

GUEST EDITORIAL

POSTCOLONIAL TRANSLATION

Dr. Anjali Gera Roy is Professor in Dept. of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur - 721302, West Bengal. She has published "Three Great African Novelists: Achebe, Soyinka, Tutuola" (2001 New Delhi: Creative), and several articles on Postcolonial literatures and theory. Her current interests are Culture and Media Studies, Folklore and Translation.

Post-colonialism, a neologism which has entered the literary jargon fairly recently, appears to have made up its mind to stay challenging its many detractors to find a suitable substitute to describe the global condition after the colonial encounter. Whether one chooses to display familiarity with the latest linguistic fads in metropolitan universities by opting for the word 'post-colonial', or plays conservative by preferring the good old 'commonwealth', one cannot deny the close kinship

Translation is the essential premise of post-coloniality. Translation understood as a secondary activity, a derivative discourse dependent on an original text resonates with the dilemmas of post-coloniality. We are all 'translated' men or women irrespective of our disciplinary locations as we translate ideas, institutions, and ideologies originating in settings alien to our own, which doom us to unoriginality. As we discourse in borrowed languages, we are compelled to answer the question: Is there anything outside colonialism?

Definitely, there is. But the self that is outside colonialism lies hidden from the outsider's gaze in our languages to which we must return if we are to recover this self. Unfortunately, these indigenous languages of self-recovery are untranslatable into familiar euro-american categories. This brings us to the incommensurability thesis in Translation. Some of the essays shift the incommensurability thesis from *intralingual* to *interlingual* (=intersemiotic or multisemiotic translation).

The incommensurability premise is further compounded in the cultural terrain where cultural incommensurability is arranged in a hierarchical relation. T S Satyanath's definition of translation as "an act of transfer of knowledge, information and ideas from one language to another" as a colonial enterprise which implies "certain relationships of power among the languages and cultures involved in the process" fits all the essays in this issue including his own. Jharna Sanyal's *Vernacular Dressings and English Redressings*, Purabi Panwar's *Post-colonial Translation: Globalizing Literature* and Swati Ganguly's *Translation and Dissemination* implicate translation in relationships of power. Testifying to the "the importance of

translation in the project of the British Empire", Sanyal points out that "the politics of this metaphorical recasting" in the Preface to *Neel Darpan* lies in "elevating the local cultural markers to universal moral properties". While Sanyal and Panwar trace back the issue of power invested in the translator to the *orientalist* enterprise, Ganguly exposes the politics of translation in the disciplinary formation of post-colonial studies. Its privileged location in the Euro-American Academy enables the monitoring and control of what gets translated, disseminated or read, forcing one to repeat that "postcolonial nations like India also produce significant and powerful Indian regional languages or *bhasha* literatures".

Reading post-colonialism as 'resistance', Meena T Pillai says, "part of the project of postcolonial theory would be to push literary texts into this shifting arena of discursiveness, thus enabling new strands of counter narratives and counter contexts to shape themselves and complicate binarist histories". Reading translation as representation, she proceeds to analyze two subaltern narratives, one displaying "the need to implement discursive strategies to resist translation" and the other "indicating the translatability of the subaltern identity into the master language of the nation". Satyanath reveals "the processes of constructing dominations and counter constructions" by tracing the history of the Kannada translations of Shakespeare in which Shakespeare is reinscribed as Śēkh Pīr. Anjali Gera Roy, borrowing Rushdie's extension of the idea of translation or 'carrying across' to migrancy, cites another instance of post-colonial resistance, of a dislocated community's refusal to be translated into the national language by preserving pre-colonial dialectal difference through its deconstruction of the national language.

The essays by M K Raghavendra, Priyadarshi Patnaik and B Hariharan move into the relatively unexplored realm of intersemiotic translation. B Hariharan seeks to extend the meaning of translation beyond the linguistic to embrace the semiotic and the inchoate. 'A dream, or an orthodox tradition handed down from generation to generation', says he, 'is a text that may also be translated as well as the city'. Hariharan gives examples of translation as a personal enterprise, as a cultural enterprise and as a public enterprise. Raghavendra makes an insight-studded attempt to defend the much-maligned Hindi film against the plagiarism charge by presenting it as 'post-colonial appropriation'. Somadatta Mandal's paper elucidates the work of Tagore as a translator which, to quote her, is 'essentially colonial discourse'. Tutun Mukherjee's paper, the only one not on postcolonialism, is on cultural interference in translation.

Anjali Gera Roy
Guest Editor