texts. For those who know both Sanskrit and Oriya, the original passages are available in the notes. However, for those who must read in English, given below are the translations. The translation from the Sanskrit is by C. L. Goswami (Goswami: 1995). The translation from Oriya is mine. In spite of the translations of translations, I hope that I will be able to make a few pertinent observations about the practice of translation in the Indian context.

The passage that I take up here is from the section that deals with the lessons that the Abadhuta learns from his twenty-four gurus. Among his gurus are the sky, the earth, the sea, animals and insects. The Abadhuta also learns from the experiences of the fallen woman – here the prostitute Pingalā who lived once in the town of Videha.

Srimad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāna (Sanskrit) [1]
Canto 11. Chapter 8. Verses 30-34

Alas! How senseless and of uncontrolled mind am I! Behold the extent of my foolishness; ignorant as I am
I have expected the fulfillment of my desire from a trifling mean paramour! (30)
Forsaking the eternal and real lord who resides in my heart and gives joy and wealth forever,
Fondly have I sought a poor man who cannot satisfy my desires and who only gives grief, fear, worry, sorrow and infatuation. (31)
Lo! How uselessly have I afflicted my soul by leading the life of a courtesan and living by such a highly reproachable profession;
I expected wealth and satisfaction from a lustful, greedy and lamentable person through the body sold to him. (32)
What female other than myself would have enjoyed a body, which is like a house of which the framework is bones,
Covered with skin, hair and nails, which is full of urine and excreta and has nine doors through which constantly flows foul matter? (33)
Among the citizens of Mithila (Videha) I am the only foolish and wicked person…

Bhāgavata Mahāpurāna (Oriya)
Canto 11. Chapter 8. Verses 30-34[2]

Look at the net of my desire!
I lived my time in ignorance,
Ruined everything in my lust for wealth,
In my woman's ways, in my carnal drive
Among unholy men
I indulged my desire intoxicated.
Curse this life of mine!
Close to me is my Deliverer,

The giver of all wealth and happiness,
The Father of all orphans
The Lord of the path to liberation.
Distancing that pearl, that eternal Lord
From my cursed mind
I took to the company of wicked men.
Ignorant were my colourful ways.
They were very wicked and
Misfortune was the reason for my downfall.
For I lived among the debauch
As a result of the sins of my past life;
Was tormented in vein
With the ways of wicked womanhood.
Thirsting for money
I misused this body –
A cage made of bones
Covered with nail, skin and hair.
With chains and knots of veins
Smearing the skin with flesh.
In this house of body I stay.
Endlessly flow the nine openings.
Within which move urine and stool
Complete with phlegm, bile and...
Malodorous worms, saliva and veins;
Diseases grow here endlessly.
Such is the house where I reside.
This is what my Guru taught me.
Not paying heed to his words
In this house I am the –
In the whole city of Videha
There is no fool like me.
(Verses 30 -34)

While Jagannātha remains close to the spirit of the original, discusses the same themes, takes up the same issues, he also introduces variations of his own, extends certain metaphors, sometimes intensifies certain images and often elaborates and

elucidates. In other words, there are places where the translation also extends into commentary.

To begin with, the content of the four verses of the Sanskrit text are covered in around 20 short verses in the Oriya *Bhāgavata*. As indicated earlier, the metre is different, the approach elucidatory, giving rise to certain repetitions that one doesn't find in the Sanskrit text. This is an interesting point since by very nature, Oriya didactic poetry is repetitive. It is a part of this tradition. On the other hand Sanskrit verses are aphoristic more often and pithy, given as they are to condensation by the very compounding of words. Such attempt at pithiness hardly exists anywhere in the Oriya literary tradition and is in fact alien to it. While the Sanskrit *Bhāgavata* is elucidatory in nature in the context of Sanskrit verse, compared to the Oriya text, it is very compressed.

The Oriya text, here, begins with a metaphor – one which is cultural and very powerful. He uses the metaphor of the net or the web for the world. Entrapment in the world of desires is the theme of both the texts, but in the Oriya text, the metaphor of the net is new. *Māya Jāla* or the "illusory web" of the world is a very common metaphor in Oriya religious poetry. The poet uses it here in the Oriya text to intensify the state of affairs with the fallen woman who feels entrapped.

Another interesting case is the use of extended metaphor and its elaboration. Both in the Sanskrit and the Oriya tradition, the body being seen as a 'cage' is a very powerful cultural metaphor. In the *Bhakti* poetry of the 16th – 17th century Orissa, it is very frequently used. In this context, the Oriya text extends this metaphor, elaborates

on it and highlights the disgusting elements that constitute this body. The reference to “diseases” is also new, not directly referred to in the Sanskrit text.

Is it not possible to go through a text, internalize it, and then express it in your own cultural context as cogently as possible? Is it not possible to take a metaphor and then extend it in order to intensify it? Is it not possible to elaborate, give flesh to stories or outlines that stand bare in the “original?” Is it not possible to get out of the mindset that makes one the “original” and the other the “copy?” I believe all these things happen when we look at “translation” in the Indian context.

Both the Sanskrit and the Oriya works seek inspiration prior to the beginning the work. If we had a translation in the literal sense, as we understand it today, the Oriya text would have sought the blessings for the poet of the Sanskrit text. But that does not happen. The Oriya text seeks inspiration and blessings for itself – its travails and smooth journey.

In this tradition, not only does the author internalize the text, but the text also internalizes the author. For instance, at the end of almost each chapter, Jagannātha says something like this:

> The tale of these twenty-four gurus
> Uddhaba tells, O Chakrapāni.
> That tale is one of great delight.

And this is the summary of the eleventh canto…

> Jagannātha Dāsa tells this
> Setting his mind at the feet of Lord Krishna. (11th Canto, chapter 10)

The author of the Oriya *Bhāgavata* has made the text his own and is himself embedded within the text. This is another common feature of much medieval poetry of India.

The notion of translation, as we understand it today, involves an 'original author' and an 'original text'. Faithfulness, devotion, textual integrity are highlighted; or else one rebels against them; they are never transcended. In the Indian tradition, internalization and transformation appropriate to the cultural context are indicated. Even as the author absorbs, the author is absorbed too.

However, a word of caution! Not all texts are or can be treated in this way, even in the Indian tradition. For instance, there was hardly any attempt to translate the *Vedas* into any other language prior to colonization. Vedas are *apaurusheya* (= not man-made), and are transmitted by *sruti* (= listening). They cannot be made one's own the way the *Purānas* can be. From the point of view of content, the meaning of the *Vedas* is embedded in the sound. Meaning proliferates at various levels – only one of them is literal. At another level meaning and sound are so closely linked that separating them divests them of all meaning. *Mantras* thus become untranslatable (Roy: 2004).

But the same is not the case with *Bhagvad Gitā*, which is considered anonymous in origin. In the Oriya language itself, there must be at least five *Gitās* between the 15th and 17th century A.D. The framework became so popular that almost any treatise on any religious subject started making use of it. In such a context, *Gitā* referred to the format (Krishna and Arjuna) and not to the content. What was translated, if at all it can be called that, was the form (even proforma) and not the content.

In the context of philosophical works, there were not many translations, at least from Sanskrit to the regional languages. For

instance, I know of no translations of Sanskrit philosophical works into Oriya in the pre-colonial context. This could possibly be because those who indulged in philosophy were expected to know Sanskrit. It was the language of philosophy and there was no popular demand for philosophy as there was for *Purānas* or the epics.

An exploration of the translation of Pali canonical texts into Sanskrit would give us a lot of insight into the strategies followed in translating philosophical texts. However such an exploration would be outside the tether of this paper.

Let us now at Indian aesthetics and Indian poetics seeking some light on the act(ivity) we call ‘translation’.

Section II

The various art forms, in the Indian context, are closely interrelated. This is indicated in many ancient treatises on art as I have pointed out elsewhere (Patnaik: 2004). For instance, the *Visnudharmottara* (Part 3, cpt 2, Verse 1-9), in a passage emphasizing the knowledge required to understand image-making, says:

> Lord of men, he who does not know properly the rules of *chitra* can, by no means, be able to discern the characteristics of image… Without any knowledge of the art of dancing, the rules of painting are very difficult to be understood... The practice of dancing is difficult to be understood by one who is not acquainted with music… without singing, music cannot be understood.
>
> (Kramrisch: 1928, 31-32)

In the context of dance, *vāchikābhinaya* (expression through words) can be easily translated into *angikābhinaya* (expression

through gestures) since an elaborate and well developed language of gestures exists which is capable both of description and narration.

Concepts like *alamkara* (ornamentations), *dosas* (defects), *gunas* (qualities), *bhāvas* (emotions expressed successfully through art) and *riti* (style) are common to music, painting, dance as well as literature. It is perhaps because of this interrelation that around the 16th century A.D., there evolved a form of painting known as *Rāgmālā*. This is the depiction of the *rāgas* (musical forms) through a series of paintings. Such a radical conceptualization – translating something that is temporal and transient into something spatial and static – would not have been possible without a set up in which the various art forms shared many values, strategies and ideals.

Hence, stories belonging to the corpus of our tradition could be enacted in plays, dance forms, indicated in murals or paintings or transmitted through songs. A great degree of translatability among modes existed in such a tradition. Notions of authorship did not interfere with such translations or, as I have tried to suggest, 'transmutations'.

In the background of such inter-modal exchanges that Indian aesthetics permitted, it is not difficult to point to possible ways of translating between different languages and even cultures.

I shall begin with the observations that T.R.S. Sharma makes about Indian poetics and translation and then build on those ideas. In the context of *rasa*, he considered it the shaping principle, the inner rhetoricity working through the text and shaping it (Sharma 2004: 148-49). *Rasa* can also be considered the aesthetic emotion that pervades the work that gives it its emotion-based orientation. Unless this is successfully transmitted to the audience, according to Indian poetics, the work fails. The same principle can apply to translation. Though it looks apparently innocent, this can be radical

when applied to translation – the translation may, if necessary, have to use totally different words or figures or configurations in order to successfully evoke similar emotions (to the source text) in another language or another culture. Thus, *rasa*, as a guiding principle, allows for departure from textual, word-for-word translation. If we look at Jagannātha's *Bhāgavata*, the different verse form used can be justified in these terms – the cultural difference required a different verse form which was lucid and seemed effortless. But I do not of course wish to indicate that Jagannātha's choice was necessarily based on *rasa* theory.

Riti refers to stylistics. Sharma differentiates it from rhetorics which also includes tropes or figures of thought (Sharma 2004: 149). *Riti* indicates the choice of language, the tone, the swiftness or slowness of pace, the static or the dynamic aspect of the language, the choice of verse. If *rasa* is the spirit that runs through the work, *riti* is the body, its fluidity or rigidity, its movements, its rhythms.

How does one emulate *riti* in a translation? Sharma gives the example of Hemingway. Since Hemingway uses a predominantly Anglo-Saxon diction and simple sentences, in an Indian translation, the use of colloquial rather than Sanskritised expressions could be indicated. *Riti* requires an acute ear, and the ability to choose an apt cultural 'transference'.

An elaboration of this point may be in order here. Often cultures cannot be translated. A different ethos has a different demand. A tone, a style, a narrative strategy may not exist in the translated language. Here one cannot translate; one must look for a cultural parallel. And in doing so, one goes not so much by *riti* as by *rasa*.

Alamkāras constitute figures of sound and thought. Metaphors, tropes, different kinds of figures come under it. While

being considered as the supreme attributes of literature till the 10th century A.D., after Ânandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, these came, often, to be considered as mere embellishments. *Alamkāra* or jewelry is that which adorns the bare body and thus makes it beautiful.

In translation, one tries to translate figures of thought, but what about figures of sound? What about the vibrations. As with *mantras* which lose their meaning in translation (since the vibration of the original sounds are missing), with *sabda* (sound) *alamkāra*, translation usually fails.

Sharma finally talks of *dhvani*, which is a force-field of meanings, often culture-specific (Sharma: 2004, 150). *Dhvani* was brought into the realm of poetics by Ânandavardhana and is generally translated as 'suggestion'. For instance, Ganga (which could be someone's name) brings in the association of the holy river, the myth of Ganga and Shiva, the image of sacrifices, the sacredness of the water. This may pose problems for translation. *Dhvani* is to a very great extent culture-specific and poses the most difficulty to a translator. However, many texts rely on evocation and suggestion. Hence, *dhvani* is an important issue that translators must keep in mind. A strategy that some translators use is implicit commentary within the text in order to explain possible evocations. Others use notes and leave the rest to the reader's imagination. But there is no easy way to tackle the problem.

One other set of elements of Indian poetics that Sharma does not mention or consider important for translation is *dosas* (defects) and *gunas* (positive qualities) that one identifies in a text. Indian poetics lays down a series of defects (usually ten in number by each ancient critic) and good qualities of literary writing. While in the contemporary context we may no longer use the same guidelines, they are significant indicators of writing strategies.

For instance, here are a few *dosas* and *gunas* that Bharata lists. Among *gunas* he indicates *slesa* (apt use), *prasada* (clarity), *samatā* (evenness), *mādhurya* (sweetness) etc. Among *dosas* he lists *qudarthā* (circumlocution or difficult words), *arthantara* (digression into irrelevance), *arthahina* (incoherence, multiple meanings), *ekārtha* (tautology) etc.

Dosas and *gunas*, we must admit, are both context- and culture-dependent and hence relative. Say, 'sweetness' may not be apt in all writings. In some, it may even be considered a defect. Nor is it the translator's main job to identify 'defects' in the text and remedy them. But *dosas* and *gunas* are insightful indicators of the subtle nuances of the style of writing. They get linked to *riti* or stylistics. They can make the translator choose the right strategy for emulating the style (or collage of styles) to be found in the text to be translated, be they *dosas* or *gunas*.

Finally, it must be said that the five elements of Indian poetics indicated above do not necessarily work in unity when one comes to translation. There might be inherently contradictory demands that each makes on the translator. If one goes by later poeticians in the Indian tradition, one would resolve the issue by focusing on *rasa*, the emotional evocation of the translation and its approximation to the text that is translated. Other elements must work in accord, and where they do not, must be subordinated to or abandoned in favour of *rasa*.

I also subscribe to such a view. In spite of the various things that we have to say in literary theory about texts, a very significant component of any act of literature is the response of the reader/audience to it, and this can never be purely intellectual or cerebral. Aesthetic relish always brings in certain emotions or their evocations. All translations must finally be read/experienced, and they must evoke certain aesthetic emotions in the reader/audience. In

that every literary work can be analyzed through *rasa* and it can be a guiding principle for any transaltion.

NOTES

[1]. *Srimad Bhagavata Mahāpurāna*, Gorakhpur Gita Press,

Gorakhpur, (3rd Edition) 1995.

2. *aho me mohobitatim paṣyatābijitātmanaḥ| yā kantādastaḥ kāmam kāmaye yena bāliṣā (30)*
santam samipe ramaṇamratipradam bittapradam nityamimam bihāya |
akāmadam dukhhabhayādiṣokamohapradam tucḥ
amahambhagegnyā (31)
aho mayātmā paritāpito bruthā sānketyabrutyati bigaryabartayā |
strairnānrād yārthatřśonosocyāt křītena bittam ratimātmanecḥtī |(32)
yadasthi vinirmita bamsbangsyasthuṇam tvacā romanakheḥa
pinardum |
khyaranna badvāra magārametad birnmutrapurnam madupetikānya | (33)
idehanām pure hyāsminhamekeba muḍhaḍiḥi

3. *dekha mohara mohazāla | agyāne bancili mu kāla*
sarba nāśili dhana lobhe | nārī svabhābe kāmabhābe
asādhu puruṣanka mele | kāntara bhāve kāmabhole
ramili dhane dei mana | dhika e moharajībana
nikate achi mora bhartā | sarba sampada sukha-dātā
anātha nātha janahitā | mukati gatira bidhātā
ze nitya puruṣa ratana | tāhānka dure thoi mana
ramili kupuru ṣa sange | dhane surati sukha range
buddhi mohara dusta ati | bipāka phale hīnagati
banchili tuchajana mele | purba pātaka karmaphala

bruthā tāpita heli muhiṇ | stirī lampate bhava muhin
artha truśnāre hoi marta | e deha kali mu biartha
asthi panjarā cāripāśe | chāu ṇi nakha roma keśe
śirā śikuli gan ṭhi jokhe | carma rudhira māmsa lepe
e kāya ghare bāsa moro | nirate bahe nabadvāra
ehā madhyare malamutra | sampurṇa kapha bāta pitta
durgandha kr̆umi lāla nāḍi | aśeṣa roga cḥanti baḍhi
emanta ghare mote thoi | je guru gale śikhyā dei
se guru bākya na pramaṇi | a ghere muhi docāruṇī
bideha nagarare thāi | mo pari mu ḍha kehi nāhi

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Texts on Translation and Translational Norms in Bengal

Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta

Abstract

Translation Studies in India has begun to take institutional shape and it is important at this juncture to collate texts on translation written in Indian languages at different points of time. This would not only facilitate our understanding of translational norms acting in the literary and linguistic system at any given point of time, but also lead to a general notion of attitudes related to translation as process and product in a particular system. This in turn will enable us to build our theories of inter-lingual translation. In this paper I will draw attention to a few such texts in Bangla in what has been called the modern period in literary history.

Translation in Bangla, as in the case of other Indian languages, has a long history going back to ancient times and whether or not in the early stages they were looked upon as 'translation' is a different matter. In fact, as Dinesh Chandra Sen points out in his article "Bangla Bhashay Anubad-Sahitya" (Sen 1907:18:2&3), the very course of Bangla language was deflected towards Sanskrit again in the early stages because of the profusion of Sanskrit words in the translated versions of the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagvat Purana*. These texts were very popular and hence had an impact on the common language of the people. Sen further gives the example of Alaol's *Padmabati* in the mid-17th century, translated from the Hindi *Padumavat* of Jaysi, as having the greatest number of Sanskrit words. The translation, accomplished while Alaol was in service in Arakan, was found, Sen

states, in the Persian script in Chittagong. Numerous such instances may be there of the curious passage from one language into another of a popular text in India. There was also the case of translations from Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit tales into simple Hindusthani that were again very popular and had a great impact on the language and literature of the people. The translation scene, however, changed quite radically in the middle of the nineteenth century with the encounter between two very different linguistic and literary systems, Bangla and English, within asymmetrical power relations. In 1851, the Vernacular Literature Committee (later renamed Society), a semi-governmental institution was set up by Drinkwater Bethune, with help and co-operation from British and Indian scholars. In Bangla the society was called Bangabhasanubadak Samaj or Society for Bangla Translation. In the preface to the first text *Lord Clive* (1852) published by the society, the author Harachandra Dutta wrote that "the object of the association is distinctly stated to be, not only to translate but to adapt English authors into Bengali" (quoted in Sukumar Sen, 1975:43). We can recognise the statement as laying out a colonialist project aimed at obliterating elements in the literary system and remoulding with an overarching purpose. The project however, was only partially successful, for in practice, the society produced translations not only of British texts, but also of texts from other literatures through English and from Indian literatures. However, the kind of literature that was translated, moral tales and social allegories, led to the production of similar texts in the original, gradually bringing in dichotomies and changes in the value system. But again, from a different point of view, activities of the society also contributed to significant changes in the use of the Bangla language that, along with other factors, led to the creation of masterpieces in prose in the next few decades. It would be an interesting study to see how these changes were necessarily very different from those brought about in the early stages of translation from Sanskrit into Bangla.

My concern in this paper is with the modern period and the translation of poetry where one does not encounter any overt prescriptive agenda imposed from above as in the case of prose. In an indirect manner, however, through English education chiefly, an entire school of poetry gets adapted and some translated, though it is not until the first decades of the twentieth century that anthologies of translated poems appear. Here again we come across a large range of source language texts and various different attitudes towards what we would call translational norms, and our understanding of translation as activity in Bengal would be incomplete if we read it solely in terms of a colonial paradigm.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, and the first few decades of the twentieth century to a certain extent, one comes across a large number of poems that are called adaptations, literally *chhaya abalambane* (in the shadow of) and quite often the language is mentioned, but not the name of the poet or the poem. A comparison with the source language text of some of the poems would reveal a strong presence of an invariant core, and this, according to Gideon Toury, would allow the poem the legitimacy of a translated text. In others one may find just a distant echo of the original, although this is rare. The phenomenon may also suggest that the concept of translation as an activity that involves the decoding of a message in a particular language/literary system and encoding it in another, taking into account the denotative and the connotative elements of the message in the sphere of poetry, has not yet taken any definite shape. Yet again, the attitude also has at its point of origin an idealistic, universalistic notion of poetry that shapes horizons of poetic activities in the literary system and this despite experiences of colonialism over a long period of time. It is universalism with a difference as articulated by Rabindranath in his speech 'Visvasahitya' or World Literature delivered in 1906. There he talks about his view of literature as one constituting a world of its own, where each single work contributes to the perfection of the

whole. He feels that man realised himself, fulfilled himself in knowing others, in bringing them closer or working for them. It was this truth or essence of man that tried to express itself through literature and hence one could conceive of literature in terms of a whole where each literary work played its part in realising the perfection of the whole. Rabindranath does speak of one literature, of essences and truths, but what lends a different dimension to his theory of essences and truths is the fact that they are contingent on human relations. The thought process is open-ended – the creation of the literary tower forever remains incomplete with just the ideal of the end stamped on its innermost core. Within this framework the translational norm will also be open-ended enough to include free adaptations of poems that can belong anywhere and to all.

Rabindranath's vision of *visvasahitya* finds resonance in many of the poet-translators of the period. The first collections of world poetry in Bangla were *Tirthasalil* (1908), *Tirtharenu* (1910) and *Manimanjusha* (1915) and their author Satyendranath Dutta. There were five hundred and three texts from different periods and countries. Translations were made from Chinese, Persian, English, French, and from several Indian languages. In one of the earlier poems Satyendranath seems a little unsure of the end-product, “I do not know what I did in the context of what I had set out to do” (1984:123). The pre-translational phase, one governed by the ideology of faithfulness and by visions of precise contours, soon gives way to other exigencies, more immediate perhaps, more necessary to the literary system. The leading poets of the period encourage Satyendranath in his efforts to translate – Rabindranath tells him after reading *Tirtharenu* that his translations are not *silpakarya* (artifacts), but *sristikarya* (creative acts). Earlier after reading *Tirthasalil*, he had written that the translated poems had taken shelter in the branches of the original to blossom in all their beauty and *rasa*. The translation of a poem was in fact, he writes, both a translation and a new poem. In other words, the translated poem also had to be accepted as a poem in the target literature to

legitimise its entity as a translated poem. In Satyendranath's translations there is a strong presence of the source language poem in the general ambience and the form which are again layered with cultural and local connotations. There are also the demands of the creative act – once a choice has been made with reference to one particular texteme, others necessarily have to follow. As a poet, Satyendranath occupies an important place for his experiments with sound patterns, and often as translator, he finds an incentive in source language poems to explore such patterns. The Japanese *tanka* and the Malaysian *pantoum*, the verse patterns of Paul Verlaine and Victor Hugo and certain metrical patterns of Sanskrit poetry are introduced in Bangla through his translations. As for the act of translation, he says he engages with it to bring about a relationship of *ananda* or joy (*anander atmiyata korite sadhan*).

Satyendranath Datta belongs to the pre-modern period in Bangla literature, if we go by standard periodisation in histories of literatures. Translation activities continue on a large scale during the several decades of transition from the pre-modern to the modern. Poets, especially from the mid-twenties, try to come out from the dominant presence of Rabindranath, to find new means of expression as they grapple with the times, the aftermath of the First World War, the economic depression and the resultant instability. Translation activities at this point of time get linked with the uncertainties of social life and receive a new stimulus. Anthologies of translated poems by single authors are published a little later in the fifties, but journals such as *Parichay*, concentrating to a large extent on foreign literature, emerge. The poetry of the period becomes marked by an intertextual quality that becomes both the sign and symptom of modernity. As Alokeranjan Dasgupta and Sankha Ghosh write in the preface to their volume of translated poems *Sapto Sindhu Das Diganto*, translation during the period is an integrated activity, for the source language poem is not felt to be a very distant entity, whereas in earlier periods source language poems

were translated for the sake of beauty and variety or, in other words, not because they complemented one's sense of being in the world. In fact, to many poets writing at the time, translation becomes a necessary act. If we do not have as many adaptations (*chhaya abalambane*) as in the last few decades, we have Bangla poetry, or at least one prominent stream of Bangla poetry being compulsively drawn into a larger arena of world poetry. The notion of difference, strongly present but unstated in the concept of *visvasahitya,* is glossed over at least on the surface level. Translation then supposedly has an active place in modelling the target system. Sudhindranath Dutta writes an essay called 'Kavyer Mukti' or the 'Emancipation of Poetry' where he emphasises the need for an open-ended process of reception. The very act of translation gets linked with the writing of poetry. On the pragmatic level this can imply greater degrees of equivalence between content or semantic categories as well as metalinguistic or cultural and semiotic aspects. Given the differences in the two systems this happens within certain limits and to the extent that it does it also brings in a gap between the popular and the cultivated circuit of readers of poetry. In the next section, I will take up texts on translation by three important poet-translators of the period.

I will go back to Sudhindranath Datta, an important poet-translator of the period who believes that the ground for creating poetry is not as fertile as before and so the poet has to roam the entire world and gather seeds that can germinate into poetry. In his introduction to his volume of translated poems *Pratidhvani* (1954) he takes up the notion of translation and states that poetry is untranslatable – it is impossible to create the same poem in another language at another time and in another place and especially where the systems are as different from each other as for instance, Bangla and French. Yet he translates. His translations of Mallarmé's 'L'après-midi d'un faune' and of Valéry's 'L'ebauche d'un serpent' have been acclaimed as poems of considerable achievement. The first has a hundred verses of the same length with end rhymes, while

the second has thirty-one stanzas of ten short and equal lines with a complex rhyme scheme. Datta also has a detailed note on Mallarmé's poem suggesting that the venture had been undertaken as a kind of exercise in difference – an attempt to reach some kind of an end-point, a limit to which poetry could aspire, to the empty core of music or to the ideal of absence. It is a certain concept of poetry that would then seek to find expression in the translated poem. The volume also has twenty-three sonnets of Shakespeare and several poems of Heine. Datta tries to find a way out of his own argument that since poetry is the exact correspondence of word and experience it is untransferable, by saying that in the case of a translated poem it is the experience of the source language poem that is substituted for primary experience. Again later he says that translation is a creative act undertaken as a means of self-expression. The success of the translated work, he feels, depends on the means adapted for self-expression. What he means is that translation engages with form and style, rather than with semantic content – the latter is important in as much as it is a part of the form, but not as a central preoccupation. The translational norm then encompasses a holistic perspective including the poem and the history of poetic form as such. It is within this broader view of poetry that the translational act becomes crystallised. It will be a faithful translation from the point of view of the overall experience or the elicitation of *rasa* and an independent poem in literary history, looking both to the past and the future, carrying within it the possibilities and potentials of further explorations in form and syntax, something that may bear fruit in the poet's own poems. Some parts of Datta's famous poem 'Jajati', Buddhadeva Bose points out, is a happy blend of translation, reception and creation.

Moving from the general to the personal, Datta uses a complex symbol to describe his status as a translator. Although, he states, his translations can never reach the heights achieved by the source language poems, by constant revisions and rewritings, he is

able to achieve the status of Ekalavya. It is history that makes him use the symbol that he does, but history is not a determining force, for the symbol is evocative of both pride and humility, the former more perhaps than the latter. There is a double vision in Sudhindranath's concept of the translator as Ekalavya – a strong attempt to excel in conveying the experience of the source language poem on the one hand, and on the other, the consciousness of having achieved excellence as a poet, of a sense of fulfilment that will lead to other directions, other poems and other poets, create a tradition that will link up with his own as well as with the tradition of European poetry from which he draws.

Commenting on the act of translation with reference to Sudhindranath Datta's translations in 'Kabitar Anubad o Sudhindranath Datta' (1957) Buddha deva Bose, an eminent poet-translator, says translational activity implies training in discipline and self-restraint (a point mentioned earlier also by Datta) as well as what he calls *atmasuddhi* or purification of the self. The latter may signify that labour undertaken for the sake of poetry in a somewhat detached manner, as a kind of *sadhana*, with the self in the background, leads to purification. The task of the translator gets invested with a value code from a spiritual domain. In fact, he often envisions a deep relationship with the source language poem. He states that in order to "get hold of the poem, one has to merge with it, give a part of oneself to it. This great union can be called translation" (ibid. 1957:167). The discourse on translation that we encounter in Bose is symptomatic of a general trend in engaging with translation where one tries to understand the nature of the activity from an ontological point of view, sometimes with reference to the creative impulse, as most of the translators are also poets. There is an inward turn -a self-reflexivity with reference to the creative, situated within *kavyatatva*, or Indian poetics, that is present in a diffused manner in the literary system. It is the poet, Bose says, who is the natural and legitimate translator of poetry. With the right combinations, the act undertaken by a poet will be creative and not

simply constructive. He also talks of the poet using a source language text as a mask for himself and so his translation is often not just a translation, but in fact a rival poem. He compliments Sudhindranath not for a faithful series of translated poems, but for having added a group of “heartwarming” poems to the repertoire of Bangla poetry.

There is also a movement towards the objective, the pragmatic area of discourse when he begins to engage with actual target language texts. He voices his reservations about the domestication of source language texts on cultural levels. A translational experience demands that a lilac should remain a lilac and the Alps should not to be transformed into the Himalayas. But he is willing to temporarily withdraw his reservations because of the gift of certain poems such as 'Parivad', scintilating with *rasa*. Bose, incidentally, also quotes from various European poets and translators on translation. There are changes in translational norms, as exemplified by Sudhindranath's and Buddhadeva's analysis of metrical patterns in different language systems with reference to dependability, but this is so only in the case of the discourse on translation while actual practice foregrounds creativity, recognises, in the words of Bishnu Dey, that the equation is far more complex than that of a simple mathematics of one and two, involving as it does *rupa* and *guna*, *rasa* and *prem* or love (Dey 1965:1-97).

Buddhadeva's greatest achievements in the area of translation are his renderings of Kalidasa's *Meghadutam*, Baudelaire's *Les fleurs du mal* and the poems of Holderlin and Rilke. In the context of Kalidasa's translation, he states that it is the translator's task and the translator's alone, to make ancient writers and their works an integrated part of contemporary literature. There are also numerous references to European literature in his article where he thinks the ancient literary tradition manifests itself as a vital part of the modern because of an uninterrupted history of

translations of ancient texts. Here he attests to the fact that translated texts while being discrete units are also parts of a larger whole contributing to a certain extent in giving shape to contemporary texts and/or investing them with a certain depth and perspective.

While translating Baudelaire's *Les fleurs du mal*, Bose gives detailed annotations along with a chronological sequence of events in Baudelaire's life and a separate date chart of literary events in France during his time. He reconstitutes the period in which Baudelaire was writing to prevent any unilinear or single dimensional reading of the poems. It is important to create a frame within which the act of translation takes place - and the act itself becomes a linguistic event with metalingual dimensions within a macroevent of cultural reconstruction. The latter is related primarily to the source culture, but works in the context of the target culture as well. Baudelaire's poetry, Bose feels, extracts and conveys the essence of poetry while divesting it of all that is inessential. Translating his poetry then would be an important literary task, an exploration of language and what it can achieve, an exercise that would be functional in different ways in literary history. The actual translations give us poems in Bangla that bear traces of a different kind of poetic sensibility – they introduce new elements to Bangla literature by bringing in the face of the base and ugly in poetry and by creating new expressions of suffering. It is Baudelaire suitably adapted to a different space and time and to a certain extent, reworked in accordance with the personal predilections of the poet-translator. *Les fleurs du mal* is a book of poems that takes one on an evocative voyage through some of the most desperate, vile and loathsome images of modern life. The poetic form in Bangla is not ready to carry across certain experiences, as language and form answer in a very complex manner to what can or cannot be expressed in a particular community at a particular time. Hence, "Il est des parfums frais comme des chairs des enfants/ Doux comme les hautbois, verts comme les prairies" (Baudelaire 1954:14) (There are perfumes fresh as the flesh of infants/ soft as the oboe, green as

the prairies) becomes “Kono kono gandho jeno organer nisvane komol/ prairier sabuje makha, sisur parase sukhomoy”(1969:39) (Some perfumes are soft in the sound of the organ/ covered with the green of prairies, pleasurable with the touch of infants). The metaphoric rendered into the non-metaphorical has taken away the extension in space and time as well as the nameless violence of the first verse, but the invariant core of synaesthetic experience has been preserved and it is this that would be functional in literary history.

In his introduction to *Les fleurs du mal*, Buddhadeva Bose explains that as we had been confined within English literature for a long period our consciousness of world literature as well as of English literature remained incomplete. In order to appreciate any literature it was important to be aware of related literatures and of the multiliterary factors acting upon it. Translation was a kind of decolonising activity for him in that it led to a decentering of primary channels of influence and reception.

Bishnu Dey, the third poet-translator in this study, has made various statements on different occasions regarding the act of translation, but I will simply take up a word that he uses in the context of translation and that word is *anubadsambhavyata* or 'translatability'. Dey is an important poet translator who talks about why certain poets and their ideas had been important to him. Eliot's method, his formal devices, Dey states in an essay on the poet (1948), are of great help to him as he writes despite the fact that they inhabit different worlds. He further states, that it is because of the “underlying freedom of the symbolist method... that a Christian poem receives translatability (*anubadsambhavyata*) in memory of Gandhiji's second movement, 'Coriolan' in the period of the interim government, 'Gerontion' suddenly appears in the twilight of the merged adaptation-translation period when Gandhiji protests through fasts and young boys and girls lay down their lives in processions to protest against the insane murders taking place in Calcutta.” The

word *anubadsambhavyata* throws open a whole range of contexts within which the act of translation receives maturation. There is the context of historical configurations where translation would play an interactive role in grasping and consequently giving voice to the experiences of the given moment. A sense of solidarity established through translation also underlies the examples that Bishnu Dey offers, for each of them articulates a situation of oppression. This is a phenomenon that one encounters quite often in the history of translation in Bengal, in Bishnu Dey's own translation of socialist poets, as well as generally, in translated collections of anti-fascist poetry, for instance. What is important in Bishnu Dey's statement again is the fact that translation is not simply a transfer from one language to another, but also from one event to another, bringing new contexts of understanding to an event in another culture.

The word 'translatability' also takes us back to Walter Benjamin's essay “The Task of the Translator: An Introduction to the Translation of Baudelaire's Tableaux Parisien”:

> “Translation is a mode. To comprehend it as mode one must go back to the original, for that contains the law governing the translation, its translatability... Translatability is an essential quality of certain works, which is not to say it is essential that they be translated: it means rather that a specific significance inherent in the original manifests itself in its translatability” (Benjamin 1969:72).

Benjamin's statement also pointed to a continuous renewal and transformation of the original in translation. He stated that the purposefulness of the process was to be sought in a higher sphere, “the ultimate purpose towards which all single functions tend is sought not in its own sphere, but a higher one.” It is here that the “suprahistorical kinship” of languages enters. Bishnu Dey's *anubadsambhavyata* brings us back from the suprahistorical to the

present in a very concrete manner – fills out a speculative continuum with a segment of an intense presence. For instance, if we look at 'Coriolan'- " Look / There he is now, look: There is no interrogation in his eyes / Or in the hands, quiet over the horse's neck / And the eyes watchful, / waiting, / perceiving, / indifferent" (Dey 1969: 127)- and place it in the context of the freedom movement in India we understand that translatability involves a clearer grasp of the present, the struggle for independence, the chaotic times and an ability to articulate and hence have a grasp over history. And again translatability does not only pertain to a newer comprehensibility, a different understanding of the particular, but also takes one back to other contexts of meaning and hence opens up further possibilities of future relationships with yet other similar contexts. Dey is moving towards a larger sphere of purposefulness that lies in a different conceptualisation of literature and that gets assimilated with the concept of translation. Translational norms are then formulated with reference to both old and new systems of aesthetics operating in the sphere of Bangla poetry.

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Towards a Theory of Rewriting: Drawing from the Indian Practice

K.M. Sherrif

Abstract

The present paper draws attention to the domain of rewriting which constitutes an important segment of translational practices in popular culture. The aesthetic and ideological implications of such rewritings have not received much attention in Culture Studies. Among popular forms of rewritings are dramatizations of novels, cinematizations of literary works and renderings of literary works in performing art forms like kathakali and opera. The paper argues that the rewritings of literary texts in the performing arts of kathaprasangam and harikatha in Malayalam and other languages need to be studied in the context of Culture Studies and Translation Studies.

Andre Lefevere was the first Translation Studies scholar to position translation in a paradigm of rewriting (Lefevere 1984, 1987). The notion that translation can only be a rewriting of the source text was by this time an accepted fact in Translation Studies. Lefevere, however, pointed out that translation was only one of the many forms of rewriting, and that the role of translations in any culture could only be understood in relation to the role of the other forms of rewriting in that culture. The forms of rewriting Lefevere enumerated included criticism (which he considered the most important form of rewriting after translation), the review, the blurb, trans-genre rewritings like the dramatization of a novel and intersemiotic rewritings like the cinematic version of a literary text. Lefevere's ideas on the nature of rewriting and the diverse ways in

which rewritings position themselves in the matrix of a culture were not significantly developed by literary theorists, including Translation Studies scholars, who came after him. This paper makes an attempt to briefly inquire into the ways in which a theory of rewriting can be developed, how it can draw substantially from the traditional and modern practice of rewriting in India, and how such a theory can make substantial contributions to Culture Studies.

The crisis in Translation Studies as a discipline has become quite apparent today. There are a number of reasons for this crisis. The first is that of nomenclature. Translation Studies has made forays across its frontiers in the last quarter of the century after its emergence as a full-fledged discipline in 1983.[1] Border-crossings have been quite frequent, and quite successful too in tackling other forms of rewriting. Dubbing and subtitling in cinema were the 'near abroad'; Dirk Delabastita (1990) discusses the nature of translation (rewriting) in the mass media, outlining the complexities in rewriting texts in cinema and on radio and television. Cinematic versions of literary texts and intra-lingual and extra-lingual remakes of films apart, Delabastita shows how dubbing and sub-titling have to contend with complexities of both the target culture and the medium. The possibilities of border-crossings were fully demonstrated in the National Translation Seminar held at IIT, Mumbai in December 2004. The topics discussed included 'rewriting' of theme music by dramatic troupes crossing cultural boundaries, the notion of translation in music, translation of visual poetry and the remaking of films.

Secondly, Translation Studies has virtually exhausted its theoretical resources. The eighties and nineties of the last century saw a veritable explosion in translation theory as Translation Studies scholars, generously assisted by literary theorists in other areas, broke new ground in the discipline and effectively positioned it within the domain of Culture Studies. In fact the Rewriting-Culture paradigm in Translation Studies is one of the most revolutionary

advances in both literary theory and Culture Studies in the twentieth century. Translation Studies went on to make seminal contributions to every theoretical paradigm or critical approach which came to be considered revolutionary or avant-garde: deconstruction, postcolonial studies, feminist studies, subaltern studies, even queer theory.[2] Translation theory has effectively offered tools for interrogating asymmetrical relations between hegemonic and marginalized cultures, patriarchal structures embedded in discourses, the marginalization of subaltern cultures within cultures which are themselves marginalized globally, the appropriation of cultural resistance in translation and the operation of market fundamentalism in translation, to mention only the more obvious areas. In fact, Translations Studies scholars like Lefevere, Bassnett, Hermans, and Venuti even called for the demolition of the Euro-centrism of the discipline in the West. Sujit Mukherjee, Harish Trivedi and Ayyappa Panikker in India offered theoretical paradigms which challenged the Western notions on translation. No wonder translation theory looks so exhausted today and descriptive Translation Studies are proliferating.

The vast unchartered terrain of cultural rewriting offers challenges for Translation Studies scholars to widen their horizons, and in the process bring the discipline closer to Culture Studies. The Indian tradition of rewriting is quite remarkable. Literary rewriting has, of course, occupied the attention of Translation Studies scholars and literary theorists alike. It needs hardly be stated that, unlike in the West, where faithfulness in translation was an inviolable ideal till quite recently, literary texts were not translated, but merely rendered in a new form, i.e. rewritten in India. That such rewriting, starting with the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata in the various spoken languages of India, had both aesthetic and socio-political implications, especially in contexts like the Bhakti movement, is widely recognized today. But the tradition of inter-semiotic rewriting, as in the rewriting of literary texts in performing arts, has

hardly come to the notice of Translation Studies scholars. The aesthetic and socio-political distance that separates the rewriting of Ramayana by poets like Ezhuthachan or Tulsidas who can be positioned within the Bhakti movement and the rewriting of the same text, or portions of it, in performing arts like Kathakali or Yakshagana is worthy of intensive study. The stark contrast between the devotional fervour of Ezhuthachan's verses and the stylized mudras of Kathakali with their alienating effect, stares one in the face. The topical allusions the Chakyar performing a Koothu (a performing art form in Kerala which is desperately struggling for survival) insinuates into his mixed verse-prose rendering of contexts from Ramayana and Mahabharata and his frequent implication of the audience in the narrative deserves attention from scholars. The strains of Chinese music woven into a Manipuri dance performance, many of whose themes are derived from the great Indian epics, also ought to interest the Translation Studies scholar.

There have been more fascinating instances of rewriting in India in recent times. One of them is *Kathaprasangam*, a secular form of *Harikatha,* whose popularity once rivaled that of cinema in Kerala. *Kathaprasangam* evolved in the state in the early decades of the twentieth century and Joseph Kaimapparamban is generally regarded as having pioneered the form. Perhaps the greatest exponent of the form was Kedamangalam Sadanandan, a card-holding communist, whose performances, along with the plays staged by the KPAC, served as the cultural bulwark for the communist movement in the state. Sadanandan chose most of his themes from contemporary Malayalam literary texts, especially those which reflected the turbulent transformation Kerala society was undergoing in the mid-twentiety century. Sadanandan had a remarkable successor in Sambasivan, who apart from using Malayalam literary texts, adapted texts which are still regarded as the classics of the `world literature'. Sambasivan's *Othello* and *Anna Karenina* became quite popular. There is, of course, a school of opinion which accuses Sambasivan of trivializing classics, of

literally dragging them to the marketplace. What one tends to forget is that most non-professional readers in any culture have had access to a large body of the `world literature', including the classics, only through rewritings: retellings of stories, reviews, critical articles, encyclopedias and other books for reference. An important phase in the history of *Kathaprasangam* in Kerala is the emergence of a number of Muslim women artists like Zeena Pallikkara, Ramla Begum and Ayesha Begum during the sixties and of the last century. Apart from stories from the Khur-aan and Malayalee Muslim folklore, they adapted texts which recorded themes from the ferment of social transformation in their community. In fact the history of the Left-led Progressive Literary Movement in Kerala will be incomplete without reference to Sadanandan, Sambasivan and the Muslim women artists.

Popular culture provides more instances of both the rigid enforcement of inter-cultural embargoes on rewriting and on their effortless lifting. Dubbing and remaking of films across languages have been a common phenomenon in Indian cinema from its early years. The location of the film industry in the metropolises of Mumbai, Chennai and Calcutta facilitated dubbing and remaking, especially when Hindi was either the target language or the source language. Till the early eighties Hindi was, more often than not, the source language. Powerful storylines and technical perfection in Malayalam and Tamil cinema reversed the trend. The popularity of composers like A.R. Rahman also ensured that the songs in the films were 'translated' in the remakes. Given the cultural matrices from which popular cinema operates, certain contexts have to be drastically rewritten. Two instances may be cited to illustrate the point. In the Malayalam film *Ramjirao Speaking*, which was a great commercial success, the typical 'Mappila' (Malayalee Muslim) humour is tapped to devastating effect. Majeed (played by Mamukoya) the bosom-friend of the protagonist and his cronies provide explosive humour towards the end of the film. In the Hindi

remake, the bosom-friend (played by Om Puri) and his cronies are Sikhs. In the popular imagination, humour is not a strong point of the North Indian Muslim, while it is of the Punjabi Sardar. In *Godfather*, another commercially successful Malayalam cinema, the patriarch Anjooran (played by the playwright and actor N.N. Pillai) cannot help looking ludicrously funny in a number of scenes, given the history of the anti-feudal struggles in Kerala in the twentieth century. In *Hulchul*, the Hindi remake, Anjooran's counterpart (played by Amrish Puri), who does not have the burden of history on his back, looks every bit the terrifying Thakur.

The translation of film songs in remakes provokes a rethinking of traditional notions of faithfulness in translation. The lyrics in the remakes are often linked to the lyrics in the original film only by the identical tune in which they are sung. In semantic content, only the mood is retained to fit into an identical or similar context: a romantic rendezvous, a boisterous gathering of young people or the solitary reverie of the love-torn boy or girl. Without the tune, very little remains to link the songs in an inter-textual relationship. As the notion of poetry being lost in translation goes up in smoke, popular culture has the last laugh.

A theoretical framework that can engage all forms of cultural rewriting can be developed out of the basic principles of translation theory formulated in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The varied forms of cultural rewriting in India points to such a development. Although it is too early to see Translation Studies evolving into a fully blown branch of Culture Studies called Rewriting Studies which can account for the rewriting of all cultural phenomena, it is clear that the discipline can, ultimately, have no other destiny.

NOTES

1. Translation Studies which used to be included under headings of either 'Linguistics' or 'Comparative Literature' was given a separate bibliographical entry by the Modern Language Association of America in 1983.
2. See Keith Harvey "Translating Camp Talk: Gay Identities and Cultural Transfer" Lawrence Venuti (ed.) *Translation Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, 2000.

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Revisiting the Canon through the *Ghazal* in English

Chandrani Chatterjee
Milind Malshe

Abstract

At the dawn of English education in India the popularity of certain genres led to the adaptation, transformation and assimilation of these forms in the Indian languages. However, in this East-West encounter, not only were the European forms appropriated by the Indian writers, one of the Eastern forms, viz. the ghazal, was taken up by writers in English. This paper traces the origin of the ghazal as a distinct form, its development in the poetry of Mir (c 1723-82) and Ghalib (1797-1869) before discussing how this genre was adapted and experimented with, by some writers in English. In this process we try to address some issues like translation, adaptation and transformation and also what factors affect the composition and institution of a canon.

I

Ghazal as a form is supposed to have originated in Arabia in the late seventh century.[1] It is said to have developed from the *nasib*, which itself was an amorous prelude to the *qasida* (an ode). *Qasida* was a panegyric to the emperor or his noblemen. It has been observed that because of its comparative brevity and concentration, its thematic variety and rich suggestiveness, the *ghazal* soon eclipsed the *qasida* and became the most popular form to be introduced in India from the Persian and Arabic literary traditions: "Ghazal means literally conversation, most often between lovers. It has a strict form

bound by rules, containing from a minimum of five to a maximum of seventeen couplets. Though each couplet expresses a complete unit of thought, a series of them are usually grouped together. Thus the unity of the poem is one not of content but of form, and is achieved by a common meter for all the couplets and a strict rhyme scheme, aa, ba, ca, da etc."[2]

A *ghazal* is thus a series of couplets. Each couplet is a self sufficient unit, detachable and quotable, generally containing the complete expression of an idea. The last couplet of the *ghazal* often includes the pen name of the poet, and is more personal than general in its tone and intent. Here the poet may express her/his own state of mind, or describe her/his religious faith, or pray for her/his beloved, or indulge in poetic self-praise. The poet signs the last couplet ('*makht'*) by including her/his name or pen name ('*takhallus')*. The different couplets of the *ghazal* are not bound by unity and consistency of thought. However, a thematic continuity might also develop in these otherwise independent couplets. Traditionally a *ghazal* focuses on romantic love and mysticism. Both lines of the first couplet (called the "*matla*") and the second line of each succeeding couplet have the same monorhyme ('*qafia'*) and refrain ('*radif*'). The refrain may be the same word or a short phrase or can even be a syllable. All the couplets are in the same meter. *Ghazal* is thus a form which has a potential to transcend its language-specificity.

The *ghazal* came to India with the establishment of Mughal rule in Delhi by Babur in 1526. Babur stationed his Persian army in the capital and this is said to have given rise to a mixed dialect in the military encampment, out of the local dialect spoken by the people and the Persian used by the soldiers. Gradually, this mixed dialect became the language of the larger group of people and was called Urdu, literally meaning the language of the military camp. Eventually, Urdu remained no longer a spoken language alone and

was written, borrowing largely from the Persian court vocabulary and using persianized Arabic script. Finally, Urdu replaced Persian as the court language of the later Mughal period. With this change, the *ghazal* also became a popular form. Although Amir Khusro (1253-1325) is supposed to have been one of the earliest practitioners of the form in northern India, Deccan in the south is said to have been the real home of the *ghazal* in the early stages. It was nursed and trained in the courts of Golconda and Bijapur under the patronage of the Muslim rulers.

Although the *ghazal* deals with the whole spectrum of human experience, its central concern is love. This could be both secular and divine in nature. It is worthwhile at this point to quote one *ghazal* of Mir, who was one of the exponents of the *ghazal* in Urdu in the eighteenth century. Mir mainly chose the theme of love for his *ghazals*:

A Complete Ghazal of Mir

1. All my plans have been overturned, and no medicine has had any effect.
You see? This sickness of the heart (love) has killed me in the end (as I told you it would).
2. I passed the days of my youth in weeping, and in old age I closed my eyes. That is, I passed many nights in wakefulness, and when morning came I rested.
3. I do not question her life-giving power. It is just the excellence of my fortune that the first message that she sent me was my sentence of death.
4. We act under constraint, and you slander us when you say we have free will. It is your will that is done, and we are blamed without cause.
5. All the rakes and profligates of the whole world bow down before you. The proud, the perverse, the awkward, the independent – all have acknowledged you as their leader.

6. If even in my distracted state I have been guilty of any want of respect [in daring to approach her], then it was little enough. For mile after mile I made way towards her, I fell down to worship her at every step.
7. What do we care for the Ka'ba and the direction in which we should turn to pray, and the holy places and the robes of pilgrimage? We who live in her lane have said farewell to all these things.
8. If the Shaikh stands naked in a mosque today it is because he spent the night drinking in the tavern, and in his drunkenness gave his cloak and gown and shirt and hat away.
9. If only she would lift the veil from her face now. What will it profit me if when my eyes are closed (in death) she unveils herself for all to see?
10. What can we do with the black and white of this world? If anything, then only this, that we can see the (black) night out with constant weeping, and bear the toil of the (white) day until evening comes.
11. At morning in the garden she walked out to take the air. Her cheek made the rose her slave, and her graceful stature made the cypress her thrall.
12. I held her silver-white wrists in my hands, but she swore (that she would come to me later), and I let them go. How raw and inexperienced I was to trust her word!
13. Every moment I beseeched her, and this has brought all my efforts to nothing. Her proud indifference increased fourfold with every time I importuned her.
14. Such a timid, fleet gazelle does not easily lose her fear of man. Those who have tamed you have performed a wonder, as though by magic power.
15. Why do you ask at this late hour what Mir's religion is? He has drawn the caste mark on his forehead and sat down in the temple. He abandoned Islam long ago.[3]

Though in translation, this *ghazal* of Mir depicts how both the divine and the human can be accommodated within the scope of

this form. The lack of fulfillment in love is depicted as being the will of the divine plan-maker. Though each couplet can stand independently, they can also be read as a continuous whole. The above *ghazal* reminds one of the Victorian dramatic monologue. The entire piece is in the form of a conversation where the presence of the listener is felt but it is a passive listener. In fact, the addressee in this *ghazal* varies between a 'you' and a 'she'. The 'you' is an omniscient presence – it is the divine, whose will is being executed and the poetic persona is aware of the fact that he has no free will. The 'she' in the *ghazal* is the beloved who has not been won yet – the entire *ghazal* is a celebration of the pangs of love and the realization of human constraint. In this conversational strategy the 'divine' turns out to be a close accomplice of the speaker – one in whom the poetic persona can confide and disclose his failure in love. The translation is largely prosaic in nature unlike the Urdu *ghazals* where the rhyme scheme played an important role – enhancing in a way the appeal of the form.

The other name which deserves special mention in the world of the *ghazal* is that of Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib (1797-1869). Ghalib belonged to a noble family of Turks. His grandfather is said to have migrated to India to join the army of Sha Alam II. Ghalib's father served the Nawab of Oudh, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Rajah of Alwar. He died in a battle and the young Ghalib was looked after by his uncle Mirza Nasarullah Khan. Ghalib is said to have had his education at Agra but he came and settled in Delhi as a young man and soon became a part of the aristocratic society of the Mughal capital. His financial problems forced him to go to Calcutta in 1826 and it is in Calcutta that Ghalib witnessed a glaring contrast between the old Mughal capital and the new city of the British. He stayed there long enough to admire the British ways of life and the changes brought in by the British rule. But scholars have noted that he was completely unaffected by English literature. As Sisir Kumar Das has pointed out, "he did not take any interest in English literature; nor did he feel any impact of the British civilization as a poet. He wrote

about charming women, elegant buildings, luscious mangoes and fine wines, but not about the intellectual fermentation there."[4]

Nearly all of Ghalib's Urdu poems are in the *ghazal* form whose themes are largely preserved by convention. The predominant theme is love, either love for a mistress or for God. The framework of the Urdu poems was flexible enough to accommodate both the secular and the divine. With respect to forms and themes Ghalib worked within the medieval tradition and his poetry was conditioned by his taste and education as by the contemporary aristocratic view of poetry. He was devoted to the institutions, conventions and practices of the medieval period, of the Mughal period, to be precise. According to Sisir Kumar Das, "The greatest singular contribution of Ghalib to Urdu literature in particular and Indian literature in general, is his complete freedom from any kind of philosophical scheme which had dominated Indian poetry for several centuries. His view of life was not that of a pagan …but it is free from religious inhibitions on the one hand and embraces life, on the other, both as joyous existence and as a dark and painful experience. The dilemmas of existence, the tensions of desires, the contradiction of thought, make his poetry rich and humane…"[5]

Let us examine a ghazal by Ghalib in this context

1. aa, ki meree jaan ko qaraar naheen hai
taaqat-e-bedaad-e-intazaar naheen hai

[qaraar = rest/repose, bedaad = injustice]

2. dete hain jannat hayaat-e-dahar ke badle
nashsha ba_andaaza-e-khummaar naheen hai

[hayaat = life, dahar = world, ba_andaaza = according to,
khummaar = intoxication]

3. giriya nikaale hai teree bazm se mujh ko
haay ! ki roone pe ikhtiyaar naheen hai

[giriya = weeping, ikhtiyaar = control]

4. hamse abas hai gumaan-e-ranjish-e-khaatir
khaak mein ushshaaq kee ghubaar naheen hai

[‘abas = indifferent, gumaan = suspicion, ranjish=unpleasantness, khaak = ashes/dust, ushshaaq = lovers, ghubaar = clouds of dust]

5. dil se uthaa lutf-e-jalva haay ma'anee
ghair-e-gul aainaa-e-bahaar naheen hai

[ma'anee = meanings, ghair-e-gul = blossoms]

6. qatl ka mere kiya hai 'ahad to baare
waae ! akhar 'ahad ustuwaar naheen hai

['ahad = promise, baare = at last, ustuwaar = frim/determined]

7. toone qasam mai_kashee kee khaaee hai ‘Ghalib’
teree qasam ka kuchch 'eitbaar naheen hai !

[mai_kashee = boozing, 'eitbaar = trust/faith][6]

In almost all *ghazals* by Ghalib, the poet signs the last couplet (“*makhta*”) by including her/his name or pen name (“*takhallus*”). The theme revolves around the pangs of love – the restlessness and the sufferings of the beloved, who has relied on the promises that were made by a drunken lover. The rhyme scheme of the *ghazal* is aa, ba, ca, da, ea, fa, ga. The refrain (*radif*) in the above *ghazal* rests in the phrase ‘*naheen hai*’, which is repeated at the end

of the second line of each couplet, thus lending a repetitive negative tone to the entire poem - which reiterates the pangs of love.

II

After having traced a brief history of the *ghazal,* let us examine how this form of composition has inspired writers in the West to write *ghazals* in English. In this context the essay 'On Translating a Form: The Possible/Impossible Ghazal in English', by Anisur Rahman becomes particularly relevant because it deals with the transformation of an Eastern form – the *ghazal*, to suit the tastes of the readers in the West. It is needless to say that a form or a literary genre gains popularity with a particular culture only when the readers of the target culture are able to relate and associate with the genre. Moreover, a genre does not exist in a vacuum; it is integrally related with the content that the form holds. In the case of the *ghazal* as we have already discussed it is the form that holds sway, in which case it is worth examining how different languages and cultures contribute to the maintaining of the form.

Rahman comments on the importance of the form in the final act of reading:

> A literary form that largely validates a text can make much difference in the final act of reading. It is the form that empowers a literary experience in a language, and it is also the form that gets translated in yet another language of an approximate or remote variety with equal measure of success or otherwise. When used in either of the contexts, it calls on its other constituents: an image, a metaphor, a symbol; a history, a culture, a tone of voice. Form also determines its stance with a language, diction, a genre, a structure. While the constituents may be essentially compatible with a cultural, literary, or linguistic framework, they may appear incongruous,

> though justifiably so, in a different tradition, or in a tradition of the “other”. It may be derived, therefore, that a writer in a source language operates on one level of primary representation, whereas a translator operates on multiple levels with the form and all its baggage, both in the source and the target language. In whatever way a literary form may conduct itself (and it does not conduct itself in isolation), it is, in a major way, conditioned by all its constituents together. It may be derived further that the form, along with its constituents, creates its own modes of signification and helps the location of culture.[7]

Likewise in the case of the *ghazal,* the form had a fundamental role to play when adapted by a different culture. The *ghazals* of Ghalib inspired writers from different parts of the world who tried their hands at *ghazal* writing. Writers like Adrienne Rich, Judith Wright, Jim Harrison, John Thompson, D.G. Jones, Phyllis Webb, Douglas Barbour, Max Plater, and others experimented with *ghazal* writing. According to Rahman, the English *ghazal* writers can be divided into two distinct groups: one group consists of those who adhere to the form of the couplet, where the couplets are often independent of one another; the other group consists of poets who do not use the couplet but deploy the other aspects of the form, such as the rhyme scheme, and also try to approximate to the original thematic models.

Why was it that the *ghazal* became a popular form in the West? The *ghazal* as already discussed is a form that was terse, expressing in a couplet structure ideas about love both human and divine. It is noteworthy that the two English *ghazal* writers to be examined in this paper, Adrienne Rich and Phyllis Webb, both were fascinated by the lyric form and the aural appeal of poetry. Phyllis Webb was fascinated by the music of poetry and its conversational tone: ‘I think there is increasingly in my poetry a “you” who is not necessarily the reader. It’s like having a ghost of one’s own in the room. I know there’s some sort of person-presence I’m addressing

the poem to. More and more I want to involve that 'you' in the poem, say, "You're here. Don't go away"…I control the use of this other presence to make a more social environment for the poem, so that it is not just a statement of an isolated person, but assumes an audience, assumes an involved presence whom one desperately hopes is there somewhere when the work is done.'[8] Adrienne Rich in the essay 'Blood, Bread and Poetry', admits that she was, 'easily entranced by pure sound and still am, no matter what it is saying; and any poet who mixes poetry of the actual world with the poetry of sound interests and excites me more than I am able to say.'[9] The *ghazal* readily afforded these American writers with a form that had its roots in a different culture but was capable of fulfilling their requirements. The flexibility and novelty of the *ghazal* appealed to Adrienne Rich, who was in quest of a new form. In '*What is Found There: Notebooks on Poetry and Politics*' (1993), Rich comments on her quest thus:

> What poetry is made of is so old, so familiar, that it's easy to forget that it's not just the words, but polyrhythmic sounds, speech in its endeavours (every poem breaks a silence that had to be overcome), prismatic meanings lit by each other's light, stained by each other's shadows. In the wash of poetry the old, beaten, worn stones of language take on colours that disappear when you sieve them up out of the streambed and try to sort them out.[10]

In this quest for a form, which could give proper shape to her ideas, a form that was flexible enough to accommodate her views on life and woman emancipation, Adrienne Rich was inspired by the writings of Ghalib and chose to write *ghazals* using the couplet form in the collection called *Leaflets* (1969). Rich acknowledged her debt to Ghalib when she wrote: 'My *ghazals* are personal and public, American and twentieth century; but they owe much to the presence of Ghalib in my mind: a poet, self-educated

and profoundly learned, who owned no property and borrowed his books, writing in an age of political and cultural break up.'[11]

Rich and the other American writers could perhaps identify themselves with the situation in which Ghalib had composed his verses and how the *ghazal* had facilitated the expression of his moods and thoughts. It was a time of cultural and political breakup and Ghalib found the *ghazal* form to be the most suitable in so far as the couplet structure easily afforded a switch of moods without in any way disturbing the appeal of the whole. Similar was the case with Rich. Rich recalls her growing-up years as overtly dominated by the intellectual presence and demands of her father, while covertly marked by the submerged tensions and silences arising from the conflicts between the religious and cultural heritage of her father's Jewish background and her mother's southern Protestantism. Her relationship with her father was one of strong identification and desire for approval, yet it was adversarial in many ways. Under his tutelage Rich first began to write poetry, conforming to his standards well past her early successes and publications.

Rich's poetry has clearly recorded, imagined, and forecast her personal and political journeys with searing power. In 1956, she began dating her poems to underscore their existence within a context, and to argue against the idea that poetry existed separately from the poet's life. Stylistically, she began to draw on contemporary rhythms and images, especially those derived from the cinematic techniques of jump cuts and collage. *Leaflets* (1969), *The Will to Change* (1971), and *Diving into the Wreck* (1973) demonstrate a progressive coming to power as Rich contends against the desolation patriarchy enacts on literal and psychic landscape. Intimately connected with this struggle for empowerment and action, is the deepening of her determination 'to write directly and overtly as a woman, out of a woman's body and experience.'[12]

In an interview in 1994, Rich expressed how the language of poetry was not and could not be severed from the language of politics. She did not agree to the traditional ivory tower view of poetry and disagreed to the fact that 'political poetry is suspected of immense subversive power, yet accused of being by definition, bad writing, impotent, lacking in breadth. No wonder the North American poet finds herself or himself slightly crazed by the double messages.'[13] She did not agree to the term political poetry and was of the opinion that, '[I]nstead of political poetry, we might want to say poetry of witness, poetry of dissent, poetry that is the voice of those and on behalf of those who are generally unheard. I'm reading poetry all the time that is enormously accessible in its language. And I don't mean by that using the smallest possible vocabulary. We're living in a country now where the range of articulateness has really diminished down to almost a TV level, where to hear people speaking with rich figures of speech, which used to be the property of everybody, is increasingly rare.'[14] Her *ghazals* are also illustrative of her general view of poetry:

> Last night you wrote on the wall: Revolution is poetry.
> Today you needn't write; the wall has tumbled down.
> (From *Ghazals : Homage to Ghalib*, lines 1-2, 1968)

In her *ghazals*, Rich often invokes Ghalib to depict both her allegiance to and departure from his poetry. The following *ghazal* by Rich bears testimony to this fact:

> Not all, only a few, return as the rose or the tulip;
> What faces there must be still veiled by the dust!
>
> The three stars, three daughters, stayed veiled and secret by day;
> What word did the darkness speak to bring them forth in their nakedness?

Sleep is his, and peace of mind, and the nights belong to him
across whose arms you spread the veils of your hair.

We are the forerunners; breaking the pattern is our way of life.
Whenever the races blurred they entered the stream of reality.

If Ghalib must go on shedding these tears, you who inhabit the world
will see these cities blotted into the wilderness.[15]

The very use of the phrase 'breaking the pattern is our way of life' in a way summarizes the way in which the *ghazals* in English need to be viewed. Twentieth century American poets have omitted the rhyme while retaining the couplet form and the approximate length. They also emphasize disconnectedness between couplets, juxtaposing apparently unrelated observations, placing insights or images side by side without explaining their connection. In the above *ghazal* by Rich, the disjointedness of the couplets themselves convey the need to break the pattern – a desire to conform only to the bare minimum and still retain the generic label. Rich models her *ghazals* on those of Mirza Ghalib. She follows Ghalib's use of minimum five couplets, where each couplet is autonomous and independent of the others. The continuity and unity flow from the associations and images playing back and forth among the couplets in any single *ghazal*. The image that lends a unity to the above *ghazal* and in a way holds it together is that of the 'veil'. It also lends a degree of secrecy and mystery to the *ghazal* – the notion of the unknown and the unfathomable.

The other writer whose experimentations with the *ghazal* require special attention is Phyllis Webb. Her collection is titled *Water and Light: Ghazals and Anti Ghazals*. Phyllis Webb further subtitles the collection. The deliberate use or the need felt to refer to

the *ghazals* as ‘poems’ is significant indeed. In a way, therefore, Webb is not satisfied in calling her *ghazals* anti ghazals. Largely they are poems. The very title ‘Anti-Ghazals’ also explains “her desire for seeking a subversive way of testing the limits of her poetic material and form.”[16]

In fact, the notion of the English *ghazal* or the *anti ghazal* being accommodated within the boundaries of the canonical English literature is worth examining. The canonical may exist only in a specific point in history – it implies an idea of fixity, and a related idea of selection, both of which are prompted by a historical exigency. The canon is always threatened and subverted by the dynamics of genres. For example, an epic written by Virgil has the generic markers of an epic by Homer, recorded and utilized in the light of Virgil’s (and his readers’) expectations. Thus even though a genre becomes intelligible by conforming to the ‘horizon of expectation’ of its readers, the extension of this horizon by individual texts is a sign of the genre’s vitality its ability to participate in the process of shaping emotion, experience, perception into literature. Even if a genre like the epic, or tragedy or the novel is enshrined in a canon, the proof of the genre’s life is its dynamism in response to history. This dynamism may involve its reconstitution by peripheral genres – it may also involve the canonized genres’ interaction with the periphery, and its consequent change. Thus arises the question whether this newly realigned genre is still admissible in the canon, whether the genre is now excluded from the canon or whether the canon breaks itself down to accommodate a newly emerged genre. Similar is the case of the *ghazal* in English. *Ghazal* as a genre had no place in the English literary canon prior to the cultural contact with the East. Thus, the English *ghazal* may be regarded as a peripheral genre, so far as the English literary canon is concerned.

Webb's *ghazals* show that she is concerned with both the form and the literary heritage to which she belonged. Webb's handling of the form certainly reveals the transformation that a genre is expected to undergo when treated by a foreign culture. *Water and Light: Ghazals and Anti-Ghazals* is a revision of the *ghazal* where Webb creates a marginal text of female poetics which challenges the conventions and the authority of male writing. In terms of its form, the *ghazal* is perhaps ideally suited to Webb's revisionist pursuit. In medieval lyrics of courtship and love, the woman has always been the object of the male desire. In fact, it is the male who sings the praise of his lady love – she is not only desired but her identity is also a subject of the male gaze. In her poems, Webb seeks to redefine that gaze and thus reorient the notion of desire altogether, this time from a feminist perspective. The collection is divided into five sections each with an independent title. The sections are as follows: Sunday Water: Thirteen Anti Ghazals; The Birds; I Daniel; Frivolities; Middle Distance. Let us take a poem from Webb's collection to illustrate the above point:

> Mulberry tree with innocent eyes,
> Catalpa with your huge hands,
>
> I am looking at you
> so why can't you look back?
>
> Seduce me, Mulberry, with your silk-spun eyelashes,
> applaud, Catalpa, with leafy ambuscades.
>
> I am a patient person from time to time,
> willingly would I fall into your entrapments
>
> of silk stockings and flowery candelabra.
> Or should I save myself with long voyages
>
> interstellar longings
> where we might meet as pure event

> and I would say Mulberry tree, Catalpa,
> and you would say, simply, Phyllis.[17]

In the above *ghazal*, the rigid conventions of the form, like those of a Petrarchan sonnet, that addresses an idealized beloved who personifies all the cherished 'universal' qualities of woman as lover, are broken. Here, the equation of seduction is disturbed in that the seduction takes place between the poetic persona and two species of trees: the mulberry and the catalpa. The desire to be seduced dwells with the poetic persona, whose name is not disclosed till the end of the poem, when we learn it is someone called Phyllis. The conversational tone of the poem cannot be missed. There is a determination to challenge conventional poetic structures. As she herself notes, "But as I learnt more about *ghazals*, I saw I was actually defying some of the traditional rules, constraints, and pleasure laid down so long ago," she writes in the preface. The traditional *ghazal* was composed of couplets linked with a lyrical element in it. Webb's anti-ghazals focus on the particular, the local, the dialectal, and the private. Rather than directing her attention to woman as love object, Webb concentrates on the woman as writing subject, on the construction of the female self, which is intrinsically bound to the development of a new kind of language. The language is deliberately disjointed, evocative, impressionistic, experiential, and sensuous, in a marked departure from the generalized romantic conventions of earlier *ghazals*. Focusing on simplicity, Webb seems fascinated with nature, ancient ritual, and the sublime and mysterious rhythms, which create the female self; hence she writes anti-ghazals. She is deliberately discordant and asymmetrical, blending elevated with colloquial language in a fruitful dialectic. She employs varying line lengths, and does not always observe a set rhyme scheme, preferring instead to write fragments like:

> "Drunken and amatory, illogical, stoned, mellifluous
> journey of the ten lines." (p.20)

Webb also challenges the subject matter, the mystical seriousness, of the early lyric form by inserting various “trivial,” irreverent or mocking humorous incidents in her anti-ghazals:

> Ah Ghalib, you are drinking too much,
> Your lines are becoming maudlin.
>
> Here, take this tea and sober up. The moon
> is full tonight, and I can’t sleep.
>
> And look – this small branch of cherry
> blossoms, picked today, and it’s only February.
>
> You could use a few cool Japanese images
> to put you on the straight and narrow.
>
> Still, I love to study your graceful script,
> Urdu amorous, flowing across the page.
>
> There were nights I watched you dip your pen
> into the old Persian too, inscribe ‘Asad’
>
> with a youthful flourish. Remember Asad,
> Ghalib?
>
> Mirza Asadullah Beg Khan, who are you really?
> Born in Agra, of Turkish ancestry,
>
> Fond of women, politics, money, wine.
> ‘Losses and consequent grief’ a recurring
>
> theme, also ‘a poetry…of what was,
> what could have been possible.’
>
> Ah! Ghalib, you are almost asleep,
> head on the table, hand flung out,
>
> upturned. In the blue and white jar

a cherry branch, dark pink in moonlight –

from the land of
only what is (pp 60-61).

The *ghazal* form is expanded in Webb's verse to incorporate the very reality which it traditionally seeks to distance itself from, to elevate the ordinary to the realm of the distinct. The object is no longer a passive woman, who is instead mocked by Webb as "the Beloved in her bored flesh," as she writes in another anti-ghazal. The traditional *ghazal* as a form is reduced to "this stringy instrument scraping away, / Whining about love's ultimate perfection" (p.20), while the conventional conceptualization of transcendental love itself is undermined by a playful tone. The centrality of male creativity and male sexual response is displaced, its authority neutralized through ridicule, contradiction, and disparity. What the anti-ghazals reflect instead is a spirit of female self-affirmation, the result of Webb's long struggle towards personal, poetic, and spiritual autonomy.

Webb celebrates common domestic experience, the way that womens' tasks (including the task of writing) focus on the interruption of "wholeness":

"The women writers, their heads bent under the light,
work late at their kitchen tables" (p.12).

Or

"My morning poem destroyed by the good neighbour policy.
Mrs. Olsson, organic gardener, lectures me on the good life.

Oh this is cozy, all of us together "(p.13).

For Webb, writing is not a retreat from reality, it is a process:

> "The pull, this way and that, ultimately into the pull
> of the pen across the page.
>
> Sniffing for poems, the forward memory
> of hand beyond the grasp" (p 18).

The easy blend of the line lengths facilitates Webb's task in taking the line "across the page" or not, as she chooses, without resorting to male "yawp". Writing is not the creation of a passive object or an artifact to be preserved for posterity, but rather it is a continuum centered on the present moment,

> "the flow, flux, even the effluent stormy
> in high wind" (p.16).

Writing is interrupted by the welcome intrusion of women neighbours who teach the poet something about daily life; it is the ability to "relate disconnectedly". The real insight Webb offers us here is that genuine writing is done, not by blocking out the world, but by allowing it to exist. And this is a revelation with profound spiritual implications.

Webb's writing demonstrates the development of a feminist poet who rises from the ashes of her past, a past shaped by patriarchal perceptions of the divine and of art (there are conscious references to characters in T.S. Eliot's poems where the genders have been reversed like Ms. Prufrock). Her repeated emphasis on "breaking" leads us to recognize the necessity of shattering outworn myths.

III

In the two English *ghazal* writers that we have looked at, the *ghazal* appears to be largely prosaic; the theme and the content of most of the English *ghazals* concentrate on the contemporary socio-political scenario of the writer – largely twentieth century and American. In the anti-ghazals of Webb in particular the 'canonical' in the form of frequent references to T.S. Eliot's poems peeps into this otherwise peripheral genre. Largely, what defines a canon is primarily a set of power relations. Thus, whatever does not follow the generic or thematic dictates of the canon or fulfill the needs of the canon-markers will be rendered peripheral. However, as we have argued earlier – a canon may exist only in a specific point in history. Thus, the peripheral may seek to deconstruct the existing canon and find a place for itself in the new canon.

Nevertheless, one question keeps recurring. It goes without saying that some texts are enjoyed, studied, returned to – that is they survive irrespective of a reorganization or breaking down of canonical boundaries. Do these individual texts or a collection of them remain thus because of canonization by extra literary forces? Or is there something inherent in them that explain their continued relevance? Their survival is dependant on their ability to resonate with aspects of experience in the context of their reception, perhaps centuries after their composition. The Urdu *ghazals* of Mir and Ghalib undoubtedly had this capacity and this is reflected in the way interest in the *ghazals* was revived by writers in the West. What is yet to be seen is whether this peripheral genre is able to enter the canon of English literature and how. In this sense, to decide on the peripheral and the central, we will have to apply the test of time. The literary value of a text or genre can be judged after many years. However, more than that, any idea of 'canon' and 'periphery' is necessarily based on limited judgment and an attempt to universalize and institutionalize that limited judgment. That is to say, what is

worth canonizing to us may not seem worth canonizing to somebody else. What constitutes the canon, then, is not the superiority of any judgment but the ability to exercise power, coercive or otherwise to make one's judgment acceptable. In the case of the English *ghazal*, similar forces will be at work to decide the fate of this newly emerged genre in the English literary canon.

NOTES

1. Information on the 'ghazal' is a combination of material available in the following sources:

   (a) The site http://www.msci.memphis.edu/ramamurt/ghazal.html;
   (b) The entry on 'ghazal' in *A History of Indian Literature*, by Sisir Kumar Das (In two volumes)
   (c) *An Anthology of Indian Literatures* (ed) K. Santhanam;
   (d) *An Anthology of Indian Literature* (ed) John B. Alphonso-Karkala;
   (e) *Merriam Websters' Encyclopedia of Literature*;
   (f) *Dictionary of World Literature* ed. Joseph T. Shipley; and
   (g) *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* ed. Alex Preminger and T.V.F. Brogan.

2. *An Anthology of Indian Literature* (ed) John B. Alphonso-Karkala Noida: Indian Council for Cultural Relations.1987 p 496.
3. Ibid. pp 500-501.
4. See Das, Sisir Kumar *A History of Indian Literature* (1800-1910). Delhi: Sahitya Akademi. 1991, 2000.
5. ibid
6. The ghazal by Ghalib is from the following site http://www.cs.wisc.edu/~navin/india/songs/ghalib/44.g.

7. Rahman, Anisur 'On Translating a Form: The Possible/Impossible Ghazal in English', in *Translation Poetics and Practice*. p 120 New Delhi: Creative Books.

8. *20th century Poetry and Poetics, Fourth Edition*, p 340 (ed) by Garry Geddes.
9. Ibid. p 283.
10. Ibid. p 899.
11. Ibid. p123.
12. Information on Rich's life and works are available on the site http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/m_r/rich/bio.htm and also from the anthology *20th century Poetry and Poetics*, edited by Garry Geddes.
13. Cited in *20th century Poetry and Poetics, Fourth Edition*, edited by Garry Geddes pp 282-283.
14. From the site http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/m_r/rich/progressive.htm.
15. Adrienne Rich in Aijaz Ahmad edited *Ghazals of Ghalib* New York: Columbia University Press, 1971. p 78.
16. *Water and Light: Ghazals and Anti Ghazals*, Poems by Phyllis Webb Toronto: Coach House Press. 1984. p 45.
17. Ibid. p 133. .

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Translation in/and Hindi Literature

Avadhesh Kumar Singh

Abstract

The paper is an attempt to study translational practices in different periods in Hindi literature in the following broad areas: (1) Indian linguistic realities and translation in the early period (from early period to 1100) (2) Translation in the Bhakti (1100-1700) and Riti (1700-1800) periods (3) Translation in the Navajagaran Period (1800-1920) (4) Translation in the Swachchandatavad period (1920-1950) (5) Translation in the Adhunik Period (1950-1980) and (6) Translation in the Adhunikottar Period (1980 onwards). The paper focuses on translations into Hindi. It is argued that there are some identifiable trends in each of these periods which help us understand how Hindi internalized alien traditions and defined its mainstream literary culture.

Introduction

Translation in Hindi is *bhashantar* ('linguistic transference'), *parakayapravesh* ('transference of spirit from one body to the next, or transmigration'), *sweekaran* ('making the other as one's own, appropriation'), and even *paltukaran* ('domestication of the source text in the target linguistic system and culture'). The term is translated as *anuvad* in Hindi, as in so many other Indian languages. Literally and etymologically, *anuvad* stands for the 'subsequent' or 'following' discourse (*anu*=following, *vad*=discourse). I prefer the term *anuvad* to all others, as it means 'subsequent discourse' (target text) based on a *vad* (discourse, i.e.source text). It presupposes an existing discourse, i.e. *vad* or source text. The *vad* and *anuvad* lead to the third stage, which we

can term as *samvad* (dialogue) with one's own self and other(s) within and without[1]. This dialogue or *samvad* impacts the self and the other in more ways than one in different historical periods. Attendant political, ideological and economic considerations notwithstanding, *samvad* becomes an instrument for transformation of the self and the other, as can be discerned in the development of Hindi literature.

The present paper endeavors to study translational practices in different periods in Hindi literature, in the following broad areas: (1) Indian linguistic realities and translation in the early period, (from early period to 1100) (2) translation in the Bhakti (1100-1700) and Riti (1700-1800) periods, (3) translation in the Navjagaran period (4) translation in the Swachhandatavad period (1920-1950), (5) translation in the Aadhunik period (1950-1980), and (6) translation in the Adhunikottar period (1980 onwards). I have limited myself to discussing translation into Hindi and will not discuss translation from Hindi into other languages (something that I propose to explore later). Though true *adan-pradan* (the process of give and take from one language to another) through translation can be understood only after studying both aspects, the present study, however inadequate it might be, will help reveal the endeavors made in Hindi to equip itself with its own and alien literary traditions in order to transform itself, and in the process, transform other(s) as well.

Translation in the Pre-colonial Period

Albeit somewhat simplistically, translation in India can be periodized as follows: (1) the pre-colonial, (2) the colonial, and (3) the post-colonial.

The first period can be sub-divided into two: (1) from the beginning (which may be difficult to specify) to 1100 and (2) from 1100 to 1757. To understand the translational practices in the period

it is necessary to remember that India has always been multilingual, with Prakrit and Apabhransh as the languages of social transaction and Sanskrit as the language of learned discourse. It was attended by co-existence of diverse styles or *riti* e.g. *Panchali, Avanti, Vidarbhi, Daskshinatya* and *Gaudi* named after various regions. The description of the *Kavyapurush*[2] and *chakravarti kshetra*[3] in the late tenth century Sanskrit poetician Rajashekhara's *Kavyamimamsa* bears witness to this. As late as the twelfth century Hemchandra (1089-1173), a Jain monk and a precursor of Gujarati, wrote a grammar of Prakrit but composed his critical treatises, e.g. *Kavyanushasana*, in Sanskrit. The present Indian multilingualism is a direct descendant of the linguistic pluralism of antiquity. Since Indians have been living with this pluralism for long, they are natural un/conscious translators, who translated without caring for a methodology or theory of translation. Indians existed in multiple languages simultaneously and could shift from one linguistic system to another with ease. In India the sister languages cohabiting their own or collective space were not adversaries. As late as the second quarter of the 19th century, multilingualism flourished in India. For instance, Dayaram in Gujarat wrote in Gujarati and Hindi. Bhartendu Harishchandra (1850-1885) in Hindi called himself in his "Evidence" before the Education Commission a poet of Sanskrit, Hindi and Urdu and composed even in Gujarati. In this sense Indian consciousness was/is essentially translational, though not in the Western sense. The traditions of *bhashya* (commentary on Hindu sacred texts), *tika* (sub-commentaries) and *anvyaya* (determination or explaining meaning by establishing connections or relationships), though written in the same language, were manifestations of this consciousness.

Though *anuvad* is not an unknown term in Indian tradition, the fact is that there was almost no tradition of translation in ancient India in the modern sense of the term except for *bhashya*, *tika*, and *vartik* (commentary on abstruse sense of text in the tradition of hagiography), which can be considered as translation only in a very

loose sense. The first two, however, were practised in the same language.

The poets of the Bhakti period (1100-1700) were translators in a different and loose sense, as they strove to translate ancient Indian knowledge and wisdom manifested in different treatises through Sanskrit by appropriating it in various bhashas (native languages). The period from 1100 to 1700 was marked by the *lokabhashikaran*[4] of knowledge in Sanskrit. The Bhakti poets namely Nanak, Kabir, Sur, Tulsi, Narsinh, Mira, Gyaneshvar democratized the knowledge in Sanskrit, by transferring it into dialects and *lokbhashas* (languages of ordinary people). Translation from non-Indian languages into Indian languages and vice versa was less than desired. The translation of the Upanishads into Persian in the seventeenth century by Prince Dara Shikoh and the rendition of the works of Sanskrit poetics into bhashas were notable activities in the period.

The post-Bhakti Riti poets from middle of the seventeenth to the hind quarter of the eighteenth century, operated in more than one language. This period witnessed a continuation of the traditions of *tika* (commentary), *tippani* (explanation of difficult words or phrases), *bhavanuvad* (sense for sense translation) and *vartik*, the last being marked by translation with explanation. In fact, it is possible to use the term *vykhyanuvad* (translation with explanation) for it. Along with literary and religious texts, texts belonging to the Vedanta (literally 'end of the Vedas'; it is used for the Upanishads), Vaidyak (medicine) and Jyotish (astrology) schools of thought and narratives from Prakrit and Persian were also translated in this period. Sabal Singh Chauhan (1661-1724), king of Sabalgarh (near Etwah distict in Uttar Pradesh), translated the *Mahabharata* in the Doha and Chaupai metres in such simple language that it verges on the unpoetic. By comparison, Gokulnath Gopinath's translation of the *Mahabharata* is more poetic and literary.

The seventeenth century witnessed translations of Sanskrit works e.g. plays, puranas and narratives into Hindi. Damodardas belonging to Dadu panth (Dadu sect) translated the *Markandeya Purana* in 1648, and Meghraj Pradhan translated *Adhyatma Ramayan*. In 1767 Ramahari translated Roopgoswmani's Sanskrit plays as *Vidagdh Madhav Natak*. Other religious and ethical texts translated in this period included Devichand's *Hitopadesh Granth Mahaprabodhini* and Banshidhar's *Mitra Manohar* (1717), both are translations of the old Sanskrit verse narrative *Hitopadesh*. The *Nachiketpuran* (the well-known story of Nachiketas in the *Kathopanishad*) was frequently translated – as *Nachiketopakhyan* in 1707 and then in 1831 as *Nachiketpuran*. Translated as it abundantly was between 1754 and 1769 the *Garud Puran* (Book of the Dead) was also a favorite among translators. Nazir Anandram's translation of a part of the *Padmapuran* (Rama's life story) is also worth mentioning here. Surati Mishra translated *Vaitalpanchvinshaitika* as *Vaital Pachchisi*, which can be put in the category of *chhayanuvad* (literally 'shadow translation').

Translation in the colonial period

The real impetus to translation activities came during the foreign rule from 1757 to 1857 under the East India Company and from 1857 to 1947 under the direct colonial rule, though most of these activities were not free from colonial / political considerations[5]. Thus the next phase of translation in India was a consequence of its colonization in the second half of the eighteenth century. In the first phase the most significant event was the establishment of the Asiatic Society. Among many activities that it supported was also translation of Indian texts into English such as *Abhigyanashakuntalam*, the *Gita*, *Manusmriti* and so on. For the first time translation was pursued in an unprecedented manner in order to (re)discover, know and (re)fashion native knowledge systems which would help to appropriate and control India. Knowing is controlling, and more often than not, translation in the colonial period was the

means of achieving both goals. It became a means of cultural transformation or conversion of the other that needed to be intellectually domesticated after being politically vanquished.

Excepting the translation of some ancient Indian classics and treatises into Western languages, most of the translations were into Indian languages, and those selected for translation from Western languages (e.g English) to Indian languages were such works as would serve the colonizer's purposes. While English translations of Khayyam's *Rubbayat* and some of the Indian literary classics were attempted to eroticize the Orient to the West, the translations by William Carey and company of the Bible into 16 Indian language in the 1880s were motivated more by religious expansionist intentions than by the 'catholicity' of Christianity. Translations from English to Indian languages in subsequent years crushed the Indian creative sensibility, though there is no denying the fact that these translations helped in introducing some new literary trends and movements into Indian literature.

The Asiatic Society was an Orientalist Institute, but not in the Saidean sense, for it did not always act as the handmaid of colonization. The Orientalists, or Indologists to be precise, of the early period from 1757 to 1825, and their translational operations (associated with the Society at least by the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century) were inspired by admiration for the Indian's cultural heritage. The translation of the Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, *Mahabharata*, *Gita*, *Manusmruti* and *Abhigyanashakuntalam* among other translations by scholars associated with the Society and others – introduced Indian knowledge systems to Europe. This process of translation from Indian languages to European languages enriched Europe's knowledge about India as a new land with knowledge systems different from its own. The establishment of Chairs of Sanskrit in major universities of Europe, by the first quarter of the 19th century

was not a mere coincidence but a result of the orientation of Europe towards India through Orientalism.

The nineteenth century witnessed a strengthening of translation activities into Hindi, the Brijbhasha language, to be precise. Lalloolal translated *Hitopadesh* as *Rajneeti* in 1802, and the dialogue between the sage Shukdev and King Parikshit as *Kalyavankatha* and K*imiya-e Shaadat* (1817 edn.). Translation of the *Bhagavat* by Sevaram Mishra and of the *Siddhasiddhanta* was also attempted in the first half of the 19th century, which was marked by the growth of prose in Brij. Quite a few non-literary texts on religion, poetics, medicine, rituals, astronomy, geography and mathematics were translated into prose mixed with verse. This influenced the language of translation, as may be discerned in Lallolal's translation of *Hitopadesh*. The *vartik* and *tika* traditions continued, and these could be considered as additions to the categories of translation in the loose sense of the term. Also worth noting are the translations of Ved Vyas's *Mahabharata* and Kalidas's *Rutusamhar* by Sabal Singh Chauhan (1661-1724) and the *tika* of the *Gitabhashamrata* of Ramanuji Bhagvandas (1698), *Gita Prashna* by Swami Navrang in the eighteenth century, Nazar Anandram's *Parmanand –Pravodh Tika* (1704), Krishna Chakravarty's *Bhagavad-Gita Bhashya*, and Hari Vallabh Das's *Gitabhashya Tika* in verse and prose. Tulsidas's *Ramacharitmanas,* Bihari's *Satsai* and Keshav's *Rasikpriya*, *Ramchandrika*, *Kavipriya* and *Vairagyashatak* also earned the attention of tikakars or commentators. Though *tika* is not translation in the strict sense of the term, it is translation with latitude - usually in the same linguistic group. These commentaries can be put in the following categories as translation from Sanskrit to the Brij dialect –i.e, commentaries from one dialect to another in the same language group (e.g. from Avadhi to Brij).

Tikanuvad (= translation with commentaries) of different texts in the Riti period were also attempted, for example

Bhashaupanishad, Bhashapadmapurana, *Bhashayogavashishtha*, *Mallinathcharitavachanika*, *Sudrashti Tarangini Vachanika*, and *Hitopadeshvachanika*. *Bhashaupanishad* is a Persian translation of 22 Upanishads, including *Taiteriopanishad*. The manuscript of this 1719 translation is preserved in the Asiatic Society, Calcutta. The translation of Daulatram Jain's *Ramakatha* as *Bhashapadmapurana* or *Padmapuran Vachanika* from Prakrit to Khariboli, profusely mixed with Rajasthani and Brijbhasha, is worth noting. The interaction between Khariboli and Persian continued in this period, i.e. in the first quarter of the 18th century, as can be seen in *Paras Bhag*, a translation of *Keemia Shaadat* by Sevapanthi Addanshah and Kriparam from Persian to Khariboli. Some of the translations from Sanskrit include *Gitanuvad*, of doubtful authorship but generally ascribed to Birbal (1723 edn.) and *Suryasidhanta*, a translation of the Sanskrit text of astrology of the same title by Pandit Kamodananda Mishra from Sanskrit in 1782. In general, texts from medicine, astrology, religious and spiritual scriptures, geography, history, philosophy and narratives from Sanskrit and Persian were more commentaries than true translation.

Pandit Yogadhyan Mishra translated *Hatimtaee*, a famous Kissa which is a narrative dealing with the world of magic and fantasy in 1838; Tarinicharan Mitra translated *Purush-Parikshasangraha* dealing with human attributes in 1813; and Dayashankar, the younger brother of Laloolal, translated *Daybhag*, a text dealing with inheritance of property in 1832. Quite a few Sufi and Islamic religious texts were translated into Dakhini Hindi, which is dominated by Urdu and is closer to Khariboli in word-form and sentence construction. Significant contributions include a translation of Miran Yakoobi's *Shamaylul Atakia* and *Dalaylul Atakia*, Mohammad – Valiullah Kadari's translation of *Mariftussuluk* and also of translation of Saiyad Shah Mohammad Kadiri's *Risala-e-Vajoodiya*, Shahmir's *Asararuttauhid* and Abdul Hamid's *Risalae Tasavvuf*. Quite a few texts by anonymous authors that were translated in this period are narratives – e.g., *Tutinama, Anware*

Suheli, and *Kissa-e-Gulo Hurmuz*. *Sittae Samasiya* and *Risala Zarre Saken* are medical texts translated into Dakhini Hindi. Some of the translations were attempted in consonance with an attitude towards Hindi that was, to a large extent, shaped by the language policy of the rulers. Sadal Mishra's translations of *Nachiketopakhyana* and *Adhyatma Ramayana* are its examples. At Sir John Gilchrist instance, Mishra translated the latter work as *Ramcharitra* in about 320 pages. He wrote:

> "The most kind reservoir of all human attributes Mr. Gilchrist Sir resolved to render Sanskrit texts into Bhasha. One day he asked me to render the *Adhyatma Ramayana* in a language that would have Persian and Arabic words in it. So I started using Khariboli for my purpose" (cited in Ganapatichandra Gupta Vol. II. 737).

Along with original compositions, the Bharatendu period (1850-1885) in the second half of the nineteenth century was marked by sustained translation from Sanskrit and English, the latter activity an offshoot of colonization. Raja Laxman Sigh (1826-96) translated Kalidas's *Raghuvansh* and his epic poem *Meghdoot* in simple yet poetic Brijbhasha in Savaiya metre. Bharatendu himself translated a *Narad Bhakti Sutra* and Shandilya's *Bhaktisutra* as *Tadeeya Sarvaswa* in 1874 with greater focus on sense than on linguistic considerations. Babu Totaram (1848-1902) translated Valmiki's *Ramayana* as *Ram Ramayana* from Sanskrit to Hindi. In this period, works by the fifth-century poet and dramatist Kalidasa were translated repeatedly from Sanskrit. Thakur Jag Mohan Singh's translations of Kalidasa's *Ritusamharam* (1876) and *Meghdoot* (1883) deserve our attention, for he consciously prioritized preservation of sense over literal translation and indirectly tried to adopt translation strategies such as deletion and addition in terms of sense. Lala Sitaram 'Bhoop' (1858-1937) translated *Meghdoot* (1833), the play *Kumarasambhavam* (1884), the play *Raghuvamsham* (1885-92) and *Ritusamharam* (1893) without

achieving the effect of Jag Mohan Singh. The major difference between the translations of the two was that the former used tatsama (Sanskrit) phraseology and Kavitta and Savaiya metres, whereas the latter used Doha, Chaupai and Ghanakshari metres. Apart from these, 'Bhoop' translated verses nos. 73 to 85 from the "Adisarga" of Ved Vyas's the *Mahabharata* as *Devyani* and also Kapil Muni's *Sankhyasutra* from Sanskrit to Hindi, although he did not publish it. He also translated Byron's *The Prisoner of Shilon* as *Shilon Ka Bandi*. Among English works, Oliver Goldsmith's *Hamlet* and the poem *Deserted Village* were translated as *Ekantvasi Yogi* (1886) and *Oojad Gram* (1889) by Shridhar Pathak into Brijbhasha-mixed Khariboli. Pathak also translated Goldsmith's poem *The Traveller* as *Shranta Pathika*. The credit for initiating the process of translating English works into Hindi thus goes to the Bharatendu period.

In 1863 Raja Laxman Singh translated Kalidas's *Abhigyana shakuntalam* which became popular for two reasons -- the subconscious engagement during the age with Shankuntala's exotic and Dhushyanta's amnesiac story, and the advocacy of purity of language to which Laxman Singh subscribed and practised as well. In this period, apart from Kalidasa, the poet Bhavabhuti was another favourite with the translators of Sanskrit literature. Their works were translated again in this period, showing dissatisfaction with earlier versions. After Raja Laxman Singh's translation of *Abhigyana shakuntalam* attention was drawn to other works as well. Nandalal Viswanath Dubey also tried to translate the play in 1888, and Lala Sitaram translated Klidasa's play *Malvikagnimitra* in 1898. Devdutta Tiwari, Nandalal Vishwanath Dubey and Lala Sitaram translated Bhavabhooti's *Uttar Ramcharita* in 1871, 1886 and 1897 respectively. Sitaram translated Bhavabhooti's play *Malatimadhava* and *Mahavircharita* in 1898 and 1897. Lala Shaligram also rendered *Maltimadhava* in 1881. Shitalaprasad and Ayodhyaprasad Chaudhari translated Krishnamitra's *Prabandhachandrodaya* in 1879 and 1885 respectively, while Gadadhar Bhatta translated King Shudraka's play *Mrchhakatikam* in 1880. Important Sanskrit plays translated in this

period included Harsha's *Ratnavali* (translated by Devadutta in 1872 and by Balmukunda Singh in 1898) and Bhattnarayana's *Venisanhara* (translated by Jawalaprasad Singh in 1897). The period, i.e. the second half of the 19th century, is marked by a few tendencies. Most of the translators were creative writers who wanted to enrich their languages with translations. The texts chosen for translations included Sanskrit texts, particularly epics and plays along with English works and even from Bhasha literatures like Bengali and Marathi.

Among other plays, Bharatendu translated the Sanskrit play *Chaurpanchashika* into Hindi from its Bangla translation in 1868, *Ratnavali* from Sanskrit in 1868, *Pakhand Vikhandan* (a translation of the Act III of Krishna Mishra's *Pravandhchandrodaya*) in 1872, *Dhanjayavyaya* (a translation of Act III of the Sanskrit play of the same title by *Kanchankavi*) in 1873, *Karpoor Manjari* (a translation of Vishakhdutta's play) in 1878. Bharatendu also translated Shakespeare's *Merchnt of Venice* as *Durlabh Bandhu* in 1880. The Parsi drama companies staged Shakespeare's plays, and this gave impetus to translation. Arya translated *Merchant of Venice* as *Venice ka Vyapari* in 1888, Munshi Imdad Ali rendered *Comedy of Errors* as *Bhramjalak* in 1885, while Lala Sitaram rendered it as *Bhoolbhulaiya* in 1885. Other translations of Shakespeare's plays were *As you Like It* as *Manbhavan* by Purohit Gopinath in 1896, *Romeo and Juliet* as *Premlila* by Purohit Gopinath in 1877, and *Macbeth* as *Sahsendra Sahas* by Mathuraprasad Upadhyaya in 1893. Babu Totram translated Joseph Addison's tragedy *Cato* as *Kratanta* in 1879. This trend of translating English plays signalled the importance of English through colonial encounter, and it gave a new direction to Hindi drama, which had availed itself primarily of Sanskrit and folk dramatic traditions. From Bangla, Michael Madhusudan Dutt's plays -- e.g. *Padmavati* (translated in 1878 by Balkrishna Bhatt), *Sharmishtha* (in 1880 by Ramcharan Shukla) and *Krishnamurari* (in 1899 by Ramkrishna Verma) – were translated along with Manmohan Bahu's *Sati* (in 1880 by Uditnaranyan Lal),

Rajakishore Dev's *Padmavati* (in 1889 by Ramkrishna Verma) and Dwarakanath Ganguli's *Veer Nari* in 1899 by Ramkrishna.

Apart from Bangla plays, novels in Bangla by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1833–94), Rameshchandra Dutta (1848-1909) and Tarkanath Ganguli (1845–1907) were also translated. Notable translations include Gadadhar Singh's translation of Rameshchandra Dutt's *Bangavijeta* (1886) and Bankim's *Durgesh nandini* (1882), Pratap Narayan Mishra's translation of Bankim Chandra's *Raj Singh, Indira, Radharani,* and *Yugalanguriya,* Radhacharan Goswami's translation of Damodar Mukherjee's *Mranmayee* and Munshi Haritnarayanlal's translation of Swarnkumar's *Deep Nirvan.*Apart from these, Ramkrishna Verma's translation of *Chittorchatki* in 1895, Kartikprasad Khatri's *Ila* (1896), and *Jaya Madhumalti* and Gopal Das Gahamari's *Chaturchanchala* (1893), *Bhanumati* (1894) and *Naye Babu* (1895) deserve to be noted here, for these translators did not mention the names of the source authors. Gopal Das Gahamari's translations in particular and others in general can be put in the category of translation-cum-adaptation.

Translations from Marathi and Urdu novels included Bharatendu's *Poornaprakash Chandraprabha* from Marathi and Ramkrishna Verma's *Sansardarpan* (1885), *Amala Vratantamala* (1884), *Thag Vratantamala* (1889) and *Police Vratantamata* (1890) from Urdu. Some of these translations were discussed and commented upon, with Badrinarayan Chaudhri's 'Premaghan' criticizing Gadadhar Singh's translation of *Bangvijeta* in detail in *Anandakadambini* and Balmukund Gupta critiquing the translation of Goldsmith's *Hermit* as *Ekantayoga.*

Apart from writing about fifty original works, Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi (1864-1938), after whom the period is named the "Dwivedi Yug [era]" (1893-1918), translated thirty texts.[6] Rai Devi Prasad 'Poorna' (1868-1915) translated Kalidasa's *Meghdoot* as *Dharadhar-dhawan* in 1902.

In the Dwivedi era, Sanskrit, English and Bangla dramatic texts translated were Savananda Avasthi's translation *Naginenda* (1956), *Mrichohhakatika* by Lala Sitaram in 1913, and *Uttararamacharita* by Kaviratna Satyanarayana. Also, the plays of French dramatist Moliere were translated from their English versions by Lalluprasad Pandey and Gangaprasad Pandey.

Gopaldas Gahamari had introduced detective themes through his detective novels, and he strengthened this with his translation of Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* as *Govindram* in 1905. The fascination with detective themes and novels continued in the twentieth century. G.W.M. Reynolds' novel, *Mysteries of the Court of London* was translated as *London Rahasya* and his *Loves of the Hair* as *Rangmahal* by Gangaprasad Gupta in 1904. The fascination with detective stories and the supernatural and miraculous disallowed the use of translation as a mode of introducing new and rich models of novel from non–English traditions such as Russian, French, German, and Spanish, among others. That is how colonization impacts and limits the choices of the subject. However, there were some exceptions as well. For instance, fictional works of literary merit like Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (under the same title by Janardhan Prasad Jha "Dwij"), and Sir Walter Scott's *The Abbott* (as *Rani Mary* in 1916 by Lala Chandralal). Also, there were some non-English novels like Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* (by Durga Prasad Khatri as *Abhage Ka Bhagya* in 1914-15), and Harriet Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (as *Tom Kaka Ki Kutiya* in 1916 by Mahavir Prasad Poddar). From Bangla, the novels of established novelists like Damodar Mukhopadhyaya, Bankimchandra, Panchakauri De, Rabindranath Tagore and Rameshchandra Dutt were translated respectively by Ishwari Prasad Sharma, Kishorilal Goswami, Gopalram Gahamari and Jonardhan Jha 'Dwij'. All these source texts barring a few exceptions dealt with miracle, mystery or detective incidents in their

thematic concerns. The absence of translations of serious socially oriented novels speaks of the taste of the then readership in Hindi.

Translation played a role in developing and establishing a critical sense in Hindi. In the Bharatendu period Jagannath Ratnedar had attempted a verse translation of Alexander Pope's *Essay on Criticism* as *Samalochandarsha* in 1897. Later Acharya Ram Chandra Shukla translated Joseph Addison's "Essay on Imagination" as *Kalpana ke Ananda*, and he also translated Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia* as *Buddha Charita* in 1922. Interestingly, this is not in Khari boli Hindi but in Brijbhasha, and Shukla did not take recourse to literal translation. Rather he added to the translation at will. He had previously translated Megasthenese's *India* as *Megasthenesekalina Bharata* in 1897, John Henry Newman's *Literature* as *Sahitya* in 1904, and Sir T. Madhava Rao's *Minor Hints* as *Rajprabandha Siksha* in 1913. Others, such as Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, made profuse use of English critics without translating or at times even acknowledging them.

Munshi Premchand was a unique case. He used to write his novels in Urdu and then translate them into Hindi – e.g., wrote *Bazare Hunsa*, *Gosh-e-Afimat* and *Gogane Havti* and then translated them as *Sevasadan, Premashram* and *Rangbhoomi*. In fact the task was easier, for linguistic code switching between Urdu and Hindi was not difficult for Premchand like northern Indians who operate between the common vocabulary of Hindi and Urdu and their common *Gangajamuni* culture. Ironically, they were first published in Hindi. In between he translated two of his existing Urdu novels – *Jalva-e-Isar* as *Vardan* in 1921, and *Hamkhurma va Hamsawab* as *Prem Arthat Do Sakhiyon Ka Vivah.* He rewrote the Hindi variance of *Prema* in Hindi and published it as *Pratigya* in 1929. He was not happy with the state of the pre-Premchand Hindi novel in comparison with the Urdu and Bengali novel. He saw translation as a means of enriching Hindi literature, but not simply through translation. He was highly critical of the indiscriminate translations

from Bengali, particularly in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the early part of the first quarter of the twentieth century. Premchand wanted the treasure of Hindi to be enriched by its own jewels, as well as by the best from other world literatures such as Russian and French. So in his essay "Upanyasa" (Premchand 1962: 33-38) he called upon young people to learn these languages and then translate their good literary works into Hindi.

Acharya Vishweshar translated Abhinavgupta's *Abhinav Bharati*, Kuntaka's *Vakrotijivit*, Anandavardhana's *Dhwanyaloka*, Ramchandra Gunachandra's *Natyadarpan* and Mammata's *Kavyaprakasha*. Under the editorship of Dr. Nagendra, Aristotle's *Poetics*, Longinus's *The Sublime* and Horacles' *Arts Poetica* were translated as *Arastu Ka Kavyashastra*, *Kavya Mein Udatta Tattva* and *Kavyakala* respectively.

Quite a few travelogues from Gujarati, Marathi and Bangla by Kanhaiyalal Maneklal Munshi, Kaka Kalelker and Shanker were translated respectively as *Badrinath Ki Yatra* (1959) *Sooryodaya Ka Desh* (195), *Himalaya Ki yatra* (1948) and *A Par Bangla O Par Bangla* (1982). Other notable translations in the middle decades of the twentieth century include the translation of important short stories of the world as *Sansar Ki Sarwashreshtha Kahaniya* in 1940 and a translation by Shamsher Bahadur Singh, the Marxist poet, of Aijaz Ahmed's history of Urdu literature as *Urdu Sahitya ka Itihasa* in 1956.

Memoirs were translated from different languages in the post-Independence period. Ilachandra Joshi was one of the pioneers with his translation of Gorky's *Memoirs* as *Gorky Ke Sansmaran* in 1942. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi translated Rabindranath Tagore's memoirs as *Mera Bachpan* from Bangla. Manuben Gandhi's memoirs were translated by Kurangiben Desai as *Ba Meri Man* and by Ram Narayan Chaudhary as *Ba Aur Babu Ki Sheetal Chhaya Main* in 1954. From Panjabi, Amrita Pritam's memoirs were

translated as *Atit Ki Parchaiyan* in 1962. Upendra Nath 'Ashq' edited and translated Urdu memoir as *Urduke Bhatareen Sansmaran* in Hindi in 1962. Mukundilal Shrivastava brought out Nayan Tara Sahgal's *Prison and Chocolate* from English to Hindi as *Mera Bachpan*.

The Indian mind's fascination with Shakespeare that had begun in the nineteenth century as a by-product of the colonial literary enterprise continued in the twentieth century. If in the first half of the century Harivanshrai Bachchan translated Shakespeare as part of his academic, creative and personal pursuits, Rangeya Raghav, one of the most prolific translators of Shakespeare, did so more out of his love for Hindi than for Shakespeare. "A language which does not possess translations of Shakespeare, cannot be counted among the more developed languages" (cited in Trivedi 1993, 33). Further, retranslation of Shakespeare's plays speaks of his dissatisfaction with the preceding translations of Shakespeare, for Shakespeare was already there in Hindi but not in the kind of translations that Rangeya Raghava wanted.

Another notable feature of translation into Hindi in the second half of the twentieth century was the participation in the translational enterprise of noted creative and critical writers, both established and emerging, against the backdrop of a realization of the significance of translation as the means of enriching their literature and their own creativity. Vishnu Khare's translation of *The Wasteland* and Mohan Rakesh's translation of *The Portait of a Lady* speak of their choice of Anglo-American-centric texts more out of their fascination for them and less out of their canonical status in the Hindi academic world. Incidentally, both of these translators were not directly concerned with the academic world. Others moved away from the Anglo-American space to a large extent, such as the translation of Albert Camus' *The Stranger* by Rajendra Yadav and Bertolt Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* by Kamleshwar. Kedarnath Singh translated Paul Eluard's poems and discovered his

own poetic talent in the process, and became one of the significant Hindi poets of the last quarter of the twentieth century.

In the 1960s and 1970s, translation into Hindi moved further away from England and America to central and eastern European countries such as Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Poland and Russia. Through the choice of source texts this constituted indirect resistance to American hegemony. The case of Nirmal Verma stands out. The translations of Czech creative literature (particularly of Milan Kundera) by this eminent Hindi novelist and essayist introduced Czech creativity to the Hindi readership even before it reached English, and Verma made use of Czech locales in his maiden novel. Raghuvir Sahay, a distinguished poet, translated Hungarian poets, the Polish novelist Jerzi Andrezejewaski, and the Yugoslavic/Bosnian poet Ivo Andric. Sahay's translation of Andric's epic novel *Na Drini Chupriya* as *Drina Nadi Ka Pul* (1986) is significant because of his choice of the text for translation. He selected it after becoming fascinated with Andric's delineation of characters and their conduct, the struggle for oppositional values within European history, and also in an attempt to make the sympathetic Indian reader conscious of the present state of India and its future. Commenting on Andric's appeal to him, he said,

> "In his work, while people accept the new, they do not barter away the old for it. This is the true meaning of knowing one's tradition; and this is also the Indian philosophy of history."

In Sahay, translation thus becomes an instrument of knowing and reinstating one's own cultural and philosophical traditions through similar literary works and traditions from hitherto unknown lands. Writings from Latin America, Africa and the Caribbean came to be translated into Hindi. Virendra Kumar Barnwal translated Wole Soyinka's poems as *Wole Soyankaki Kavitayen* in 1991 out of his love or affinity for the poet and his

work, not out of any translational ideals. The shift of the centre of fictional creativity to the non-American and non-European world such as South America, Africa and Asia, discernible as it is, in awards like the Nobel Prize and the Commonwealth and Booker Prizes to non-European and non-American writers introduced the works of these writers to Hindi literature through translation. In addition to *Teen Saal* (Chekhov) *Agneya Versha* (Constantine Faydin), *Surkh aur Syah* (Stendhal), *Dheere Bahe Don* (Mikhail Sholokhov), *Pahala Adami, Azanabi, Plague, Patan, Sukhi Mratyu* (all by Albert Camus), *Kisan* (Balzac), Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as *Ekant Ke Sau Varsha* were translated. Indian English writing such as Vikran Seth's *A Suitable Boy* and *An Equal Music* were translated as *Ek Achchha sa Ladka* and *Ek sa Sangeet* respectively, Salman Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* as *Haroon aur Kahaniyon ka Samunder,* Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* as *Pakistan Mail*, and Shobha De's *Starry Nights* as *Sitaron ki Raten.*

This period was remarkable for another translational tendency viz. of translating Urdu poetry into Hindi, though it meant mere transcription of Urdu poets like Ghalib in Devanagari script with meanings of difficult words given in Hindi.

In the post-colonial period various literary and cultural institutions (Central and State Sahitya Akademis) and publication houses such as Katha, Macmillan and the National Book Trust encouraged translation to facilitate interaction among various linguistic identities. The main tendencies included a critique of colonial translations and their motivations and ideologies, translations of works from post-colonial societies into Indian languages and also from Eurasian countries, a shift from the word/sentence/paragraph or vision to culture as the unit of translation, and the use of English as an intermediary language. Towards its close the twentieth century witnessed 'horizontal' translations (*Adan Pradan*) among Indian languages more than ever.

The declining decades of the twentieth century witnessed a new upsurge in translation that was unbridled by colonial complexes and calculations but not always politically innocent. The translation scenario in Hindi might not compare favourably with English, but it is quite healthy because of the large Hindi readership and greater acceptance of Hindi among other sister languages. Among several reasons that may be adduced for this phenomenon are the emergence of a new crop of good writers in Indian languages who want to have an access to Hindi readership through translations. Some concerted efforts by the Sahitya Akademi (the National Academy of Letters) were made in collaboration with other agencies in this direction. The entry of some new publishing houses such as Bharatiya Gyanpith and Sahitya Akademi along with Hindi Akademis in many states have given a new impetus to translation in Hindi by getting most of the award winning works translated into Hindi. Academic Hindi publishers like Vani, Rajkamal, Radhakrishna, showed greater inclination for publishing important works from non-Indian languages like English, French, German, Russian, and also Latin American and African languages. Another notable feature was the emergence of dalit and feminist discourse. So, literary works dealing with them were translated. Since the dalit discourse flourished more in Marathi than in any other language, the works of Daya Pawar and Sharan Kumar Limbale were translated and published in Hindi by Vani, Rajkamal and Radhakrishna in particular.

I will conclude with the remark that translational practices prevalent at that time in India, especially in Hindi, have to take note of the linguistic clusters in the country, as there used to be five Prakrit or natural languages of the people viz. Panchali, Avanti, Vaidarbhi, Gaudi, and Dakshinatya. In ancient India there were eight linguistic clusters:

1. TMKT: Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu
2. MKKT: Marathi, Konkani, Kannada, Telugu
3. HGM: Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi

4. HPGMBO: Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarat, Marathi, Magadhi, Oriya, Bengali
5. ABO: Assamese, Bengali, Oriya
6. AGK & NE: Assamese & North-eastern dialects/languages
7. PDHT: Panjabi, Dogri, Hindi, Tibetan/Ladakhi
8. HOTM: Hindi, Oriya, Telugu, Marathi

They exist on the geographical map of India. The need is of greater translational interactions among them. The interaction among Indian languages would lend impetus to translation in Hindi because Hindi touches major linguistic clusters barring the southern linguistic cluster. This is what I would term as 'Home and Abroad' approach to translational activities followed by 'Home and Abroad' phenomenon which has plagued translational pursuits in India. First there should be translation amongst sister languages of India and then between Indian and non-Indian languages. Hindi, by virtue of its leadership and demographic space covering more than forty crores of people within India, would be the greatest beneficiary of this 'Home & Home' and then 'abroad' proposal of translational practice.[7]

NOTES

1. The terms *vad, anuvad* and *samvad* are a variation of the title of the book *Vad, Vivad aur Samvad* by the noted Hindi critic, Namvar Singh. The title of the book is a creative translation of Hegelian dialectical terms: thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. In both the cases the beginning and the end are the same though, in the second and central stage anti-thesis and translation or subsequent discourse occupy the central place in their respective paradigm. I consider *samvad* and synthesis to be reciprocal processes because synthesis is a consequence of dialogue.

2. *Kavyapurush* (=verbal/literary discourse incarnate) is a mythical account of the origin of literature and its forms given in Chapter III of *Kavyamimamsa*. Goddess Saraswati, mother of Kavyapurush, appreciates him, as he is the first creator of verse:

   > "Words and meaning form your body, Sanskrit your mouth, Prakrit dialects your arms, Apabhrmsha your legs, Pisachi your feet and Mishra languages your bosom. You are complete, happy, sweet and large-hearted. Your speech is elevated. Rasa is the soul."

3. In Chapter III of Kavyamimamsa, *Chakravarti kshetra* is described to be from the Southern Sea to the Himalayas covering an area of one thousand *yojanas* (about four thousand miles). The poets of the country can describe the apparel, manners, customs and speech of these geographical areas.

4. I prefer this term to 'vernacularisation' because it has a politically dismissive connotation in it. *Lokbhashaikaran* includes in it democratization of knowledge, first composed in Sanskrit through the process of its transference into *lokbhashas* ('native' laguages is politically incorrect). For an elaborate note on this, see AK Singh (my article) "Neither Amnesia nor Aphasia: Knowledge, Continuity and Change in Indian Poetical traditions" in *Indian Knowledge Systems,* Vol. 2, 372-3.

5. For an elaborate discussion, see (my article) "Renaissance Self-(Re) Fashioning" in *South Asian Review,* Pennsylvania University.

6. Panditraj Jagannath's *Bhavini Vilasa* from Sanskrit in 1891 and *Yamunastrota* as *Amrutalahiri* in 1896, Bacon's famous essays as *Bacon Vichar* in 1901, Herbert Spenser's essay "Education" as "Shiksha" in 1906, John Stuart Mill's essay *On Liberty* as *Swadheenata* 1907, the *Mahabharata* as *Hindi Mahabharata* in 1908, Kalidas's *Raghuvansha, Kumar Sambhava* and *Meghdoot* in 1912, 1915 and 1917 respectively, Bhattnarayana's

Venisnghara 1913, Bharavi's *Kiratarjuniyam* in 1917, and *Akhyayika Saptaka,* the translation of seven selected narratives, in 1927.

7. For an elaborate discussion of this point, see (my articles) "Decolonising Engish Studies in India" in *Decolonisation*: *A Search for Alternatives* eds. Adesh Pal et al. New Delhi: Creative books, 2001, and "A Case for Comparative Literay Studies" in *English Studies: Indian Perspective*. eds. Makarand Paranjape et al. New Delhi: Mantra Books, 2005.

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Translating Gujarati Fiction and Poetry: A Study with Reference to Sundaram's Works

Hemang Desai

Abstract

The present paper discusses the issues and challenges faced while translating the short stories and poems of 'Sundaram' (the pen name of T.P.Luhar) from Gujarati into English. These issues have wider relevance in the context of the issues in Indian Literature in English Translation. The issues range from the translation of the specific aspect of source culture like kinship and community, address terms, articles of dress and kitchenware, idioms and proverbs, omens and terms from native medicinal and musical systems to syntax, lexis and a host of stylistic features. Concomitantly the paper also talks about the generic translation strategies that could be of use to the translator who sets out to translate a regional language text into English. The paper also deals with issues like the choice of idiom, intended readership and the role of translation in postcolonial India, which are frequently debated, in the context of Indian literature in English translation.

As a complex act that seeks to translocate lingual and cultural properties of an exclusive and unique literary space to a partially or fully disparate space, translation is identified as one of the most unglamorous and enigmatic human endeavours. However at the same time, in a world of inestimable plurality, it makes us aware of the unrealistic prospect of accomplishing unqualified uniformity and of the advantages of a systematic attempt to understand 'the other'. In a country like India with its long-standing multilingual literary tradition, it is a matter of regret that most languages are not perfectly comprehensible even to the speakers

hailing from neighbouring languages. National literature in India is thus separated by semi-permeable cultural and linguistic barriers. Translation activity is indispensable in India as a means to build cross-cultural bridges within the country. In the post-colonial period translation becomes a very important instrument for negotiating social tensions, language conflicts, social transitions and for identifying the plurality of linguistic expressions and cultural experience and also for understanding the remarkable unity underlying them (Choudhury 1997). However, such a practice has its own pitfalls ranging from the political to the artistic. The risk involved in the practice increases a thousand fold when one seeks to bridge the yawning gulf between two languages like Gujarāti and English, which are separated by time and space, and more significantly share a history complicated by colonialism. Consequently as a translator starts off to translate a literary text s/he encounters what in popular terms are called 'problems' of translation which in turn problematize the notion of translatability. The problems discussed here are generic in nature in the sense that every translator who translates from an Indian language into English would ineluctably face them, partially or fully. These problems can be broadly grouped under the following categories. i) Translating Culture ii) Linguistics and Semantics of Translation iii) Translating Poetry.

Translating Culture

The concept of total or pure equivalence and the idea of the possibility of inter-lingual synonymy have always dominated translation theory. However, language is not merely a medium through which experience is communicated but something inseparable from the experience it communicates since "we see and hear and otherwise experience as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation"(Sapir 1949:207-214). Language by adding meaning to the world of objects helps its users to make sense of the world in its own peculiar and

restrictive way. Consequently, linguistic diversity across the world plays a significant part in the maintenance of corresponding differences and diversities in culture and mentality of the people of various regions. Any attempt at reformulation even within a single language has implications for alterations in meaning which rules out the prospect of having interlingual synonymy. The major stumbling block in the way of interlingual textual transference is culture, which is inextricably woven with the language that governs a literary artifact. The semiotician Julia Kriesteva looks upon a verbal text as an ensemble of diverse modes of cultural signification, that is, a text as a signifying system implicates other forms of signification like myths, fashion, indigenous medicinal system, musical system, festivals, food, metaphysical structure, rituals and religious practices, superstitions in addition to other textual structures. A literary text is a sub-system of the cultural semiotic system and is embedded in the ideological and socio-economic structures of society. Therefore, a translator has to look not only for verbal equivalents but also for socio-economic, ideological and cultural signifiers involved in the creation of a text which being culture-specific are impossible to be replicated in a diverse cultural tradition. As a result the translator may adopt appropriative strategy whereby he would appropriate certain terms in his rendering. Such a policy corresponds not only to a vision of the original work but also to a more or less precise conception of the readers for whom the translations are intended. If a translator has a wider readership in mind, national as well as international, her/his division of cultural properties into distinct categories of the translatable and the untranslatable may spring from a desire to reconstitute the specific socio-political and historical milieu rather than convey specific word-meanings. Very often the target readership faces no appreciable problem in making out these foreign signs because either the context makes the signification easy or the term turns out to be so frequently used that it is appropriated in English-language dictionaries. "Today," says Rimi Chatterjee, "the Indian originals…are now almost universally familiar to most

Western readers. In addition readers have become more tolerant of cultural difference and no longer baulk at a glossary of Indian kinship terms, food, flora and fauna and articles of dress and daily use" (Chatterjee Rimi 2002: 25-33). On the other hand, however, such untranslated terms cannot be reduced to the state of pure signifieds because of their ostensible alienness to a disparate linguistic sign-system into which they are transported. Even their lexicalization in certain cases cannot serve to ignore their identity as foreign entities and the resultant co-presence of cultures and languages in the translated text. Such foreign terms, whether italicized or not, and their translations in turn, generate a hybrid space, a space of inquiry. Carol Meier rightly says the end of translation is, "a further investigation of how apparently inexplicable things might be comprehended without making them explicable in familiar terms (and without allowing them to appear simply different)" (1996). However, at the same time a translator should not foreignize the translation just for the sake of doing it. Readability of the translation and its ability to kindle and sustain the interest of the non-native reader ought to be given topmost priority. So, at times, a short descriptive phrase to substitute the indigenous noun can serve the purpose. This is truly the tension, which underscores the translation of Sundaram's stories and poems: neither to make the translation a seamless English text nor to make it an inaccessible foreign text but rather to constitute a play of familiarity and foreignness so as to produce a text in which they intermingle. Sundaram sets many of his stories in villages and tinctures them with local colour by frequently representing dialects, customs, dress, food items, utensils, and ways of thinking and feeling that are distinctive of rural areas. Words from these signifying practices had to be borrowed in target language by the way of glossary even in the face of its rough source language equivalent posed a tantalizing temptation because at times such words were suffused with different connotations and moreover the method of preparation also varied. For example, to refer to the cloth which covers a woman's breasts Sundaram uses a variety of terms like '*moliyo*', '*kāpadun*', '*katori*'

which are nearly the same as the English 'bodice'. However, such a replacement would sound quite facile and unduly simplistic, as it would connive at all the erotic and sensuous overtones that the original terms carry. The same holds true for '*chuni'*, '*kānti'* and '*nathani'* for all of which 'nose-ring' would have been too inappropriate an equivalent. In stories like '*Mājā Velā nun Mrutyun'* (The Demise of Maja Velo), *'Kholki'* (You, Blockhe), *'Māne Khole'* (In the Lap of Moth), *'Min Piyāsi'* (Thirsty Fish), *'Ambā Bhavāni'* and *'Bidio'* (Bidis), the author mentions indigenous kitchenware like *tapeli*, *hāndli*, *doni*, *tāsni*, *padio* and *chulo*, delicacies like *rotlo*, *kadi*, *sutarfeni*, *maisur*, *pendo*, *magas*, *mohanthāl* and *mālpudā.* Many of these words have a metaphorical function in the narrative and fit so well into the overall semantic structure of the story that any attempt at replacing or paraphrasing them would have dealt a shattering blow to its symmetrical build. Sometimes local colour manifests itself in the indigenous medicinal and musical system. Resultantly, words like *dātan*, *tamburo*, *ektāro*, *sharnāi*, *dhun*, and even sounds of tabla-like *dhagina tinak dhin* are transliterated. The fact that sounds of tabla, which are called *bol* in native musical terminology, have to be transliterated contradicts the axiom that the language of music doesn't know cartographic demarcations. Not to talk of the language of music, music itself has various origins and different traditions. For example, in India, we have two traditions of classical music, Hindustani and Karnātak. Each of them has its own distinctive way of tala, metrical arrangement, and specific configuration of notes. Again a community address, that is, a noun derived from the name of a particular caste or community by adding suffixes like 'o', 'an' and 'i' to it, certainly sounds quite bizarre and weird to the Western reader who is not conversant with the hierarchical hereditary divisions established among the Hindus under the banner of jati, varna or caste. Therefore, addresses like *loovāno, ghānchan, vāniyan, vāghri, bhangiyo, bhangadi, kācchiyo, muslim vorā, thākore, patel* etc. have been transliterated and explained in the glossary. The same is the case with certain

conventional societal addresses specific to rural culture like *bāpā, bāplā, bun, mādi* etc. which are emotionally charged terms conveying sentiments of esteem, dignity, intimacy towards the person addressed. Translating them with 'mother', 'sister', 'brother' and 'father' would have robbed them of their emotional exuberance. Apart from these, traditional kinship terms and conventional stereotypes prove to be untranslatable because of their being extremely culture-specific. In the poem '*Chal*' the *gopi* sings,

> Empty out your pitchers though full of water
> Don't heed *sāsu*'s injunctions

Here the replacement of *sāsu* with 'mother-in-law' would strip the term of the connotation it has in the Bhakti literary tradition of the mother-in-law being a severe taskmaster who, in collusion with her daughter, the *nanand*, the sister-in-law, keeps a strict vigil over the activities of her daughter-in-law, the *gopi*. Thus, *sāsu* and *nanand* represent oppressive stereotypes in the Indian familial system. Allegorically they connote the social norms and constricting dictates of the mundane world, which hamper the spiritual growth of a devotee. In the same way, kinship terms like *bhābhi* 'brother's wife' or 'wife of the husband's elder brother' and *vahu* 'daughter-in-law' are loaded terms. In India, *bhābhi* and *nanand* share a playful, lively and good-humored relationship. Both of them, if approximately of the same age, are not just legally bonded relations but intimate friends so much so that a *nanand* divulges to her *bhābhi* all her secrets and the issues which she hesitates to discuss with her mother. If the age difference between them is great, *bhābhi* becomes a motherly figure to the young *nanand* apart from being a friend. In the story *Kholki*, the father-in-law calls out for his *vahu*, to bring water for guests. Here the word 'daughter-in-law' would have sounded too formal and drab as it fails to convey the feeling of the awe, respect and security on the part of the *vahu* and a distant and yet fatherly attitude on the part of the father-in-law that characterize their relationship. This becomes manifest in the story *Māne Khole*,

where Shabu, the protagonist, pulls a veil over her face out of propriety and decorum in the presence of her father-in-law.

Differences between cultures are not located exclusively at the lexical level, but at the level of culture-specific practices, popular beliefs, myths, omens, superstitions and rituals. In songs elucidating *Premlakshanā* Bhakti, the poet uses the myth of Rādhā or *gopis* and Krishna, which, of course, has no parallel in the English culture. Similarly, in the story '*Min Piyāsi*' the protagonist sings a bhajan, which draws on the myth of the guru Matsyendranāth and his disciple Gorakh. On the metaphysical plane, this myth functions as a backdrop against which the story of the protagonist's life is laid. Much of the charm and force of the story would be lost if the reader fails to relate this myth to the plot of the story. In such situations, the translator has to assimilate them into English by way of a glossary. Omens like 'a cat walking across somebody's path', decorous formalities like 'women pulling a veil over the face in the presence of elders like father-in-law', superstitions like 'pouring a handful of water on the head before entering a holy river' to pay homage to it and 'putting out an oil lamp with the flap of a cloth' (and never with a blow of breath) are extremely culture-specific and the translator has to resort to the paraphrastic approach. However, at times it is quite likely for a non-native reader to get bamboozled at the sight of conventions like 'reserving the lump of cow dung' when the narrative scarcely affords any space for explaining the utilitarian rationale behind the act. In such cases, a translator has to take the help of footnotes and annotations. The same holds true for proverbs and idioms which being repositories of the cumulative inherited wisdom of a speech community carry a freight of historical happenstance and often a plain illogicality which are impossible to map onto another language. In the story, *Evening in Paris* a woman addresses her husband's friend as '*mārā bhāi*', that is, 'my brother'. This would definitely confuse the Western reader who is not aware of the Indian cultural tradition that expects every woman to look

upon every other man except her husband as brother or father. Footnotes are required to resolve such issues. Sometimes translational problems could be resolved by being purely paraphrastic, however, without an elision of the central historical or cultural signifier present in the idiom because it often bears a metaphorical relation to the character's persona or serves as a means to evolve a specific motif in the story. In the story *Kholki*, the protagonist Chandan's pure and unsullied character is emphasized throughout the narrative with the help of a variety of images. The allusion to Ganges in the form of an idiom is a smart way of reiterating the same. The idiom used is *Gher bethān Gangāji āvyān*. It is translated as

> "You are lucky for being able to celebrate remarriage at home only; I had to come as far as here leaving home and parents. In your case the waters of holy Ganges have flowed right up to her devotee's feet."

The foregoing discussion reiterates the axiom that though the quest for exact cultural equivalents is futile, translation remains a feasible activity and can be executed with a lesser or greater amount of accuracy, cultural gaps can be filled and elements of one culture can be integrated into another by relying upon all kinds of innovative devices such as borrowing, substitution, literal translation, neologism, omission, addition and paraphrasing.

The Linguistics and Semantics of Translation

If the problems relating to cultural transference are vexing, the structure of the language poses no less a dilemma to the translator. There is a world of a difference in the syntactical and lexical organization between the Gujarati and English languages. For example, English language has sentences with a rigorous SVO word order, except in the passive voice. But Gujarāti has more inflections by the agency of which the sentence patterns freely vary from SOV

to OSV. Due to this flexibility of the word order and greater possibility for inflections, Gujarāti sentence structures become more assimilative in nature. That is, a single Gujarāti complex sentence can club together more simple sentences than one English complex sentence possibly can. These differences in the syntactic and lexical arrangement between the two languages call for a number of 'adjustments' while reproducing the message in the receptor language. Sundaram, in many of his short stories, habitually gives prolix descriptions running through a single long complex sentence. While attempting to transfer such descriptions into a comparatively rigid syntactical pattern of English, simplistic and even an editing approach has to be adopted in order to accomplish accuracy and integrity in semantic translocation. For example, the following paragraph from the story *Tārini* (The Saviour), broken into two sentences, originally formed one long-winded sentence.

> "From the mystical body of the endless sky stretching several lakhs of miles away, the midday sun, with rapt attention, was concentrating its light and scorching heat pointedly on the earth. Raising her devout self out of unflagging hope and unshakable faith the earth had become a hill - the apex of a mountain - and readily positioned herself right in front of the gaze of the sun as if to receive the gracious prasad of that supreme deity."

Attempts at translating a long-winded Gujarāti description running through a single sentence into an equally long-drawn-out English one prove to be futile. Apart from sounding jarring and stiff, such an attempt causes the problem of determining the noun, which the sub-clause refers to. At the lexical level too the distinction between second person pronouns of address in Gujarāti like honorific '*tamey*' and familiar '*tu*' could not be rendered into English. Again, gender determination of certain nouns like 'moon' becomes problematic. In such cases, the contextual, figurative and metaphorical significance of the noun was taken into account. For

example, in the story '*Ambā Bhavāni*', the moon is shown to be viewing the mesmerizing beauty of Ambā and her lovemaking with Amro from above. Moon, which has feminine gender in English, is masculine gender in Gujarati. But this act of secret viewing alludes to the same act performed by Lord Krishna in Vrindāvana. It may also refer to the mythical tale of Indra being bewitched by the ravishing beauty of Ahalyā who lived on earth. In the light of these mythical significations, the noun was inflected with the suffix -god and 'moon-god' was given a masculine gender.

Furthermore, in Gujarāti a verb is inflected according to the gender of the subject especially in the past tense, even when the subject is as genderless as the first person. But English verbs are gender-neutral in nature and so when it came to translating the bhakti song '*Mere Piyā*' the English verb failed to convey the fact that a woman or a *gopi* is addressing the song to her lover or Krishna. Thus, while the original reads

Mai to chup chup chah rahi

the translation reads

Covertly have I kept on doting

English is not as strong in forming compound words as Gujarati, a faculty that every other Indian language has in abundance. Sanskrit grammar has these *tatpurusha* compounds. Braj B. Kachru the linguist has rightly remarked that Indian English hybrids are formed on the same principle in order to fulfill a perceived need among Indians for such words (welcome address, England-returned), but are unintelligible to native speakers (Braj Kachru1983:23).

Furthermore, most Indian languages, including Gujarati, use double adjectives, adverbs, and even verbs either to intensify their meaning or to indicate the boringly or annoyingly repetitive aspect

of the action. This comes out very lamely in English. For example in the song, '*Mere Piyā*', *chup chup* had to be rendered as just 'silently' or 'covertly'. Again, typical Gujarati expressions like *dhime dhime, unchā unchā, marak marak, dur dur* and many others could not be conveyed with an equal amount of stress and intensity. The same problems occur with transferring the degree of frequency or amount conveyed by Gujarati and English qualifiers and quantifiers. The expressions *kai ketloy samay* and *kai ketlāye varsho* could have been rendered to a nicety with literal parallels like 'how very much time' and 'how great many years', but on account of their unfamiliarity and oddness they are simply translated as 'how much time' and 'how many years'.

Gujarati is a language that depends on sound to make meaning. Many of its descriptive words are highly onomatopoetic and thus almost impossible to render in English. For example, the phrase for how a small stream (*zarnun*) flows is *zar zar zare*. In Sundaram's poem '*Tran Padoshi*'(A Song of Three Neighbours) the sound of the hand-mill (*ghanti*) *ghar ghar* is rendered with words like 'roaring' and 'rumbling' but with a loss of much of the poetic aural effect.

Care has to be taken not to fall prey to using the 'Babu' English with its stilted, archaic and bombastic idiom, in any form in translations. A translator is invariably faced with the generic problem while translating from a regional language into English. Translating into English is all very well, but whose English? International or Indian? This question once again brings her/him onto the brink of another question. Translating for whom? The Indian reader or the English reader? It is all the time the readership of the target language, which affects the choice of idiom and the structure of the language. Such questions are answered by the translator. However so far as translations from regional language literature into English are concerned, all efforts should be focused

upon evolving an idiom which would be a culmination of one which Raja Rao advocated in the preface to his novel 'Kanthapura'. Almost six decades after independence a translator should daringly decolonize her/his pen from the exotic and even indigenous frowns over the use of footnotes and glossary. Sundaram's works were translated for both kinds of readers, nonindian and nongujarati Indian, though primarily for non-Gujarati Indian readers who are in a dire need to familiarize themselves with it. A penetratingly discerning and perceptive non-Indian reader will not have the slightest problem in coming to terms with the idiom. When called upon to render the saucy impertinence, the salty tang of a highly localized language, manipulated especially in dialogues, the translator can take liberties with the syntax of the English language. The following example, from '*Mājā Velā nun Mrutyun*' illustrates the point.

> "Mājā Velo burst into laughter. '*Sutarfeni*! You better give up your desire to have it. Even its name you can't pronounce properly."

It is heartening to note that now the interest of Indian translators is to explore the ways in which the English language can be stretched to contain 'authentic Indian expressions' and thus to evolve an idiom which would be exclusively Indian, capable of fulfilling the needs of the native languages and which at the same time would assert the Indian lingual and cultural diversity on an international scale.

Great authors use the imperfections and quirks of language to produce certain startling effects - a macabre pun, a clever witticism, an indigenous half-truth. In the story, '*Māne Khole*', the heroine has a sly dig at her cowardly husband by frequently addressing him as *bhiyā*, a local variety of '*bhaisaheb*' which bears a close resemblance to the English 'sir'. It is attached to a person in authority exercising power over others. But in the story, Shabu's

husband is a typical lame father-seeker unable to decide anything on his own. To achieve this satiric overtone in the address I have explained the satire where the term first appears in the narrative and for the rest of its reappearances I have used 'sir'. Thus, I have tried to render the satire, which an equivalent like 'my man' or 'my husband' would have failed to do.

Problems in translation arise when a signifier has more than one unequivocal signified. That is, ambiguity in the meaning of a word or a phrase makes it difficult for the translator to reproduce all the semantic possibilities in the translation. Sundaram's poem '*Mere Piyā*' (O My Love) is an interesting example of ambiguity. In this love-poem, the beloved is singing the glory and supernal exhilaration bestowed upon her by her loving husband. The poem can also be read as a song by *gopi* addressed to her divine lover, Lord Krishna. In the poem, the interesting play on the words *chup chup* produces more than one meaning. The first stanza is,

> "O my love I don't know anything
> Covertly have I kept on doting."

Here *chup chup*, in its most immediate sense, means 'silently', 'quietly' or 'without a word'. Not to talk of demands and complaints, the stanza seems to mean that in love even vocalization of one's feelings has no place. Love is an ineffable and inexpressible emotion, which is conveyed without the aid of words. This interpretation gains force and authenticity in the second stanza where the poet affirms that in love one remains happily content with whatever one receives from one's lover.

> "O my love how disarming you are
> Gratifying is your love's shower profuse as the rains are
> Quietly have I enjoyed bathing."

But as the poem is written in the Gujarati transliteration of Vraj, a dialect of Hindi, one cannot take the possible interpretation of *chup chup* as '*chupke chupke'* which means 'secretly', 'covertly' etc. when it suits the semantic context so perfectly. The poet says that in love one has to save oneself from the vigilant and censuring eyes of the world, as the world is always intent upon snapping the bond of love and intimacy between lovers. Worldly-wise people can indulge in foul play or chicanery, which, in turn, can assume lethal proportions for lovers. On a figurative level, this interpretation can be imputed to a devotee*gopi* who wishes to be one with Lord Krishna in spite of being married. Such a *gopi* also needs to keep everything about her love affair hushed-up because if the *sāsu* or *nanand*, that are a variety of societal codes in the case of a devotee, comes to know about the said contravention, moral and ethical, she will put a stringent check on all the activities of the *gopi*\\devotee. To retain both these opposite nuances I have translated *chup chup* as 'covertly' and 'quietly' respectively in the first two stanzas. To put it in a nutshell, the fluctuating relationship between the signifier and the signified poses problems for the translator.

Some of the hardest riddles in translating a text from an Indian language into English are the literary tense and the authorial voice. In English the simple past tense is the narrative tense. The story, which is believed to have already happened, is recounted by an authorial voice, which either is a character in the story or an omniscient and omnipresent force. Though in Gujarati the narrative tense is unequivocally simple past, sometimes authors out of their zeal to make the narration sound lively and dramatic purposely switch over to simple present tense. However, a story, which vacillates between present and past tenses in the course of the narrative, is likely to fuddle a reader who is not accustomed to such time fluctuations. Tense causes problems when one attempts to map Gujarati tenses onto English ones because the time reference conveyed by them is different. That is why most Indian speakers of English use tenses wrongly, the common errors being using past

perfect for simple past and present continuous for simple present. Such errors are passable or sometimes inevitable from a stylistic point of view, but they definitely impair the message. The problem is that a translator rendering a text in the present tense from Gujarati into its English counterpart is technically correct but her/his wayward handling of tense may rob the target text of its validity as a discrete work of art. Moreover, in Gujarati the authorial voice maintains much less distance from the voices of the characters. In ‘*Māne Khole*’, the omnipresent authorial voice is often intercepted by the thoughts of the character that are meant to be overheard. Such a muddle of intertwining voices is likely to be intelligible to the native Gujarati reader but to a non-native reader it would be bewildering. The following passage exemplifies this:

> “Tears welled up in her eyes. Damn it, why do I remember all these today? She became uneasy. You don’t like going to the in-laws’ house, is that why? After how many years, you are going to the in-laws!”

Translating Poetry

The biggest challenge a translator faces while rendering a poem into English is the challenge of translating a song meant to be sung in a specific religious, conventional and literary context. Some of Sundaram’s poems have a typical Wordsworthian flavor and the rest verbalize the exuberance of the feelings of a devotee*gopi* for Krishna, the divine lover. Even his narrative poems like ‘*Bhangadi*, and ‘*Tran Pādoshi*’ throbbing with a vibrant activist and reformist agenda are no less rich in aural properties. The major predicament, in addition to the one pertaining to the cultural embeddedness of the songs, is the abundance of features, which characterize them as oral performative texts; features like consonance, internal and end rhymes, refrains, repetitions and so on. The beauty of his compositions lies in the meticulous word music elicited by means of

assonance, alliteration, consonance, internal and end rhymes, repetition, parallelism and refrains. The poet makes a prolific use of what is called *sabdālamkār*, the ornaments of sound, in Indian aesthetics. They are characteristic of medieval Indian poetry. While handling such poetry, so enchantingly rich in aural properties, if the translator goes impulsively on to follow the advice of Riffaterre, which is, to substitute all 'literariness-inducing' devices in the source text with the parallel devices in the target text, he would end up crippling the semantic content of the original to a disastrous extent (1992:204-207). In such a case, Aurobindo's advice comes to the translator's rescue. Aurobindo talks of two ways of translating poetry, "One is to keep it simply to the manner and the turn of the original [and] the other is to take its spirit, sense and imagery and produce them freely so as to suit the new language" (Aurobindo 1953:43). He favours the latter. W. H. Auden rightly points out that the sound of words, their rhythmical relations and all meanings and associations of meanings, which depend upon sound, such as rhymes and puns, are untranslatable. He further adds, "Poetry is not, like music, pure sound. Any elements in a poem which are not based on verbal experience are to some degree, translatable into another tongue, for example, images, similes and metaphors which are drawn from sensory experience" (Auden 1964:34). In translating Sundaram's poetry, the phonetic texture and superb word-music had to be forfeited in order to conserve the semantic import, which figures topmost on the list of a translator's priorities. However, wherever possible, an attempt has been made to supplant the sound effect of the source language with that of the target language, though without much success. In addition to these there are problems of meter. Indian languages, in contrast to the accentual English language, are quantitative, that is, it is the length of the syllable rather than the stress that gives them their distinctive character. Therefore, Sundaram's songs are translated into free verse in order to do better justice to the semantic subtlety as well as to retain the poetic quality. An attempt has been made to reproduce the lyrical quality of the compositions by reproducing approximately some

refrains, repetitions, and some consonances wherever it is possible. Some instances are quoted below:

> O in the village of Brahmins, there lived a *bhangadi*
> Truly, she was a *bhangadi*, with eyes shaded with collyrium,
> Wearing green glass-bangles,
> O four bangles and a colourful *chundadi* as her costume.
>
> She wore a large, closely pleated *ghāghro*
> O such a *ghāghro,* and silver anklets on staggering legs,
> Round her neck a silver ring,
> O she wore a ring and tightly braided were her tresses.
> ("Bhangadi",*Kavyamangala, p.10*)

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> O my love I don't know anything
> Covertly have I kept on doting
>
> O my love how disarming you are
> Gratifying is your love's shower profuse as the rains are
> Quietly have I enjoyed bathing
>
> O my love you are my eternal hubby
> Blessed with you I am greatly lucky
> Every moment of my life is a ceremony of wedding.
> ("Mere Piya*", Yatra, p. 199*)

Besides, certain expressions typical to Gujarati songs like *re* coming at the end of a musical phrase and which are vocal gestures of endearment, had to be dropped as their expressive power could not be reproduced in English. In certain places, expression *O* is used.

Thus in the final analysis a translator of poetry has to come to terms with the annoying fact that total fidelity to the original text

is will-o-the-wispish and the translation of poetry can at best try to attain approximation. Krushna Srinivasa speaks on the same lines when she remarks, “In ultimate sense (sic) poetry cannot be translated but its magical web of meanings and imagery can be brought out in the translated version…Translation need not be just a mere translation; it can also be a transcreation” (cited in Pathak 1996:27). Thus it is very difficult to render the richly suggestive plurivalency of signifiers in another language and that the formal properties of language and culture are usually `lost' in translation. However, translation is possible and even indispensable in a country like India. One completely agrees with A.K. Ramanujan when he comments, “One can often convey a sense of the original rhythm but not the language-bound meter; one can mimic levels of diction, even the word play, but not the actual sound of the words. Items are more difficult to translate than relations, textures more difficult than structure, words more difficult than phrasing, linear order more difficult than syntax, lines more difficult than pattern. Yet poetry is made at all those levels - and so is translation” (Ramanujan 1993:xvi). No doubt, there is no single formula or a general catalogue for translating various texts from various languages, registers, idiolects, cultures and historical periods. However, a set of practical guidelines and systematized standards for the ongoing practice of translation in the Indian subcontinent is urgently required. The happy marriage of theory and practice is essential in order to reap a crop of good, usable and honest translation of Indian literature into English.

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Translation of Bhakti Poetry into English: A Case Study of Narsinh Mehta

Sachin Ketkar

Abstract

Since the colonial times, translation into English by bilingual poet-translators is a strategy to decolonize one's soul. The translators always wanted to locate themselves in the 'true Indian society' by translating what they conceive of as 'truly Indian'. However, the notion of 'true Indian' has changed over the period of time. In case of translators of Indian literature into English like Sri Aurobindo, Indianness meant pan-Indian Sanskritic heritage while in the case of modernists like A.K. Ramanujan, Indianness means pre-colonial heritage in the modern Indian languages-the bhashas. As the poetics of Bhakti is largely indigenous, mass based, oral and performative, its translation into English whose poetics is predominantly elite, written and Westernized, involves intensely creative interaction between two widely disparate cultural domains. This interaction helps the translator overcome his own feeling of being cut off from his own cultural and social milieu and helps to rehabilitate and relocate his sensibility in the Indian context. This paper is a detailed discussion of my spiritually moving encounter of translating Narsinh Mehta, the renowned fifteenth century Gujarati poet into English. There is a discussion on the challenges arising out of the great divergence between two languages, cultures, poetics and traditions and the strategies I have used as a translator.

Since colonial times, one of the predominant themes in Indian intellectual discourses is the quest for 'true' and 'authentic'

national identity. Largely influenced by the Orientalist writings, the Indian intellectuals of the colonial period believed that the pan-Indian Sanskritic literature, often termed as '*margiya'* tradition, embodied the 'true essential Indianness'. However, after Independence, the Indian intellectuals with modernist leanings found this notion of India discriminatory, brahminical and hence very constricting. They disapproved of the whole elitist project of colonial modernity with its emphasis on the western education, literacy, and the westernized-brahminical notion of nationhood. Accentuating the import of more `local' and `demotic' oral traditions, they found an alternative to this elitist colonial modernity in the Bhakti literature. Apart from the fact that Bhakti poetry belongs to the pre-colonial, oral and folk cultural traditions of our society, it also embodies a far more radical and democratic vision in contrast to the Sanskritic-Brahminical literature. In the words of Aijaz Ahmed, 'Bhakti had been associated, on the whole, with an enormous democratization of literary language; had pressed the cultural forms of caste hegemony in favour of the artisanate and peasants ...was ideologically anti- brahminical; had deeply problematised the gender construction of all dialogic relations.' (1992:273). The Bhakti literature also provided an indigenous model of modernity for many modernist and postcolonial intellectuals. Due to this modernist revisionary reading of the Indian literary history and tradition, today the Bhakti poetry has come to mean something unambiguously native and Indian and hence extremely crucial to our identity.

Historically, the shift from the hegemonic Sanskrit literature to Bhakti is believed to have occurred somewhere towards the end of the first millennium. A.K. Ramanujan (1993:103) observes, 'A great many-sided shift occurred in the Hindu culture and sensibility between the sixth and ninth century ... *Bhakti* is one name for that shift...' He has made an interesting use of the word 'shift' as he says to suggest a linguistic analogy, for example, 'the great consonantal

shift' precisely described in Indo-European linguistics. The characteristic feature of this literature is that it is devotional and religious in nature. The abundant devotional literature in the modern Indian languages is often termed as Bhakti literature. Though it is religious in outlook, it is far more complex and many faceted. It is very different from earlier Sanskritic literature which is elite, brahminical and conventional.

Its poetics too, differed radically from Sanskritic poetics. The poetics of the Bhakti literature, unlike the classical Sanskrit literature, presupposed the oral performance of the composition. The performers and their audience were face to face. Most of the types of compositions like *'bhajans', 'kirtana', 'abhangas',* and *'padas'* were meant to be performed aloud. Music, recital, incantations were indispensable aspects of these compositions. Both the production and the reception of this discourse differed greatly from the modern written discourse. The aesthetics of the Bhakti was very much specific to the performance; therefore, most of the tools of present academic literary criticism are of little use as they largely presuppose a printed text (Ahmed 1992:253). The aesthetics of this kind of poetry involve the aesthetics of personal involvement unlike, as Ramanujan (1993:161-162) comments, the classical *rasa* aesthetics where the aesthetic experience is generalized, distanced and depersonalized by the means of poesis, the *Bhakti* poetry prizes *bhava*, *anubhava*, the personal feeling, an intense involvement and intense identification.

The translation of Indian literature into English is a widespread activity among the English educated elite since the colonial times. They strive to overcome the sense of alienation by translating literature from the Indian languages into English. Translation becomes one of the inevitable and creative contrivances of giving oneself a sense of belonging, a nationality and of locating oneself in the present historical and cultural context. Translation into English by bilingual poet-translators is a strategy to decolonize one's

soul or to bring about something of positive convergence of the two cultures and civilizations. The translators have sought to locate themselves in the 'true Indian society' by translating what they conceive of as 'truly Indian'. However, the notion of 'truly Indian' has changed over the period of time. In case of translators of Indian literature into English like Sri Aurobindo or R.C. Dutt, Indianness meant pan-Indian Sanskritic heritage, whereas in the case of modernists like Dilip Chitre or A.K. Ramanujan, Indianness means pre-colonial heritage in the modern Indian languages-the *bhashas* (Ketkar: 2003,2004). However, translation of what is primarily oral, performative, pre-colonial and demotic cultural traditions into a culture, which is primarily written, elitist, and post-colonial raises a host of complicated questions. In this context, I wish to discuss the challenges and strategies of translating Bhakti literature into English and for this, I will use my own experiences as a translator of Narsinh Mehta, the great fifteenth century Gujarati saint poet.

As a bilingual writer writing in Marathi and English, and as Maharashtrian born and brought up in Gujarat, translation is a creative, existential and ethical act of relating concretely to the other, a sort of chicken soup for an alienated and fragmented soul. Translation becomes a rhizome like activity of connecting horizontally without creating hierarchies across the multilingual and multicultural topography I inhabit. Translation also helped me to overcome the politics of `either/or' binary logic of identity, which forces you to accept a single identity: you are a Maharashtrian or you are a Gujarati, either you are a true native or you are westernized elite and so on.

As the poetics and practice of Bhakti poetry is largely indigenous, mass based, oral and performative, its translation into English whose poetics is predominantly elite, written and westernized involves intensely creative interaction between two widely disparate cultural domains. This interaction helps the

translator to overcome his own feeling of being cut off from his own cultural and social environment and helps to rehabilitate and relocate his sensibility in the Indian context. The detailed account of this spiritually moving personal encounter which follows is by no means a normative statement. I hope that the deliberations over these issues and questions like culture, literariness, oral traditions and so on, will have a wider relevance and will be of some use to other translators.

Interestingly, most of Narsinh Mehta's work is preserved orally and the authorship of many of the composition is disputable. The sole way of signing the orally performed text in the medieval Bhakti tradition was by the use of `*bhanita'* or the signature line such as `Narsaiyyachya swami' or `Bhale maliya Narsaiyyachya Swami' in the compositions of Narsinh Mehta or `Kahat Kabir Suno Bhai Saadho' in the case of Kabir. One recalls Foucault's incisive scrutiny of the shifting and problematic nature of `author function' in the Western culture (1988:197-210). The relationship between the text and its author has never been universal and constant across cultures, historical periods and the domains of discourse. The medieval Indian audience perceived the relation between the orally performed text and the author in a different way from today's audience and therefore translation of this relationship into contemporary terms is not possible.

However, the biggest challenge I had to face as a translator was that that Narsinh's poems are actually *songs*, and they are meant to be performed live before the audience, which even includes the God, and in a certain religious conventional context. For instance, his famous matutinals, or `*prabhatiyas'* as they are called, are conventionally sung in the morning. Some of his songs are usually sung in a religious gathering in a temple or at home. William Radice (1995:28), in his introduction to the translation of Rabindranath Tagore's poems, calls attention to the fact that the songs being very culture specific are impossible to translate. The emotive associations of Narsinh's word music have no equivalents in English. The

compositions are full of features that mark them as oral performative texts, for example, features like consonance, internal and end rhymes, refrains, repetitions, parallelisms, meters used for the songs, the specification for a particular *raga* and so on. In short, the extensive use of what Indian aestheticians call *sabdalamkar* or the `ornaments of sound' is a characteristic feature of Narsinh's poetry as well as most of the medieval Indian poetry. In Indian aesthetics, *sabdalamkar*as form a contrast to the *arathalamkars* or the `ornaments of sense'. The *arthalamkaras* include figures of speech like hyperbole, irony as well as simile, metaphor and the like.

As great amount of the Bhakti poetry consists of songs meant to be sung live before an audience, the very conception of literature as something printed has to be set aside. Walter.J. Ong's main argument in the essay `A Dialectic of Aural and Objective Correlatives' (1972:499) is that while considering a poem as some sort of object or a thing, one overlooks the fact that it is also sound. The `tactile and visualist bias' is very old and pervasive especially when we consider the work of literature in terms of objects, structures, skeletons and other spatial analogies. Nevertheless, when we consider literature in terms of sound, oral and aural existence, we enter more profoundly into this world of sound as such, `the I-thou world', where, through the mysterious interior resonance persons commune with persons, reaching one another's interiors in a way in which one can never reach the interior of an object. The reduction of sound to spatial analogies is much too facile. `In its ineluctable interiority,' writes Ong, ` related to this irreducible and elusive and interior economy of the sound world, all verbal expression, and in particular all true literature, remains forever something mysterious.' This means that a written text is already a loss of this mysterious element, and it is already a translation of words as sounds. Narsinh Mehta's songs already lose this mysterious quality once they are presented in print but come back to life mysteriously when retranslated into oral performance. This is a rather painful realization

for a contemporary translator as songs are inseparable from the cultural environment and language.

If one considers the suggestion put forward by Riffaterre (1992:204-217), to substitute all `literariness-inducing' devices in the source text with literally parallel devices in the target text and translate songs into songs, rhymes into rhymes, consonance into consonance, meter into meter, then great liberties will have to be taken with the semantic content of the original. One would rather agree with W.H. Auden's observation (1962:34) that the sound of words, their rhythmical relations and all meanings and associations of meanings, which depend upon sound, like rhymes and puns, are untranslatable. He points out, `poetry is not, like music, pure sound. Any elements in a poem which are not based on verbal experience are to some degree, translatable into another tongue, for example, images, similes and metaphors which are drawn from sensory experience'.

In the case of Narsinh's poetry, many elements like meter, word music, consonance, and rhymes had to be done away with in order to stay close to the semantic content. Gujarati meter of course, cannot have an equivalent in English because the Indian languages, in contrast to the accentual English language are quantitative; that is, it is the length of the syllable rather than the stress that gives them their distinctive character. Besides, as Lefevere (cited by Susan Bassnett, 1980:81-82) has opined that imitating meter, rhyme, and alliteration usually distorts the poem altogether. I have translated Narsinh's songs into nonmetrical verse in order to do better justice to the semantic element. I have as well tried to retain the poetic quality as much as possible. I have attempted to reproduce the lyrical quality of the compositions by reproducing approximately some refrains, repetitions, and some consonance wherever possible. However, I have tried to replicate this quality mainly by imitating the lyrical tone and the lyrical outlook of the compositions.

Light, Light brilliant lamps!
Draw rangoli with exquisite pearls!
Sing; sing the auspicious hymns, sweet proud girls,
And beat, beat the festive drums,
For today is Diwali! It's Festival of Lights for me!
For the Lord with garland of wild flowers, at last, has come to me!

Or

Tell me truly, my dark beloved,
To which lovely girl were you making love?

However, this lyrical quality was difficult to copy in the case of Narsinh's devotional, didactic and philosophical verse. The fact that word music imparts a great deal of beauty to Narsinh's poetry makes it difficult to translate this type of poetry into English, as its propositional content is not lyrical in the conventional sense of the word. The success of these poems is largely due to the happy marriage of the word music with the sentimental moralistic and philosophical content. The epigrammatic and compact expressions inevitably had to be recomposed into rather loose syntactical patterns of English. In this type of poetry, as most of the word music and sentimental verbal associations could not be recomposed into the language as different as English, the translations appear dull, prosaic and without the impact which the source texts have in Gujarati. For instance, the famous *Vaishnava Jana to* ...was rendered in following way:

He who feels others grief as his own,
He who obliges others in distress
Without being swollen with pride,
He alone can be called a Vaishnava!

Humbly he bows before everyone in the world
And he disparages none.

He is resolute in his words,
Deeds and mind - Glory be to his mother!
For he alone is a true Vaishnava!

He views everyone with equal eyes;
He has relinquished the tormenting thirst
And looks upon another's woman
As his own mother!
He alone can be called a Vaishnava!

In some *padas,* the content is technical and occult rather than conventionally lyrical. Therefore, the translation is in danger of being awkward and stiff, for instance in a composition like this

Meditate, meditate, the lord is in your eye, as a divine ecstasy in your inner forehead.
In person, he will touch you with love, his wonderful face with incomparable eyes!

The inner forehead referred here is the occult `third eye' or the *aajnya chakra* in certain esoteric *tantrik* practices of *kundalini* energy.

Besides, I could not reproduce certain expressions typical to Gujarati songs like *re* and *lol* coming at the end of a musical phrase and which are vocal gestures of endearment, and in English. In certain places, expression *O* is used. However, the excessive use of *O* in English translation would sound old-fashioned or even more terrible-it would sound Victorian.

I took particular care not to translate songs into the `modernist' free verse, which relies on devices like dislocation of syntax and use of minimalist-imagists conventions. In translating a text from different poetics, equivalent, I believe should be sought at the level of aesthetics that affect the text. The attempts to adapt a

text belonging to radically different poetics, to contemporary modernist poetics do not do full justice to the source language text. As translation is reading, a modernist reading of the Bhakti literature creates an illusion that the Bhakti literature was modernist. As a result, though we are blinded by the brilliance of A.K. Ramanujan's extraordinary readings/translations of the Bhakti poetry, the realization that the Bhakti literature was *never* modernist in the Continental and American sense of the term makes us uneasy.

Translating a discourse whose medium is oral word and whose performer-audience relationship is largely face-to-face, into a discourse, whose medium is written word and the relationship between the performer and the audience is not face-to-face, raises some complex questions. What one does here is not merely reproducing sense and style of the source language text but also *shifting* one type of *discourse* into another type. This type of discourse shift is involved in the translation of most of the medieval Indian poetry into English. Most accusations and laments for loss of `flavour' and `charm' from people against the translation of Bhakti poetry are actually laments for loss of `ear experience' of the word music and emotive associations linked to the source language text. This results not only from difference between two acoustic personalities of the languages but also from the difference between two types of discourses. This does not, of course, mean that I consider translation as mourning over the loss of the `original'. Translation is always a gain and profit. It produces a new text in another language and opens one more window on the other language and culture. The sooner we come out of the rhetoric of loss in discussing translation the better. However, what I am doing here is highlighting the structure of difference one encounters in the practice of translation. It is because I am writing as a translator that certain vocabulary of loss may creep into my article here. However, translation studies have come out of `practice-oriented' perspective of translation, and I have no quarrel with it as it has opened up the

field in an unprecedented way. At the same time, it is always extremely interesting and enlightening to know what is left out while translating, because it educates us about a different culture and different ways of looking at the world.

The difference between cultures is another obvious and major challenge one faces while translating poets like Narsinh into English. In fact, language and culture cannot be separated and both are inextricably interwoven with each other. Julia Kristeva's thesis (1988:59-60) that one signifying cultural practice is interwoven with the elements from other signifying cultural practices.That is, the notion of intertextuality is particularly important here. A verbal text as a signifying practice already contains elements from other signifying systems like mythology, systems of food and fashion, indigenous medicinal system, metaphysics, literary conventions and genres, musical system, festivals, religious-ritualistic beliefs and even superstitions. No text can be an island or can remain isolated in a network of signifying structures called culture. Hence, one does not translate a piece of text, though it may seem isolated, but tries to find equivalents for the entire network involved in the construction of the text. All this becomes very apparent when one attempts to translate Narsinh.

Genres hardly have equivalents in a different literary tradition, as they are conventions of a particular literary tradition. They may travel to another tradition but they are no longer the same. The flexible and lyrical form of *Pada*, which has been discussed in the chapter three, has no equivalent in English. Hence, the free verse renderings of Narsinh's poems have no fixed form in English.

Of course, the mythology of Krishna and Radha has no equivalent in English culture, nor do the allusions and references to *Puranic* characters and events have parallel in the target language culture. They are untranslatable and therefore I have only transliterated them. I also provided a glossary of culture-specific

Indian terms as appendix. Narsinh often refers to *Puranic* characters like Pralhad, Harishchandra, Shukadevaji, and Narada to give an illustration of true devotees and the miracles they can bring about. A glossary seems to be the only way out.

Certain items referring to codes of dress and food too do not have equivalents in English or even if it has a rough and approximate equivalent, the connotations and details are very different. For instance, `*choli'* which occurs often is a sort of bodice, but the whole lot of conventional erotic associations and connotations are lost and certain type of triviality sets in. It may also be because the whole way of looking at sex and the erotic is greatly different in the Indian and the Western culture. It can be said about `*jhanjhar'* and `*payal'* which means anklets but in Gujarati, it carries a distinct charge of erotic associations. In such cases, in some places I have only borrowed the lexical items in English or replaced equivalents in English. I have mainly borrowed `*choli'* within italics and used anklets for `*jhanjhar'*. The same can be applied to Gujarati food items, for instance certain Gujarati delicacies like `*rabdi'* a kind of sweetmeat have been only transliterated. The terms are explained in the glossary. Items belonging to the indigenous medicinal system, `*ayurveda'* are also to be found in the compositions. In an interesting `*pada',* Narsinh compares his beloved Lord with various types of ayurvedic medicines like dried ginger or `*ajmain'*. In most of the places, I have borrowed the item in English or replaced it by approximate equivalents. Certain omens like `fluttering of left eye' and `auspicious moment' or `*muhurat'* are culture specific and are untranslatable.

So are traditional kinship terms and the conventional stereotypes that are so peculiar to the Indian culture. For instance, *saasu* or the mother-in-law is a stereotypical oppressor of her daughter-in-law along with *nanand* or the sister-in-law as her accomplice. Hence, in many *padas* of Narsinh, when Radha, a

married girl in love with Krishna, refers to her in-laws she is evoking a typical or rather stereotyped situation where the in-laws are keeping an eye on their daughter-in-law's activities. Allegorically they connote the norms and the dictates of the mundane world, which interfere with devotional activities and thus are detrimental in *Bhakti*.

Similarly, *gopi* or Radha addresses her female companion as *sakhi*, which literally means female friend. However, the use of words like female friend or girl friend would not be appropriate in English. Hence, the word friend had to be used. Yet, the word *sakhi* has special connotation in certain Vaishnava sects. The ideal devotee would be like *sakhi* to the Lord, His girl friend. This signification cannot be rendered into English.

Certain references to the Indian eroticism, especially the reference to *Kamashastra* or the lore of eroticism, appear awkward in translation. For instance, there is a reference to woman-on-man coital position called *vipreeta rati* or literally `intercourse in contrary way' that is, woman on the top position, in one of Narsinh's poems. As using the phrase like `the contrary way' would appear awkward and even incomprehensible, I have used, ` I rolled over him in our love play' in order to suggest the playful element in the whole business.

> This is how I bewitched him, friend,
> I rolled over him in our love play!
> `No, no!' cried he as he tried to flee,
> And he cried out for his mother!

Associated with eroticism is the conventional notion of what constitutes a woman's beauty in the Indian tradition. For instance, in the following poem:

Wear these ornaments and necklaces, elephant-gaited one!
How many times to tell you to get started!
We'll kiss the nectarous mouth of our admirer, embrace him, and gambol
Casting aside all our coyness and shame!
Let's go and play dear friend! Leave aside the churning of curds

The reference to the girl as `elephant gaited one' would raise brows or sniggers in West. *Gajagamini* or the woman whose gait is like that of an elephant is considered beautiful in the Indian tradition. A plump woman with narrow waist but `droops slightly from the weight of breasts' is sexually attractive in Indian erotic traditions. This notion of woman's attractiveness is quite different from the Western notion of woman's beauty. Therefore, it becomes difficult to convey such a notion in English translation.

The words like *ras*, which literally means `flavour', `sap', `essence', and `nectar' is used in many ways in Indian tradition. It is used in Indian aesthetics to denote an aesthetic mood that is based on *bhava* or the essence of aesthetic experience and *rasika* is the person who wants to enjoy the *rasa.* I have translated *rasika* for Krishna, when he is erotically aroused, as connoisseur. However, the word connoisseur hardly communicates this sense.

Terms belonging to Indian metaphysical and philosophical systems also do not have accurate equivalents in English. I have at times rendered concepts like *maya* or the *Brahman* as `illusion' or `the absolute' only to avoid monotony, though they are not quite the same. In most places, they have been borrowed in English. The words that describe the *brahman* like the *satchitananda* literally meaning that which has the qualities of the Truth, the Consciousness, and the ultimate Bliss have been borrowed without translating. In fact, the whole way of looking at things differs in the

two cultures especially the way of looking at sexuality, religion, sentimentality, and even the moral issues. These of course cannot be translated.

Culture and language are not mutually exclusive domains of human signification. There is a great difference in the syntactical and lexical organization between Gujarati and English language. For instance, while the verb usually occurs at the end of clause in Gujarati, it occurs between the subject and the remaining part of the predicate in English. Gujarati has more inflexions and hence greater flexibility in word order compared to the more or less rigid order of English. As a result whereas an inversion would not appear as a jarring deviation in Gujarati, it would certainly appear so in English. Unlike the prepositions in English, Gujarati has post-positions. These differences in the syntactic and lexical organization between the two languages call for a number of `adjustments' while reproducing the message in the receptor language. For instance, the famous composition *bhootal Bhakti padarath motu...* had to be rendered as:

> Great is the wealth of Bhakti found only on the earth,
> Not found even in the realms of Brahma!

However literally it would be something like:

> (Earth-on) (Bhakti) (Wealth) (Great) (Brahma's realm-in)(Not)

At the lexical level, too the distinction between pronouns of address in Gujarati like honorific '*tamey*' and familiar '*tu*' cannot be rendered into English. Some lexical peculiarities of Narsinh's poetry could not be reproduced in English. For example, Narsinh's fondness for using '*di*' suffix to nouns like '*gori*' (fair one) or '*deha*' (body) turning them into '*gordi*' (dear cute fair one) or '*dehadi*' (cute little body). This suffix turns the nouns into their diminutive forms and at the same time, it signifies excessive fondness for the thing.

Translating idioms word by word is almost impossible for an idiom, by definition means a group of words whose meaning considered as a unit, is different from the meaning of each word considered separately. Certain idioms in Narsinh Mehta's poems have a function which is not merely semantic, that is, the images signified by the idiom are very poetic and hence add to the overall experience of the poem. For instance, in a poem *`doodhe voothya meh, sakarna dhim jaamya re',* the refrain is an idiomatic expression which literally means `it was raining milk and sugar was being heaped' and connotes a feeling of extreme bliss or ecstasy. Nevertheless, the image of sugar and raining milk is important in the poem, as the experience of Krishna is not just of extreme ecstasy but of extreme sweetness. Krishna is associated with sweetness, he is known as *`madhuradhipati'* - the killer of a demon named Madhu and also the lord of sweetness whose everything is sweet. Hence, the image suggested by the idiom is retained in the translation.

> `As if it was rapture of rains of milk
> And all the sweetness of sugar was being hoarded in heaps!'

Ambiguity arises when there is more than one clear interpretation. A signifier does not have a single unequivocal signified in such cases. Ambiguity is not considered as a flaw in a literary text but is seen as one of the properties that enhance aesthetic quality of the text.

Narsinh's very famous composition, *`prem ras paa ne*....'contains an interesting example of ambiguity. In the composition, Narsinh says, *`tatva nu tupanu tuchh a laage*..' in which the word *`tupanu'* is interpreted by the critics in two ways: i) as *`tu -panu'* as `you-ness' to signify the otherness or separateness of the Lord as a lover and as an entity and ii) as the noted critic Anantrai Rawal (1994:96) has observed it indicates the chaffing or

producing useless husk which metaphorically denotes arid and futile philosophical debates disliked by Narsinh who lays great stress on affective rather than rational relationship with the divine. These interpretations are not mutually contradictory as both denote the things Narsinh disliked and hence have negative associations, but while the first one is distinctly Vedantic as well as erotic, the other interpretation is more appropriate in the context as the next line uses the metaphor of husk and grain, and had to be retained. The translation offered is as follows:

> Serve me the draught of love's ambrosia
> One bedecked with peacock feathers!
> This futile threshing of arid philosophies tastes so insipid!
> These emaciated cattle crave merely the dry husk,
> They pine not for the ultimate release!
> Serve me the draught of love's ambrosia
> One bedecked with peacock feathers!

Another interesting example of ambiguity arises from the clever use of the word *bhog* which can mean not just enjoyment but also suffering in the well known philosophical poem *Jaagi ne jou to jagat dise nahi*, *oongh ma atpata bhog bhaase*. It means that when I am awake spiritually I cannot see the phenomenal world, but only in sleep do I perceive the bewildering temptations/woes. Sleeping and awakening of course are used as metaphors for the states of ignorance and enlightenment respectively. It turns on the head the conventional belief that we can perceive the phenomenal world only when we are awake. The cognition of the phenomenal world and all its temptations and woes is actually a dream and illusion born out of the sleep of ignorance. In English, however, the word that combines the signification of pleasure and suffering was not available. Hence, a compromise had to be made

> When I wake up, the world recedes from my sight.
> Only in sleep, its bewildering miseries and enjoyment perplexes me!

This of course takes away much of the force and poetic quality of the poem but somehow the plurisignation had to be rendered in order to capture Narsinh's fatalistic vision of the phenomenal world.

Another interesting situation arises when a text contains two languages, a situation alluded to by Derrida (1992:218-227). Many Sanskrit phrases from the Geeta Govind are borrowed directly by Narsinh in his poem. The poem is *Sundariratna-mukhchandra avalokva....* In the second stanza Narsinh puts a Sanskrit phrase *twamasi mam jeevan* in the mouth of the charming milkmaid, Radha, to which Krishna replies using Sanskrit phrases twamasi *shringar mam, twamasi mam* .In translation, these portions are translated into archaic English and also put into italics to suggest that they have been borrowed into the text. The poem in translation appears as follows:

> The dark one turned to gaze the moonlike face of the jewel among beauties,
> Their eyes met, their desolation ended, the lord pleaded and took the other half of his self close to him.
>
> Putting her arms around him, the girl with a ravishing face said, ` *Thou art my life,'* the lord replied, `*Thou art my* embellishment, my garland, *in thee alone* am I absorbed and thou alone sway my soul.'

The last line of this poem is also a case of ambiguity. Krishna is lavishly praising Radha throughout the poem and in the end Narsinh Mehta says *Narsaiya no swami sukhsagar, eh ni stuti eh karta. Eh ni stuti eh karta* can mean two things: first, he is praising her and at the same time it can mean he is praising himself. This deliberate ambiguity suggests the fundamental oneness within the differences between Radha and Krishna. They are separate yet they

are one. Krishna in praising Radha is actually praising himself! This is due to the clever use of pronouns in Gujarati. In translation this sense has been retained in following way at the cost of ambiguity in the original:

> Blessed is this beautiful girl, the most desirable, whom Krishna himself praises,
> The very Godhead on whom the likes of Shiva and Virancha meditate,
> Narsaiyya's Lord is the ocean of bliss, is indeed praising himself!

While translating, I have tried to remain as close to the stanza and line length of the original and yet in English the line usually turns out to be longer and occupies larger visual space. Therefore, the stanza form many times does not match in terms of number of lines or in terms of the length of lines in the stanzas. The compactness of sentence construction makes it difficult to reproduce the line length and the length of stanza of the original. The compact philosophical expression is only approximately conveyed in English .For instance, the compact and dense lines

> *hu khare tu kharo, hu vina tu nahin;*
> *hu re haiesh tahan lagi tu re haishe.*

This had to be rendered in loose and elaborate constructions,

> Only because *I* truly exist, *you* exist! Without me, you cannot be!
> You will exist only as long as I exist!
> If I no longer exist, you too will cease to be, and become ineffable,
> For who will name you if I cease to be?

However, there is no addition in the semantic message of the original text.

Translation is inevitably interpretation of a text from one language by the means of another and it is very difficult to render the richly suggestive plurivalency of signifiers in another language. The formal properties of language and culture are usually `lost' in translation. One has to abandon many times the whole structure of `signifier', and ideally replace another signifier to the signified in one language without changing it. Nevertheless, it is impossible to completely separate the signified from its signifier. The whole problematic of translation, it seems is the problematic of the relationship between the signifier and the signified, the form and the `meaning'. This theoretical problem strikes the translator with even more intensity when one is dealing with ambiguities and contradictions in the source language text.

From this detailed theoretical account, one can see that the activity of translation of Bhakti poetry is an acute creative encounter and negotiation between two seemingly incompatible traditions, histories, and poetics. However, it becomes almost an existential and cultural imperative of a translator like me who has grown up in a particular multi lingual and multi-cultural ethos. It is his profound personal need to yoke together these seemingly incompatible cultural domains. Translation becomes for me almost a yogic act, the act of yoking together of the duality and an act which embodies the personal quest for salvation in the post-colonial society.

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Translating Romantic Sensibility: Narsinhrao Divetiya's Poetry

Rakesh Desai

Abstract

Narasinhrao Divetiya (1859-1937), the well-known Gujarati poet, critic and linguist, modeled his poetry consciously on the British Romantic lyrics and translated the Romantic sensibility into Gujarati poetry through his anthology, Kusummala (1887). This anthology presents complete or partial translations of poems by Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Byron and other British romantic poems. The paper shows how Divetiya uses various strategies of translation such as direct translation, free translation, transcreation and teeka to generate a new literary sensibility in Gujarati. Narasinhrao Divetiya's lifelong association with the act of translation made available a Gujarati version of the British romantic lyric and its cognate sensibility and taste.

Nineteenth-century renaissance in Gujarat made English education and English literature available to the native Gujaratis. Further, the fourth part of F.T. Palgrave's Golden Treasury (1861), with the poems of the British romantic poets like Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley and Byron, was frequently prescribed as a textbook in schools and colleges of Gujarat. Narsinhrao Divetiya (1859-1937), a major poet, critic and linguist, modeled his poetry consciously on the British romantic lyrics and proposed to translate their allied sensibility and taste into Gujarati poetry and Gujarati readership through his anthology Kusummala (1887). This anthology, along with his other anthologies, also presents complete or partial translations in various forms of the poems by Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Byron and others. The pronounced pitch of romanticism in Gujarati poetry is invariably linked with the act of translation in the

colonial context, not ignoring at the same time native Sanskrit tradition and Charani folk literature.

Needless to say, the concepts of "romanticism" and "translation" themselves are at stake at the moment, and a historical perspective may contextualize them meaningfully. Dalpatram's poem "Bapani Pinpar" (1845) inaugurated modern Gujarati poetry as it adopted Gujarati, leaving the Vraj language, and chose Nature as the subject matter. It markedly differentiated itself from the didactic, religious medieval Gujarati poetry. Dalpatram was closely associated with Alexander Forbes, a British officer. He celebrated his friendship with him in "Forbes vilas" (1867) and commemorated his death in "Forbes virah" (1865), the first elegy in Gujarati. But Dalpatram still wrote in pragmatic mode, aiming at verbal wit and flashes.

It is Narmadashankar Lalshankar Dave or Narmad (1833-1886) who brought modernity as well as romanticism to Gujarati poetry by introducing new poetic subjects like love, Nature and freedom. Sundaram, a major twentieth-century Gujarati poet and critic, observes:

> The third and the most important feature of Narmad's poetry is the introduction, for the first time, of new subjects or a new way of introducing the old subjects into Gujarati poetry. The number of such poems is more than half of his total poetic corpus. This poetry is of three kinds: the poetry of love, the poetry of Nature, and the poetry of freedom. The last of these kinds of poetry came to be written in Gujarati for the first time by Narmad. Poetry of love and that of Nature had been written since long. Subjectivity was introduced to the poetry of love by Narmad for the first time, and the subjective element kept developing since then. Narmad contributed to the poetry of natural description by freeing it from its restrictive thematic context and from its function as a subsidiary

> subject, meant only to nourish the main rasa; and thus by making it an independent poetic subject matter.[1]
>
> (Sundaram 1946:39-40)

Narmad, a prolific writer, has a number of poems on the subjects of love, Nature and patriotism. The theme of love is treated in the poems under the general titles of "Premniti," "Priyani vani," "Priyani vani," "Priya ane priyani vani." Poems descriptive of Nature are grouped under the general titles of 'Van varnan', 'Pravas varnan', 'Gram ane srushtisaundaryana varnankavyo'. The poems, embodying the theme of freedom are collected under the general titles of 'Svatantrata', 'Shuravirna lakshano', 'Virkavita', and 'Deshabhiman sambandhi'. Romanticism in such poetry by Narmad would mean a shift from the didactic, religious poetry of the medieval period to the poetry allowing subjectivity with new subjects like love, Nature and freedom.

Though Narmad must be credited with his pioneering contribution to the emergence of modern Gujarati poetry with its romantic strain, he leaves its further cultivation to his descendants. Sundaram comments on the way Narmad's poetry treats the theme of love:

> There is hardly any attractive element left in Narmad's poetry other than the specific element of subjectivity in these love poems by Narmad. He shows a genuinely felt passion of love, which is more than physical. A desire for true love also appears in him. But he could never go deeper than the physical level in his poetry.
>
> (ibid. 45)

In the same vein Vishnuprasad Trivedi, a distinguished scholar and a critic, points out the scope left for further development of the theme of Nature in Narmad's poetry:

> The Nature poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge describe a certain mood or sentiment of Nature herself. The poems embodying independent sentiments of Nature herself are yet in a formative phase in Narmad. They are bound to conventions, echoing Sanskrit poets, at some places.
> (Trivedi 1964)

In historical terms, Gujarati poetry after Narmad, waits for a more refined and subtle approach to the themes of love and Nature in a subjective poetic mode.

Self, which is centrally located in romanticism, interacted with the British Other in the colonial period of the nineteenth-century renaissance and accordingly attempted to define itself in the matrix of nodal cultural events. "Gujarat Vernacular Society" was set up by Alexander Forbes, with the help of Dalpatram, in 1848. This body started publishing the magazine, Budhhiprakash, since 1850. Buddhivardhak Sabha was set up by Narmad and his friends in 1851 for social reforms and woman's education. "Forbes Gujarati Sabha" was instituted by Mansukhram Tripathi in 1854 in Mumbai in the memory of Alexander Forbes. It aimed at collecting old Gujarati manuscripts and translation of good English books. The same year the British parliament made the law for educating Indian people in English. In 1857 the British contained the rebellion and the East India Company was replaced by the British Queen's rule. The same year universities were set up in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras and textile industry was set up in Gujarat. Arya Samaj was founded by Dayanand Sarasvati in 1875. The first non-Parsi paper, Gujarati, a weekly, was published by Ichharam Suryaram Desai in 1880, in Mumbai. National Congress was instituted in 1885. It was a fertile period of history, with varied cultural stimulie, allowing an interaction with the British other, creating a shift between two contexts as it happens in an act of translation. Narsinhrao Divetiya's Kusummala was published in 1887.

Narsinhrao Divetiya declares his romantic project in the Preface to the first edition of *Kusummala*:

> This small collection of sangeetkavyas is published with an idealistic purpose of acquainting the well-informed readers of Gujarat of the way the Western poetry, which is a little different from the poetry of this country, is written with a different method, and this is to be done through examples and not through dry critical discussions, and thus to cultivate a taste for that kind of poetry in them.
>
> (Divetiya 1953:10)

He modelled his *sangeetkavyas* on the British romantic lyrics and thus attempted to foster a taste for British romanticism in Gujarati readership through the example of Kusummala. All his poems and translations use meters. The poems like "Prem sindhu," ("The ocean of love"), "Bahurup anupam prem dhare" ("Incomparable love assumes various forms"), or "Gan sarit" ("The river of singing"), treat the theme of love with tenderness and largely in a sacred context in meditative tone. "Suryoday" ("The sunrise"), "Sandhya" ("Evening") and "Ratri" ("Night") treat Nature as a valid poetic subject. A number of poems address the cloud and the koel, reminding Wordsworth's "To the Cuckoo," "To the Skylark" and Shelley's "To a Skylark."

Further, "Phoolni sathe ramat" ("Playing with a flower") anticipates T.E. Hulme's idea of romanticism as a belief in man being "intrinsically good, spoilt by circumstances," "a reservoir full of possibilities" (Hulme 1972:94-95). "Kavinun sukh" ("The poet's happiness") points out the tragic alienation of a romantic poet and the consequent creation of a romantic image, an idea well discussed in Frank Kermode's Romantic Image. "Karena" reasserts the romantic theme of hope.

Kusummala and other anthologies carry the poet's *teeka* or commentary at the end of the anthology in the form of a linguistic, genetic or critical analysis of a poem. In view of Divetiya's romantic project to use poems as examples to cultivate romantic taste, *teeka* on the poems also functions the same way, and becomes polemical. Further, *teeka* also becomes an extension of a poem itself, and acquires a textual status. In a way, *teeka* is a retranslation of a poem which is already a translation of a British romantic lyric.

A translation seems to enjoy the same status with an original poem from a pragmatic viewpoint as Kusummala and later anthologies carry translated versions along with the original poems. This substantiates further that all poetic texts are translations in different forms. The first two four-line stanzas of "Asthir ane sthir prem" ("Unsteady and steady love") are a translation of the first six lines of Wordsworth's "The Primrose of the rock" (Divetiya 1953:114-15). Further, "Prabhat" ("Dawn") is a translation of Shelley's "Dawn" (ibid. 134). Further, "Megh" ("The Cloud") is a "bhashantar" of Shelley's "Cloud" and "Chanda" ("The Moon") is a "nakal" ("a copy") of that poem by Shelley (ibid. 135). "Chanda" presents translation as "nakal" as its subjectmatter (chanda or the moon) is different from that of the source text (megh or the cloud), but the target language text shares the form with the source language text. "Avasan," the last poem of the anthology, sustains "bhavarth" or essence of Shelley's "Music, when soft voices die," the last poem of the fourth part of Palgrave's Golden Treasury (ibid. 136). It is a transcreation of Shelley's poem.

Translation of romanticism acquires a different poetic form in Divetiya's next anthology Hradayveena (1896). Its poems are more dramatic, often with dialogues, and show an intense social awareness. In its preface, Divetiya defines his earlier poetry, barring a few descriptive ones at its end, as "atmalakshi (subjective)" and mainly that of Hradayveena as "parlakshi (objective)" (ibid: 8). British romanticism seems to naturalize itself, reflecting native

contemporary reality. Vishnuprasad Trivedi aptly remarks that Gujarati romanticism is hardly "revolutionary" (1961: 43). Hradayveena expresses, at least, an acute awareness of the contemporary problems. "Phasi padeli vidhava" ("A widow trapped") presents a widow deceived into a marriage, resulting into her suicide. "Phulmani dasino shap" ("The curse of Phulmani dasi") is based on a real court case of Harimohan Maithi, an elderly husband, who forcibly had consummation with the eleven-year old wife, which was against even the prevalent social custom at that time. The poem, critical of patriarchy, ends with Phulmani's death. Besides, poems like "Matsyagandha ane Shantanu" ("Matsyagandha and Shantanu") and "Uttara ane Abhimanyu" ("Uttara and Abhimanyu") embody myths from the Mahabharata. Along with such "objective" poems, "Jagatna vishno utar" ("Curing the worldly poisoning") expresses the romantic idea of Nature as a beneficent agency. Moreover, *teeka* at the end mentions that "Phasi padeli vidhava" ("A childwidow trapped") was inspired ("prerit") by Tennyson's "Forlorn" and became an independent poem. Here translation means as an inspired version of the original—a transcreation. The anthology does not mention any other source language text.

Noopurjhankar (Divetiya 1914) carries many translations, and with an extensive *teeka*, occupying almost half of the volume. "Chhoopa ansun" ("Hidden tears") presents the romantic notion of the value of tears or passions. Further, it seems to combine the subjective and the objective nature of earlier anthologies, respectively, of Kusummala (ibid. 1887) and Hradayveena (ibid. 1934) in terms of, respectively, the recognition of personal sorrow and that of sorrow of the other. It contains translations of certain parts of Edwin Arnold's Light of Asia like "Kisa Gotami," "Mahabhinishkraman" and "Viyogini Yashodhara." Further, the last four-line stanza of "Viraginini Veena" is an unconscious translation of eight lines of Book VI of Light of Asia (ibid. 1914:172). Here translation is rememoration of sanskara. "Mrutyune prarthana" ("A

prayer to death") is a translation of Sarojini Naidu's "Tarry a while, O Death, I cannot die" (ibid: 178-79). "Maranno bhaya" ("Fear of death") translates Keats's sonnet "When I have fear that I may cease to be," which is entitled as "Terror of Death" in Palgrave's Golden Treasury (ibid: 179-80). Curiously, "Mrutyunun maran" ("The death of death") is inspired by a different literary form, the novel Life Everlasting by Marie Corelli (ibid: 181). "Ghuvad" ("The owl") is a transcreation of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" (ibid: 199). Divetiya's *teeka* on "Joona dhwani" ("The old voices") introduces certain terms about translation. The poem carries vague impressions of a song read years back—"Songs my mother taught me" (ibid: 218). Divetiya uses the term "chhaya" for this kind of translation, which mediates the process of translation between its forms of "bhashantar" and "anukaran." Further, "Sandhyani devine" ("To the goddess of beauty") is an inspired version of Shelley's "Hymn to Asia" (ibid: 223-24). It is notable that "Shunyahraday mughdha" and "Gopinun sammelan" are the translations of Ravindranath Tagore's Bengali songs in the play Ashrumati natak by Jyotindranath.

Smrutisanhita: Ek Karun Prashasti (ibid. 1940) commemorates the death of Narsinhrao Divetiya's son Nalinkant, and carries *teeka* written by Anandshankar Dhruv, which refers to Tennyson's "In Memoriam," and also to Wordsworth, Browning and others. It contains the celebrated elegy of Gujarati literature "Mangal mandir kholo."

Buddhacharit is a translation of Edwin Arnold's The Light of Asia or The Great Renunciation (Mahabhinishkraman). "Mahabhinishkraman," "Kisa Gotami" and "Viyogini Yashodhara" were published earlier in Noopurjhankar. According to the *teeka* by Divetiya at the end, the following parts of The Light of Asia are translated: "Prem Prasoon", "Sujatani Katha", "Budhhanun Prabodhan", "Viyogini Yashodhara", "Mahabhinishkraman" omits certain lines from the source language text. It is notable that Divetiya includes Kavi Botadkar's poem "Budhhanun Gruhagaman" also as it

is about the same theme. For Divetiya, the common theme of Buddhism may well equalize the status of a poem and that of a translation.

Narsinhrao Divetiya'a lifelong association with translation also defined his talent. Mansukhlal Jhaveri, a noted Gujarati critic, comments:

> Even the best of Narsinhrao's poetry could not have attained Nhanalal's sobriety, Kant's elegance or Balvantrai's freshness. Narasinhrao's individual talent is limited to that extent. His vision is narrow to that extent. It seems that imitation (anukriti), and not original creation, suits his talent more. I have found only one poem, which would overwhelm and which we would like to murmur day in and day out: "Premal jyoti taro dakhavi, muj jivanpanth ujalya." And it is not an independent poem. Though it is true that that poem is not independent, it is certainly almost independent. "Lead kindly light" was translated by Narsinhrao also, and also by Kant. Kant's translation might have been more "loyal" to the original text, but Kant's translation does not have tenderness, elegance and heartfelt yearning which Narsinhrao's translation has. Only Narsinhrao could manage the sustained rhythm of that poem, penetrating through heart. And that itself is his specific achievement. "Ghuvad" is another such example. It is inspired by Edgar Allan Poe's "Raven." But it is only inspired. All artistic composition, other than the inspiration, is Narsinhrao's only. And Narsinhrao could shine out in that also. Many more examples like "Mne prerata tarakavrunda! A hun avyo re" or "Chanda" can be cited. It can be discerned from all these examples that originality does not suit Narsinhrao's talent.
>
> (Jhaveri 1959:296-297)

It is notable that Narasinhrao Divetiya's creatve writing misses Kant's elegance ("madhurya"), but his translation of "Lead

kindly light" has elegance ("madhurata") which Kant's translation of the same lacks. Further, Mansukhlal Jhaveri, referring to Kusummala , notes that inspiration from life may be better than derivative inspiration in the context of translation in aesthetic terms, but in historical terms such translated versions have their own significance-modern Gujarati poetry was born with Narmad, but it "grew up and blossomed "only with Narsinhrao (ibid: 297). The romantic strain in Gujarati poetry, carried forward later by Balashankar Kanthariya, Nhanalal, Kalapi or Ravaji Patel was fostered in the context of assimilating the other and self-definition, in the context of translation.

Narsinhrao Divetiya'a lifelong association with the act of translation made available a Gujarati version of the British romantic lyric, its cognate sensibility and taste. It is also reflected on the process of translation and realized its mercurial status. Sujit Mukherjee rightly observes:

> Quite significantly, we don't have a word in any Indian language that would be the equivalent of the term 'translation.' We borrowed *anuvad* from Sanskrit (where it means 'speaking after') and *tarjuma* from Arabic (where it is nearer to 'explicate' or 'paraphrase'). More recent borrowings are *rupantar* (in Bangla) or *vivartanam* (in Malayalam) or *bhashantar* (in Hindi). That we don't have a widely accepted Indian word for 'translation' suggests that the concept itself was not familiar to us. Instead, when we admired a literary text in one language, we used it as a take-off point and composed a similar text in another language. P. Lal's use of the term 'transcreation' may well be most appropriate for such a situation—more so, now that the Advanced Learners Dictionary has sanctified it.
>
> (Mukherjee 2004:45, his italics)

In this context, Narsinhrao Divetiaya's translation is largely a transcreation of the British romantic texts while it translates its sensibility and taste into Gujarati poetry. As Divetiya informs in his *teeka* on "Ghuvad," his translation of Edgar Allan Poe's "Raven" is independent of the original except for the despairing refrain "Never more," which is in the context of the dead Lenore in the original poem, and which refers to puzzles of human life in general in the translated version "Ghuvad." Further, his translation of Cardinal Newman's "Lead kindly light" at the request of Mahatma Gandhi could be a celebrated example of transcreation. But the very process of transcreation, in terms of the degree of creation, transcending the original, may complicate the issue further. Moreover, Narsinhrao Divetiya's extensive *teeka*s to the poems are often a retranslation of a translation of a British romantic lyric. Further, these *teeka*s refer to the act of translation as either a *bhashantar*, or a *prerit* or inspired version or rememoration of *sanskara*, *chhaya*, *nakal* or *anukaran*, suggesting, at least, the plural mode of translation. They also suggest the problematic status of a source language text which ranges from being a *sanskara* to a literal text. The *teeka*s create a conceptual space wherein the issue of translation may be discussed in the context of empirical practice, keeping up its richness and complexity.

NOTES

1. All the quotations from Gujarati texts, cited in this paper, are my translations.

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Book reviews

Locating the 'missing link'? Not quite

Translation and Identity

Michael Cronin
Routledge: London and New York, 2006.

Translation Studies scholar Michael Cronin's recent book T*ranslation and Identity* is set against the background of contemporary world, based on certain assumptions, and demands the readers to share them as they sail through the book. Some of these assumptions are that that we are living in a globalised world; today identity has taken centre stage of various political struggles and is the important category with which we make sense of the contemporary world; in the globalised context it is difficult for the formation and continuance of a particular identity; identity is primarily formed around languages and issues arising out of the question of identity lead to extremely violent conflicts. It is in this assumed context that Cronin tries to situate translation as the 'missing link' between the 'local' and 'global', and according to him, `[translation] must be at the centre of any attempt to think about the question of identity in human society.' He also entrusts translators and thinkers about translation the obligation, `to engage with debates about how in our century we are to find ways to live together in our households and in our cities and in our world.'

This rather jargon-free and small book which runs to 166 pages is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, *Translation and the new cosmopolitan,* Cronin advances a new concept of cosmopolitanism, 'micro-cosmopolitanism' which is a 'cosmopolitanism from below', and is sensitive to and recognises `differences' within the local/particular not as essentialist but as fluid. Conceptualising the translation phenomenon as 'global hybrid' and 'mutable mobile', Cronin views the history of translation as essentially transnational. Further he argues for the centrality of

literature and translation to think about any cultural policy for a transnational institution like the European Union.

Cronin's appeal here to include literary translations in the national curriculum and to consider translation as a phenomenon happening 'within the language' deserves attention, but his rather conclusive statement on the history of translation that 'that historical research into translation points to whether at a microscopic or macroscopic level in many instances it is the permanent quantum duality of the cultural experience that is the norm rather than homogenous national or imperial continuum occasionally disrupted by foreign adventures,' (p. 26) is problematic precisely because it neglects the fact that translation was instrumental in perpetuating colonial power (Niranjana 1992). And he alludes to the romantic 'small is beautiful' view to look at 'local' as small, equal and ideal units in a rush to push the 'micro-cosmopolitan' concept.

Chapter 2, *Translation and migration,* is an attempt to look at the phenomenon of migration in the contemporary society as translation, and migrants as 'translated beings'. Here Cronin advances the concept of interculturalism as against multiculturalism which according to him can be achieved through translation accommodation rather than translation assimilation, the former being an instance where the migrant retains her or his source culture/language as they translate themselves into the target culture/language. The notion of conceiving translation as intrinsic rather than extrinsic echoes some of the points already made in chapter 1. The last part of the chapter deals with the limitations of the notion of citizenship as laid out by the ideals of liberal democracy in the contemporary world and tries to show how translation can be used to address this dilemma.

One of the major limitations of the arguments made in this chapter which deals with the issue of migration is that the author, quite comfortably, completely ignores the very mobile/migratory

nature of capital itself, which is the most striking feature of globalisation.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the book is chapter 3, *Interpreting identity,* which deals with the notion of interpretation as translation. Here the author tries to explore the 'aspects of identity in the practice of interpreting'. The practice of interpretation, being more of an oral act demands not just the audibility but also the visibility of the interpreters making them what Cronin calls 'embodied agents'. Cronin provides some interesting historical and present-day accounts of violent conflicts where the interpreters' role is not just crucial but often becomes fatal for themselves due to the question of identity of the interpreter, as, in the author's words, 'the message and the messenger become one'.

But here Cronin hopelessly falls back on the works of Shakespeare in an attempt to 'track an intra-textual translation presence', which is to look at what literary texts have to say about translation, in the context of `the practice of translation and interpreting in sixteenth- and early seventeenth century England and Ireland.' The point of contention here is not about looking at translation in this way, which itself is illuminating, but Shakespeare as a source, or context. Maybe we should look for new literary sources and sites to talk about translation with the help of .

In the final chapter, *The future of diversity*, Cronin advocates a 'negentropic translational perspective' towards culture which is concerned with 'the way in which translation contributes to and fosters the persistence and development of diversity'. There is a recurrent argument here for 'diversality' and diversity within the 'local' by invoking the notions of 'micro-cosmopolitanism' and 'bottom up localisation' and the vitality of translation to make sense of the contemporary world.

Elsewhere in this chapter Cronin takes a look at the contemporary Indian scenario, drawing on the work of Francesca Orsini, where in spite of the rich literary traditions of its various

regional languages, they face 'pressure' from English in India. The author does it to show how being 'bereft of translators or opportunities for translation can affect the wider "literariness" of a language' even though it has huge number of users and rich literary tradition. The author stops his investigation there and refuses to move further to find why there is a situation which is 'bereft of translators and less opportunities for translations', and whenever he does he conveniently blames it on the nation-state.

In Cronin's own words, 'one of the recurrent themes of [this book] is the constant interaction between global and local' and he tries to locate translation at the centre of this interaction as the 'missing link' between the two. But throughout the book, the author appears to be obsessed with 'local' and almost neglects and refuses to engage with the 'global', the major blind spot of this book is this.

The persuasiveness of Cronin's argument for the centrality he seeks for translation to grapple with the question of identity, one of the most contentious issues of contemporary society, can at best be considered as a strategy to draw the attention of both the public and academia into translation, a much neglected but nevertheless a fascinating and promising area of study.

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Reviewed by

Ashokan Nambiar C.
Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore
Email: asknbr@gmail.com

Theories on the Move: Translation's Role in the Travels of Literary Theories

Sebnem Susam-Sarajeva

Rodopi: Amsterdam & New York 2006 241 pages.

When we read theory translated from a different language, very often we pay attention primarily to the formulations of the theorist with perhaps a cursory glance at the name of the translator. In the intensity with which we plunge into the text, we seldom remind ourselves that the text is a translation. We do not ask how and why theories are translated. In a useful reminder, Sebnem Susam-Sarajeva's book draws our attention to the "role translation plays in the migration of literary and cultural theories across linguistic and cultural borders, and across power differentials." Migration is a complex phenomenon that contends with the problematic of location; when we recognize that translation is itself a form of migration, the implications for the author of the source-text, the re-location of the text, and the reader in the new language cannot be ignored. It is then, Sebnam argues, important to study the indicative and the formative role that translation plays.

In her multiple-case study of migration of literary theory from France to Turkey and France to Anglo-America, she tells how Roland Barthes and Hélène Cixous travelled their different ways. And so, the tenor of the argument is set up to orient the discussion towards theory travelling through languages in translation. Her task then is to address the question "how does theory travel, what may be the relationship of theory to translation in particular cases, and what happens when theory travels in various directions for different audiences?" In addressing these questions, the power differentials in relationships across cultural, linguistic, and political borders are underscored especially within a postcolonial or neocolonial context. Once this is set up, she draws out the inadequacy of postcolonial

theorizing for the study that concerns itself with a variety of power differentials that are not addressed in the available postcolonial discourse: "…what about all those languages and cultures of the countries which have never been a colony – which might have even been centres of empires themselves in the past, as in the case of Turkey – but are now nevertheless under the profound influence of hegemonic powers economically, politically and culturally?"

The discussion of Barthes and Cixous in their new cultural abode is within the framework of descriptive Translation Studies and systems theory which elaborates how theories travel. This is done by first presenting the underlying contexts of the reception of structuralism and semiotics in Turkey and French feminism in Anglo-America. The discussion of the issue of importation of structuralism and semiotics in Turkey, and French feminism in Anglo-America is particularly relevant in the specific context of India and in the larger context of translating theory for it highlights assumptions and misconceptions on theory, the politics of cultural transfer in importation, power equations, and agency, as the text dwells on the discussions and debates in the intellectual circles in the receiving languages. A very perceptive analysis of the different trajectories of the mode of critical thinking in Turkey and France and of the women's movement in France and Anglo-America brings out specific differences between systems of thinking, be it in the debate on form versus content, objective versus subjective in Turkey, or essentialism and biologism, and indebtedness to white fathers in Cixous.

Sebnem also underlines the differences between the two contexts in hand for she recognizes that "imports do not contribute to the shaping of local discourses to the same extent in every destination." The attitudinal differences in the mode of reception in the receiving system identify issues of alterity, solidarity, and universality in the case of Cixous while tropes of alterity, lack and lag are identified in the case of Barthes. An important insight here

has to do with the nature of the relationship import / export entails: "A one-way import / export relationship does not necessarily imply a passive reception of whatever comes through the linguistic borders. Imported discursive elements *are* transformed even in what may be called 'defective', 'deficient' or 'weak' systems." In other words, the receiving system has other intentions beyond the structure of the source system.

In this context, it is sound argument that the reception of the works of the two French thinkers was influenced by the general response to the respective schools of thought. Appropriately enough, we read that the translation and reception of the works constructs also long-lasting image of the writers. I find the discussion of the "monolithic images" of Barthes and Cixous in the imported culture very forceful not just for the argument but for the methodology that locates translation within an exhaustive framework of what gets translated when and by whom. "Images do not stay the same forever;" the book traces a fascinating history of the changes in the image that Barthes and Cixous have in their new languagescapes. This study of the endurance of images attests to the "domesticating power of translation regardless of the power differentials involved between the source and receiving systems."

Given the power relation between source and receiving systems, the whole question of retranslation becomes important. While the study recognizes that imports do not shape local discourses across the board, it is substantiated further by arguing that "the factors of dominance, elasticity, tolerance and power of the source and receiving systems involved determine whether travelling theory will be granted multiple-entry visa into the latter system through retranslations." Different types of retranslation theory which are largely linear are discussed. Five arguments are presented on the topic touching on the issue of canonicity, ageing translations, the struggles in the receiving system, the needs and attitudes of the receiving system, and non-existence of retranslations. We get a

fascinating glimpse of the history of Barthes' multiple entries in Turkey with the important digression on Turkish Language Reform. Cixous in Anglo-America is an instance of "*rarity* of retranslations" which is very significant. For, this "confirms the '*deproblematisation*' of translation in the Anglo-American feminist critical system." Apart from the insights one gets on the power play within feminist discourse and retranslation, I recommend the sections on *jouissance* and *écriture feminine* in chapters 5 and 6 to those who grapple with French thought.

A discussion of multiple-entry or being rooted home has to reckon with the politics of the systems involved. And so, "Both structuralism and semiotics in Turkey and French feminism in Anglo-America were taken to task for being apolitical, elitist, and unsuitable for the purposes of the ongoing local struggles." The text establishes here that theory and practice continue to be polarized which was largely the reason for the reception of the two writers in the respective systems.

The conclusion neatly sums up a theory for travelling theory. Theories travel and remain travellers, "aliens in the middle of curious, disapproving, friendly, suspicious or downright hostile locals….Translated theories continue to be perceived as foreign imports, unless they occasionally become 'transferred' cultural products." The text rightly reminds us that theory travels. Translation is also a form of migration. For all the rigorous research and tightly knit argument, the text reminds us about the body that enables such travel. Migrations to different systems, different bodies of thought are always through people. This is where theory is redeemed from mere 'sightseeing' and gets comprehended.

Sebnam's book is a remarkable journey that addresses cultural questions that concern the entry of theories in translation into a particular system. The book illustrates how important it is not to ignore the medium as much as the mode of transport of theories.

For, that is where we get to the context, history, and what theory sets out to 'remember' in the receiving system.

I have found useful openings here to do theory in the literature classroom. There is a method here to study how theory travels though the tropes one finds could be different in other systems. This book opens up a large area of inquiry for Translation Studies in India. A study that locates theories that have migrated to India in English or into regional languages in the country emerges as a distinct research possibility. In spite of advanced technology, how did three spelling errors creep into the book? *Theories on the Move* is a very useful book for budding researchers, and translators.

Reviewed by

Dr. B. Hariharan,
Dept of English,
Post Graduate Centre,
University of Mysore,
Hemagangotri,
Hassan–573220

A TRANSLATION OR A MIS-TRANSLATION?

My Story and *My Life as an Actress*

Edited and translated by Rimli Bhattacharya

Published by Kali for Women, New Delhi
278 pages
Price Rs. 300

Debjani Ray Moulik

Translation is absolutely indispensable for a wide readership. It is the only way by which a text in one language can be read by someone who is not familiar with that particular language. Thus the translator has a very important role to play. A translator should be aware that it is she who is going to introduce the author to the people who cannot comprehend the language of the original. She should desist from using such words and expressions as were not meant by the author. He might have the capability to express the thoughts of the author far better than author himself has done; but then his job is merely to <u>translate</u> the text and <u>not</u> to improve upon it. This is one view of literary translation

Rimli Bhattacharya's translation of the autobiography of Binodini Dasi, the eminent theatre personality of the late nineteenth century Bengali stage – *Amar Katha* and *Amar Abhinetri Jiban* may be cited as an example of how a translation should not be carried out. Not that she is translating something out of the blue, but that she is utterly careless, even feckless about it. In her hurry to finish and be dome with job, she makes lots of mistakes that could have been easily avoided had she been more diligent. So much so that one simply cannot rely on what she writes – one has to re-check it in the Bengali original!

Firstly, Rimli Bhattacharya does not explicitly state which version of Binodini's autobiographies served as her primary text. She writes, "This book is greatly indebted to the editors of the Bangla text of Binodini's selected works, Soumitra Chattopadhyay and Nirmalya Acharya". But in the bibliography she also mentions *Nati Binodini Rachana Samagra* edited by Asutosh Bhattacharya. Now any reader will not guess that there can be any difference in the main body of the text in this book and *Amar Katha o Anyanya Rachana* by the joint editors. More so when Asutosh Bhattacharya says that in her second edition of her *Amar Katha*, Binodini does not make any alteration to the text of the first edition, but merely added the Preface written by Girish Chandra Ghosh and a dedication. But he goes wrong. Binodini did make some additions and Rimli Bhattacharya translated them. To avoid confusion, the translator should have mentioned the name of the editor of the Bengali text she has used for translating.

Now onto Rimli Bhattacharya's translation. Binodini was made to come back to the Star Theatre due to the authority of Gurmukh Rai as the proprietor and the imploring of Girish Chandra Ghosh. But this has been translated as "… it was only because of Girish-babu's concern for me and by virtue of his authority as a shareholder…". When the Star Theatre was to be sold by Gurmukh Rai, he wanted Binodini to have half the share, if not actually be the proprietor. But this has been translated as "If Binod does not agree to this…", which is not the correct rendering of the original. Rimli Bhattacharya translates a speech of the play *Chaitanya Lila* as "In Gaya I saw at Krishna's feet…". But we all know that it is not Krishna, but Vishnu who is worshipped at Gaya and Girish Chandra Ghosh too correctly mentions it. '*Antah Krishna Bahih Radha'* has been translated as 'Krishna within and Radha without'. This does not make sense. Binodini tells us that she used to faint while performing in *Chaitanya Lila*. She could continue only after regaining her consciousness, but felt weak doing it. She adds that it

was not so on a particular occasion when Father Lafont was present. Rimli Bhattacharya puts it as "I did not continue with my performance *lifelessly*..." Even today anyone can say that Binodini's performance in this play, or for that matter in any other play, was never "lifeless". The translation goes on – in the second part of *Chaitanya Lila*, Binodini in the eponymous role required the portrayal of '*madness'*. Was this saint ever *mad*? He used to go into ecstasies, but never into fits of madness. Later on Binodini complains against the society that does not allow prostitutes to admit their children to schools; but the translator says that they are prevented from *building* schools! Binodini talks about the divine purity of her daughter and Rimli Bhattacharya renders it thus: "In that loving, trusting heart of hers was manifested the purity of the Goddess Devi..." Does the translator want to add another to our existent thirty-three crores of divine beings? Again, a nonsensical song in Ardhendu Sekhar Mustafi's skit has been translated as :

> "I am the big saheb of the world and you a little one
> I eat shrimps and you live on onions".

But if correctly translated, the second line should read

> "You eat shrimps and I live on onions".

About the staging of *Kapalkundala* at the Bengal Theatre, Binodini writes Hari Baishnab and Biharilal Chattopadhyay appeared as Nabakumar and Kapalik respectively and that the latter looked dreadful in his make-up. In Rimli Bhattacharya's translation Baishnab looked dreadful in the guise of Kapalik! There is a mistake in the transliteration of the name of a Bengali journal *Rup o Ranga* – it has been written "*Roop o Rang*".

Rimli Bhattacharya commits some other types of errors too. The cover of the book bears a picture of Binodini in the male attire of Sarojini in *Sarat – Sarojini*. But Rimli Bhattacharya forgets to

mention it. She writes that Golapsundari died in 1890, but performed in *Anandamath* in 1898! She further writes about the National Theatre splitting into the National and the Hindu National after February 1874. But the split dates earlier. She mentions Gopinath Shethi's sub-lease of the National Theatre in1871. But it may be noted that the first public theatre of Bengal opened on December 7, 1872. *The Police of Pig and Sheep* is mentioned as the *Police of Sheep and Pigs*. She further writes that the British announced the Dramatic Performances Control Bill in 1875. But the Bill was introduced in 1876.

This book bristling with such errors has been published by none other than Kali for Women, New Delhi. The publishers too could not resist making some contributions to the already numerous errors sprinkled throughout the book. The picture of Binodini in the costume of Gopa in *Buddhadeb Charit* has been described as "'Srijukta Binodini' as Sahana in male attire in Girishchandra's '*Mohini Protima*'. And the picture of the actress as Sahana is described as that of Binodini as Gopa! Such blunders are intriguing.

One feels that even with the slightest attention, most of the errors could have been avoided. It is true that there may be errors and a good translation may also be improved. One expects more care to taken by an experienced academician like Rimli Bhattacharya.

However it may be said to the credit of Rimli Bhattacharya that she aptly translates Binodini's cries of despair and her complaints against the society for the plight of prostitutes. She goes wrong in one instance. She wrongly states about the latter being stopped from building schools, but elsewhere she is faithful to the original. Rimli Bhattacharya has chosen the correct words while translating the portions where Binodini speaks out her mind. The words of the actress where she unburdens her soul are typically Indian. It is very difficult to put them in English. But they way Rimli

Bhattacharya has done this does is highly commendable. It does not show the forcing of the idiom of one language into that of another. Though Rimli Bhattacharya's translation of Binodini's autobiographies is unsatisfactory, it must be said that her work has made easier the job of the future translators of the Bengali actress. They can see how the Bengali words have been rendered into English and thus improve upon it. Moreover Rimli Bhattacharya is the first to bring the works of Binodini to those who do not know Bengali. Students of drama will now be able to profit by reading the autobiographies of an actress who performed about a hundred and thirty years ago. Besides Binodini vividly paints the days in which she lived. So students of social studies will also benefit from the translation.

Thus Rimli Bhattacharya's translation has increased the scope of research on Binodini as well as on the nineteenth century Bengali theatre.

What is urgently needed is a more meticulous and faithful translation of Binodini's autobiographies.

Reviewed by

Debjani Ray Moulik
University Research fellow
Department of English
University of Calcutta
KOLKATA

CONTRIBUTORS

Asaduddin M. is Professor and Chair, Department of English at Jamia Milia University, New Delhi. He has received the Sahitya Akademi Award for translation. He translates from Bangla, Assamese and Urdu. He has edited several books and written extensively on subjects related to Comparative Indian Literature and Translation Studies. He was the key-note speaker for the seminar based on which the present special issue was compiled.

Avadhesh K. Singh is presently the Vice-Chancellor of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University at Ahmedabad. Earlier he was Professor and Head at the Department of English at Saurashtra University, Rajkot. He is a well-known critic who has edited several scholarly volumes, besides writing extensively on Comparative Indian Literature and Translation Studies.

Chandrani Chatterjee has been a doctoral student of the Humanities department of Indian Institute of Science, Mumbai. Currently she is on a teaching assignment in the Department of English at the University of Poona. She specializes in Translation Studies.

Debendra K. Dash teaches Oriya at Ispat College at Rourkela, Orissa. He is the editor of the complete works of Fakir Mohan Senapati and Gangadhar Meher. He has received the Kshetrabagi Sahitya Vidya Puraskar for excellence in literature.

Dipti R. Pattanaik teaches English at Utkal University, Bhubaneswar. He was a winner of National Katha Award for excellence in creative writing. His essays have appeared, among other publications in Melus (U.S.A.) and Journal of Commonwealth Literature (London). He was a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Ochio State University and a Charles Wallace Fellow at Cambridge University.

Hemang Desai teaches English at a college in Vapi, Gujarat. He has published poetry and short fiction in Gujarati and English, besides translating several Gujarati authors into English, besides a book on Auden's poetry.

Milind Malshe is Professor in Humanities department of Indian Institute of Science, Mumbai. A well-known scholar of music and Marathi literature, he has published several articles on Cultural Studies and Translation.

Nikhila H. teaches at the Department of English, University of Pondicherry. She teaches Post-colonial Literature, Gender and Communication and Media Studies. She specializes in Gender Studies.

Priyadarshi Patnaik is an Associate Professor in the department of Humanities and Social Sciences at Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur. He has extensively worked on Translation Studies in the context of Oriya literature.

Rakesh Desai is a Professor of English at Veer Narmad South Gujrat University, Surat. He translates between Gujarati and

English. He has published several translations and articles, besides a book on Auden's poetry.

Ramakrishna E.V. is Professor and Head at the Department of English, Veer Narmad South Gujarat University Surat. He has published poetry and criticism in English and Malayalam. His areas of interest include Comparative Indian Literature, Culture Studies and Translation Studies. He has co-edited this special issues.

Sachin Ketkar is a Reader in English a M.S. University, Baroda. He translates among Gujarati, Marathi and English. He has published a volume of recent Marathi poetry in English translation. He is a contributing editor to New Quest.

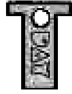
Satyanath teaches Kannada and Comparative Indian Literature at the Department of Modern Indian Languages and Literary Studies, University of Delhi. His areas of specialization are Comparative Indian Literature, Cultural Studies and Translation Studies.

Sherrif K.M. is a Reader at the Department of English at Kannur University in Kerala. He has compiled a volume of Gujarati Dalit writing and has published three volumes of translations and a translation study. His translation of Anand's Malayalam novel was published by Penguin, India.

Subha Chakraborty – Dasgupta has been a Professor of Comparative Literature at Jadavpur University, Kolkata. She has been Co-ordinator of the Centre for Advanced Studies in

the Department. She translates from and into Bangla and English and has published several papers on Comparative Indian Literature. She has also edited several books on comparative literature. She has co-edited this special issue.

Tharakeswar V.B. teaches in the Department of Translation Studies, Kannada University,Hampi. He has published several papers and carried out several projects related to issues of colonialism, nationalism and the emergence of Modern Kannada Literature. He edits *Journal of Karnataka Studies,* an interdisciplinary journal.



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EDITED BY
UDAYA NARAYANA SINGH & P. P. GIRIDHAR
ISSN 0972-8740

Guest Editorial

- E.V. Ramakrishnan

Articles

- Translation and Indian Literature: Some Reflections - M. Asaduddin
- Translating Medieval Orissa - Debendra K. Dash, Dipti R. Pattanaik
- Translation Practices in Pre-colonial India: Interrogating Stereotypes - V.B. Tharakeshwar
- Processes and Models of Translation: Cases from Medieval Kannada Literature - T.S. Satyanath
- Disputing Borders on the Literary Terrain:Translations and the Making of the Genre of 'Partition Literature' - H.Nikhila
- Translation and the Indian Tradition:Some Illustrations, Some Insights - Priyadarshi Patnaik
- Texts on Translation and Translational Norms in Bengal - Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta
- Towards a Theory of Rewriting: Drawing from the Indian Practice - K.M. Sheriff
- Revisiting the Canon Through the *Ghazal* in English - Chandrani Chatterjee, Milind Malshe
- Translation in/and Hindi Literature Avadhesh Kumar Singh
- Translating Gujarati Fiction and Poetry: A Study with Reference to Sundaram's Works - Hemang Desai
- Translation of Bhakti Poetry into English: A Case Study of Narsinh Mehta - Sachin Ketkar
- Translating Romantic Sensibility: Narsinhrao Divetiya's Poetry - Rakesh Desai

BOOK REVIEW

- Locating the 'missing link'? Not Quite Translation and Identity (by Michael Cronin) - Ashokan Nambiar C.
- Theories on the Move: Translation's Role in the Travels of Literary Theories (by Sebnem susam-Sarajeva) - Hariharan

TRANSLATION REVIEW

- A TRANSLATION OR MIS-TRANSLATION? Review of Rimli Bhattacharya's translation of *My Story and My Life as an Actress,* autobiographies of Binodini - Debjani Ray Moulik