Volume 5 Numbers 1 & 2, 2008

TRANSLATION TODAY

Editor
P.P. Giridhar

Guest Editor
M. Sridhar

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.

Translation Today

- seeks a spurt in translation activity.
- 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.

Contributions:

Translation Today welcomes contributions of articles and other suitable material as elucidated above for its issues in the following areas:

Annotated and original translations of all literary genres, translated excerpts from novels are accepted where they stand on their own, glossaries in any subject in any language-pair (Indian Languages TO Indian Languages or Indian Languages TO English or English TO Indian Languages), specialties in the translation profession: religious, technical, scientific, legal, commercial, specialities in the interpreting profession: court, conference, medical and community, multimedia, terminology, localization, translation technology: HAMT, translation memory softwares, translation teaching softwares, papers on translation as a category of or a significant dimension of thought, pieces relating translation to society, to culture, to philosophy, to poetics, to aesthetics, to epistemology, to ontology, to movements like feminism, subalternism, to power and so on, translation universals etc., to awareness's like civilisational space, nationalism, identity, the self, the other and so on, on translation pedagogy, translation curriculum, translation syllabus etc., ethics, status, and future of the profession, translator-related issues, translator studies: legal, copyright issues etc., squibs and discussion notes which are short pieces throwing up an interesting problem or analytical puzzle, reviews of translated texts, dictionaries and softwares, Letters to the Editor.

Submission:

All submissions, contributions and queries should be addressed to:

P. P. Giridhar Ph D
Central Institute of Indian languages,
Hunsur road
Manasagangotri,
Mysore 570006.

This journal is available in electronic version at
www.anukriti.net

TRANSLATION TODAY

Editor
P.P. Giridhar

Guest Editor
M. Sridhar

Volume 5 Numbers 1 & 2, 2008

Central Institute of Indian Languages
Publication No. 595

Translation Today
VOLUME 5, NOs. 1 & 2, 2008

Editor: P.P. Giridhar

ISSN-0972-8740

Single Issue: INR Rs. 125; US $ 4; EURO 3; POUND 2.5 including postage (air-mail)

Published by Prof. Rajesh Sachdeva, Director,
Cover Design: H. Manohar, CIIL Printing Press
Printed by Mr. S.B. Biswas, Manager,
CIIL Printing Press, Manasagangotri, Hunsur Road,
Mysore-570 006, India.

to

the memory of Meenakshi Mukherjee
(who spent a lifetime, promoting and dignifying Indian Writing)

In This Issue

GUEST EDITORIAL

ARTICLES

Guest Editorial

It was when I was requested to speak to the participants of a Refresher Course in Translation at CIIL in 2003 and I conducted a workshop on the reviewing of translations that the idea of organisng a seminar on the reviewing of translated texts occured to me. When I broached the matter with the then Director of CIIL, Professor Udaya Narayana Singh, he readily agreed. The seminar was organised subsequently through the Translation wing of the CIIL under Dr. P. P. Giridhar's stewardship. The seminar titled "How (not) to Review Translated Texts." was organised in the Department of English, University of Hyderabad and was cosponsored by CIIL and the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi on 19-20 January 2007. The seminar brought together almost all the players — reviewers of translation, editors of review magazines, readers of translated texts, translators and translation studies scholars — in an attempt to take stock of the revieiwing scene in the field of translation, to critically evaluate its role and offer useful steps for its improvement. Fifteen of the papers read at the seminar have been put together in the present issue of *Translation Today.* The papers thus reflect many aspects of the process of translation-reviewing. At the outset I thank Dr. P. P. Giridhar and the Director, CIIL for allowing me to guest-edit the proceedings of the seminar. I thank each of the contributors for having waited long for the publication of the papers.

I must pause to submit that most of the papers — and my theme paper perhaps meant this without explicitly stating it — are on reviewing of translations of 'literary texts' though many of the issues they discuss have a bearing on other translated texts as well. While this may have restricted the scope of the theme of reviewing translations, some of the papers have focussed on reviewing of books in general that make the volume useful to anyone interested in the phenomenon of reviewing as well.

As the format of the journal allows for an abstract at the beginning of each of the articles, I am not going to dwell on each of the articles in detail but deal with some of the issues they raise.

One of the issues they raise concerns the identity of the translator, an issue that is largely ignored by reviewers. The presence at large of the 'original' author obviously overshadows the identity of the translator making him invisible. Reasons for the effacement of the translator's name in the reviews is also explained in terms of the role of the publishers of translated texts who relegate the translator's name to an obscure corner of the book. K. M. Sherrif suggests that translation review should be treated as 'an instance of cultural interface.' He believes, rightly, that this will ensure that it does not remian mere 'promotional material' for the book. It will also help in terms of its discussion not being restricted to the quality of the translation, but its ideological implications. Meena Pillai discusses the ill effects of treating a translation from another culture into one's own as a 'domestic inscription' rather than as 'one that bears the function of intercultural communication.' In fact, she terms such practice of translation as bad translation ethics as it does not respect the linguistic and cultural differences of the source text. She seems to suggest that without a 'more punctilious scrutiny of the process of assimilation of the "foreign" and "other Indian" traditions and texts into Malayalam' and a lack of theoretical and critical engagement with the practice of translation the reviewing of translation is bound to degenerate.

Ought the reviewer to know the source language to be able to do a good job of reviewing? The response to this question has been mixed. Looking at it from the point of view of a reader of translations, Meenakshi Mukherjee rightly points out the negative aspect of choosing a reviewer who knows the source language and says that such a person 'is not likely to be satisfied with any translation because it will never approximate to the original.' On the contrary, such a reviewer perhaps is best suited to the task as s/he alone is in a position to judge the translation as a cultural transaction between the languages. She makes an interesting observation that drama is one of the most vibrant fields of translation activity wherein translation 'is done out of a real and immediate need (performance) and there is a spontaneous feedback from the audience.' She rightly points out that though each

performed text is not printed subsequently, here is an instance of drama reviewing, albeit as performance and not as translation.

Anand Mahanand emphasises the need for a shift in the reading of translations from focussing mainly on the target language to the source culture, especially when the source texts are oral narratives that involve different levels of transmission. Reviews of oral narratives, he says, must pay attention to the several stages involved in process of translation of such texts.

That review of translated texts must be done by specialists trained in the discipline of translation is emphatically made by Mahasweta as it involves issues such as conformity/non-conformity to the target language system, abridging source texts etc. She provides a clue to the state of affairs in translation, of translators who do not 'even know why or how they would re-write the original without distorting or editing it in any way' and of reviewers who are content to 'dissect the characteristics of the original, of analyzing what the original text had to offer.' She says that the translators 'need to know the two languages sensitively enough to disentangle the ambiguities and the polyvalence of the original and transfer it to the target language as best as possible' and that we need reviewers who understand that translation involves 'very important questions regarding inter-cultural transfers. One might agree that a familiarity with the issues in the discipline of Translation Studies may make one a good reviewer of translated texts, but would it necessarily make one a good translator? One is tempted to ask this question because she does raise questions regarding the making of a writer and critic.

The view that a reviewer of translation needs to be a specialist is reiterated in Tutun Mukherjee's article where she refers to J. M. Coetzee's Reviewer as Reader (RAR) who, as the 'ideal receptor' and 'quality control officer,' is expected to have 'a certain degree of competence in the subject and expertise in the process involved,' an expertise which 'may not be required of any other reader.'

While we see the point that an awareness of the issues involved in the semantic and cultural transfers involved in the activity of

translation may certainly enhance the understanding of translators and reviewers, the question is: how do we understand the position taken by N. Venugopal, a translator and a reviewer himself, who argues that a translator has 'the duty to edit the original text keeping in view the sensibilities and linguistic and cultural traditions of the target language'? This duty would obviously involve his trust in the translator's knowing what is best for the target culture. This inevitably brings in the subjectivity and ideology of the translator. Such a position takes us close to the view that 'translation was always determined by target-accessibility and therefore, had to conform to the norms of the target literary system,' a view Mahasweta contests in her article.

What is a good translation review seems to be the easiest and yet the most difficult question to satisfactorily answer. Most articles here have dealt with this question as the title of the seminar 'How (Not) to Review Translated Texts' urges them to do. Kamala, for instance, says that 'what constitutes a good translation review depends on a number of parameters determined by its intended audience.' All the same, invoking Sujit Mukherjee, she zeroes in on what must find a place in a good review — the name(s) of the translator(s), the date of the original work/translation, the translation policy followed by the translator(s) or lack of any mention of it, the editorial policy of the publishing house including information about whether it is a first translation, a re-translation or a self-translation, the reasons for the choice of author and work for translation as well as the inclusion or exclusion of certain elements for translation, certain features that stand out in the translation and the positive points in the translated work.

Padikkal wishes to look at literature as a product of culture and says that in the very process of production of culture, it also re-produces or modifies or modifies culture according to the social aspirations of the social group that creates literary texts. He therefore sees review, reception, critical engagement etc., as representing the nature of the emerging culture at a given point in time in history. He considers translated texts (presumably from English) into the Indian languages during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as

having performed the role of changing the literary relations in these languages and as having even rewritten the histories of these literatures. He avers that translators have used English models to 'write modernity' into Indian languages. Consequently, their translations were not bound by principles of fidelity, but freely interpreted the source texts in order to fashion a new language into their culture. Drawing on Tejaswini Niranjana, he refers to this humanistic notion, wherein translators attempt to exclude themselves from the text in order to present it as a unified and transparent whole, as the commonsense notion that prevails in India. He sees the prevalence of this notion as one of the major reasons why reviewers do not mention the translator. How do we understand this in terms of the notions of the so-called 'invisibility' of translators? Isn't the 'invisibility' of the translator in any translation just a pose or a pretence? Aren't the ideologies that govern any translation practice, stated or otherwise, always already inscribed in the product?

Panchanan Mohanty, Ramaswamy and Ramesh Malik feel that review and evaluation of translations must include comparison of translations of the same text, wherever they exist as they help us understand the intentions behind such efforts. They also point out that a translator's scholarship on the authors being translated certainly contributes to the quality of the translations. While the criteria they set for themselves for deciding on a good translation are mainly drawn from the principle of proximity to the original, the conclusion they arrive at by analysing two translations of Phakir Mohan Senapati makes them support the position that it is preferable to translate from L2 to L1, and not vice-versa.. Does this mean one can arrive close to a source text which is not in one's own language, only when one translates into one's own language? Doesn't this support theories of native speaker's competence?

This brings us to the article by Subbarayudu. He begins his article on a review of a recent translation of the Telugu play, *Kanyasulkam* by Vijayasree and Vijay Kumar into English wherein the reviewer suggests that 'translations of such classical works ought

to be done by eminent Telugu scholars whose literary-historical, cultural and dialectal credentials are impeccable, in collaboration with English/American translators whose authority over English and its dialects/variants would enable them to suggest appropriate equivalents.' The only concession the reviewer seems to give is that the translation can be done by a non-native speaker in collaboration with a native speaker. Perhaps, just the native speaker of English would not be in a position to acquire the desired the scholarship of the author he may be translating!

Doesn't all this bring us inevitably to the question of equivalence? Translation is impossible if we believe that each language is so unique and interprets the world, each in its own way. Or we must believe that we need different languages precisely because they are very different as they help us understand the world we live in multiple ways. Looked at from this angle, translation bypasses the question of equivalence per se. Perhaps this is the reason for the re-emergence of adaptation and rewriting. The 'cultural turn' in Translation Studies may thus be viewed as a celebration of multilingualism as well.

That reviewing of translations is carried out in the most haphazard manner, giving summaries of what seem like a review of the source text, not mentioning the name of the translator, inattention to the quality of translation, the publishing firm's and reviewing magazine's responsibility in this matter are aspects that have been raised by most of the articles. Drawing on some of these aspects, Sachidananda Mohanty underscores the point that caught in the tangle between questions of fidelity and betrayal, discussions of translation seem to concentrate on the product rather than the process. Good translation reviewing, he argues, must look into the location of the translator, the manner in which s/he deals with textual traditions and contextual factors, the knowledge of intellectual or publication history s/he brings to bear on reviewing, its role in the shaping of literary change and development and in the creation of new genres. Extending Bassnett's comment on the ethical role of translation, he posits an ethical role for reviewing. He says that 'it is also a battle 'against the

dictates of the globalised culture that seeks to level down all differences, specificities and diversities.'

Sindhu Menon takes us to some interesting early translator-reviewer exchanges in the English context to say that though the reviewing scene may not have changed drastically since then, in terms of charges of lack of fidelity to the original, it certainly has lost its 'cut and thrust ability of riposte which had at least made the early reviews readable.' She is concerned about the non-acceptability in the academic world of the English translations from Malayalam or Telugu or Urdu or Hindi while translations of Tolstoy and Plato, or Marquez and Borges have gained a canonical status. Moving from general principles of reviewing for the mass media, she attributes bad instances of translation-reviewing, where the reviewers' desire to parade their own 'multilingual skills as far better than the translator's, could delay the acceptance of texts translated from Indian languages.'

In his detailed response to each of the questions posed in the theme paper for the seminar, Sudhakar Marathe attempts to focus on each issue from the point of view of the translator, the reviewer and the publisher and provides answers. He underlines the sad state of translation reviewing in India, analyses the causes for it that stem from the culture of reviewing in general. Among the concrete suggestions he makes for the improvement of the situation are the need for 'a set of journals or significant portions of existing journals exclusively devoted to translation reviewing, for which purpose publishers and editors of newspapers and magazines need to be educated concerning the importance of translation,' for 'highly qualified as well as sensitive reviewers' who alone must review translations and for 'translators who are honest and open-minded enough to confront criticism and valuations' of their work.

Writing from the point of view of a publisher (viz. of IRB, a successful review magazine), Subashree Krishnaswamy emphasises that the fact that the 'work comes to us "filtered" through the "translator's lens" can never be forgotten or ignored.' She classifies

the reviewers into those who are 'translation-blind,' those who are 'translation-aware' and the 'nitpickers.' She is concerned about reviewing that praises a translation saying that 'it reads so well that one forgets it is a translation,' which is a sure reflection of the translator's invisibility. Drawing on Venuti, she argues for the reviewers' attention to the 'bumps on the surface' of the translations that allow for 'the cadences of the original language and culture to be heard.' She wants reviewers 'who never lose sight of the fact that the book is a translation and [who] view the translator as a special kind of writer, possessing not an originality that competes with the author's, but rather an art which uses the stylistic devices that tap into the literary resources of both the languages.'

There are references in the articles to the role of market forces, forces that have a definite bearing on the kind of translations that get published, the way translators are mentioned in translated works and the kind of reviewing they receive. I wish we had an article or two from the point of view of translation publishers to know their perspective. From my own point of view as a translator, I cannot refrain from mentioning the pressures exerted by publishers on translators to ensure that translations become eminently readable. Of course, one understands their concern for quality and for a finished product that has to be ultimately marketed. What measures can we put in place to see that the complex process of translation which happens through a negotiation between the writer of the source text, the translator and the publisher gets highlighted? And how does one protect the rights of the translator as that 'special kind of writer' who must become more and more visible, and more and more recognised?

Hyderabad
19-09-09.

M. Sridhar
University of Hyderabad

SLT, TLT and the 'Other': The Triangular Love Story of Translation

Tutun Mukherjee

Abstract

Literary translation is not a scientific procedure but involves a personal initiative towards the mediation of languages and cultures. The translator's task is to determine how to change one text into another while preserving the original text's meaning. The act of negotiation between the source language text/culture and the target language text/culture requires a delicate balance, of engaging with exciting and provocative strategies of transference and language use at every turn. Having covered the whole gamut of perspectives —from the notions of 'traduttore traditore', 'invisibility' of the translator and 'transparency' of translation to the 'beauty/fidelity' and 'imaginative interpretation' debates — translation is poised at a self-conscious moment, calling attention to its 'madness,' the process of its coming into being. This paper will probe the way the new strategy of 'bringing the reader/ reviewer to the text' further complicates the tension-filled relationship of SLT, TLT and the translator.

Let me begin by invoking a metaphor for translation. There have been many such metaphors used in the past by theorists to define translation: as treachery, as parasite, as bridge and even as predator or cannibal. It has also been conceived of as friend or deliverer. For me, the act of translation seems an attempt to connect two shores or cultural continents. In the rocking boat that is buffeted by currents of theory and strategies of language use, sits the translator keeping a steady hand on the rudder of her/his vessel and trying to steer a balanced course. Just as from one day to the other the mood of the weather changes, so from one cultural moment to another the processes of writing change languages. As the moving finger of Time documents,

neither do the components of a language remain the same, nor do two cultures continue to use language in the same way. Michael Cronin notes the challenge that the translator must confront of conveying *mnemonic time* [past, historical or pertaining to memory] into *instantaneous* time [current context] (Cronin 2003: 71). What, then, urges the translator to take on the risky task of trying to find a precarious passageway between texts of two languages and two cultures and initiate a dialogue of familiarity between them spanning space and time? The answer would echo that of an adventurer who is called by the undiscovered realms to go forth and encounter and/or experience the unfamiliar, although feeling 'at sea' with the moorings severed by the already known and the already written, yet excited with the promise of possibilities, setting sail rather in the spirit of Rabindranath Tagore's Dhananjay Bairagi:

> I shall sail the seas of injury
> through the terrible storms
> in my fear-dispelling little boat … [translation: mine]

Literary translation is not a scientific procedure. It involves a personal initiative towards the mediation of languages and cultures. When making a choice, the translator invariably answers the call of certain texts. Texts have different voices. Some voices carry more appeal to a translator at a particular point of time, a certain kind of music that attracts attention and invites deeper engagement. Like being pulled inexorably by the song of the sirens, the translator-sailor responds to the secret music of texts and sets sail towards unknown shores. But yes indeed, rowing a rocking boat between two cultural shores is a complicated and risky business.

The above metaphor serves as the *leit motif* of this article. The secret pull of a text beckons the translator with the thrill of embarking upon a labour of re-familiarization with the genealogy of the chosen text. The translator may gradually be able to establish a bond with the text of the source language or SLT. This bond has generally been acknowledged to be of two types: (1) an interpretative process that a Reader-as-Translator or RAT can set into motion by a simple engagement with the text; or (2) that of total surrender to the

geist of the text by a translator who seeks its transference into another language. If the first premise is taken to suggest that all translation is interpretation and therefore translators can inflect the originals in ways unintended by the original authors, it revives the anxieties of *traduttore, traditore* debates. The second idea of 'surrender' may be offensive to some people as it seems to suggest the effacement of a person's critical sensibility and might therefore revive the debates of 'fidelity' or the 'feminization' of the act of translation [Lawrence Venuti has also taken up for critical discussion the notion of the translator's 'visibility' as a traitor/betrayer/failure and 'invisibility' as a servant when considered in relation to the SLT]. Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak (1998) enunciates two thumb rules for the latter type of relationship in her essay on 'The Politics of Translation.' She suggests that "the task of the translator is to surrender herself to the linguistic rhetoricity of the original text. …the not unimportant minimal consequence of ignoring the task is the loss of "the literarity and textuality and sensuality of writing"' (Spivak 1998: 189). Spivak's second advice is that the translator "must be able to discriminate on the terrain of the original" (Spivak ibid).

Since the trends of discussion in Translation Studies through the nineties have tried to strike a fine balance between *prescription* and *description* — theory to aid practice — it will be helpful here to dwell upon some of the points raised above since they may very well serve as indicators for translators. First, it must be accepted that the initial exploring step of a RAT towards the SLT must gradually evolve into a deeper relationship which demands the translator's surrender to the SLT. The point to remember here is that the translator surrenders to the text and not to its writer to be able to satisfactorily transfer via translation a distinctive socio-cultural world into another. In 1990, the two eminent Translation Studies scholars Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere highlighted what they termed as the 'cultural turn' as the sensitivity which had become manifest in the translation practice for quite some time [most certainly in the postcolonial ethos]. Their view was that 'neither the word, nor the text, but the culture becomes the operational "unit" of translation' (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990: 8). Their idea was hailed by Edwin Gentzler, one of the leading synthesizers of translation theory, as the "real breakthrough for the field of translation studies" (Gentzler 2001: xi). What these theorists are trying to stress is the translator's need to inhabit the milieu of the SLT. A translator

who does not become a part of the text's moment may end up with a vessel that will flounder at sea. This can and has often happened. The example that postcolonial theorists are fond of citing is the way scholars of the First World have sometimes approached the texts of the Third World. Instances of such practice are easy to find but to always view translation as an instrument of the colonizer's ideological machinery would be as flawed as to assume that a translator familiar with a text's ethos and contexts invariably succeeds in transferring the sense and the cultural specificities of the SLT into the target language. Let me try to clarify the above point by looking at some critical reviews.

While one need not cite the instances of the 'colonial', or Orientalist type of translations, which are many, there is the need, however, to acknowledge the equally numerous examples of earnest engagement with texts of the Third World by scholars of the First World which have resulted in remarkable and deeply satisfying cultural negotiations. What comes immediately to mind is the noteworthy instance of William Radice's (2004) interactive engagement with Clinton B. Seeley's translation of Michael Madhusudan Dutt's *Meghnad-Badh Kabya* when both of them were making independent efforts to translate the challenging poem. In a review essay carried in the web-zine *Parabaas*, Radice (2004) mulls the various aspects of Clinton's translation and his own and the differences between the two attempts, the differences being the function of the choices made by them during the process of translation vis-à-vis the poem's language, metre and rhythm. This is yet another example of the richness and fecundity of the SLT and the resourcefulness and the inventiveness of the translators in producing almost conterminously two versions of the same text in the target Language.

Perfectly conscious of the fact that sweeping generalizations are obvious intellectual traps, I would only like to draw attention to two more interesting discussions to continue the thread of the argument: one, by Douglas Robinson whose review essay locates Eric Cheyfitz's *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from 'The Tempest' to 'Tarzan'* at the other extreme of the 'colonial' attitude in

translation and finds Cheyfitz's analyses seriously flawed by, what he describes as, the rather common view of the pre-colonial society as a utopia and translation as the colonizer's demonic tool (Robinson 1998: 63-77); two, by Ketaki Kushari Dyson (2003) who examines in an intensive workshop-like manner the volume *No Symbol, No Prayer* presenting the translation of Bengali poet Bijoya Mukhopadhyay's poems by Carolyne Wright, Paramita Banerjee and Sunil B. Ray, done in collaboration with the poet (Dyson, 2003). Dyson points out the errors/oversights in the transference of cultural specificities by the translators despite being contemporaries of the poet and aided by a native speaker of the target language [Appendix 1]. It would appear that the errors resulted from certain complacencies which more research and deeper involvement with the poems [and perhaps more humility] could have prevented. In his article, 'Perils of Translation', Tim Parks suggests that the more the translator gets to know the source culture and language, the less able s/he becomes in conveying its difference in another language. Parks feels that the 'dependence of acculturation' makes the independence of translation increasingly difficult (qtd. in Cronin 2003: 38). Dyson's study is exceptional and can serve as a manual or a practical 'handbook' — of the kind that Coetzee appreciates [see below] — for aspiring translators to illustrate the contemplation and rigour the act of translation demands.

Spivak's second advice that one should be able to 'discriminate on the terrain of the original' (Spivak 1998) actually urges the translator to exercise her critical sensibilities in the choice of the text in view of its socio-cultural contexts. Spivak's choice is Mahasweta Devi because she is 'unlike her scene' (Spivak 1998: 189) and because the motivation of Mahasweta Devi's writing is resistant to the customary social, political and economic practices of her time. Spivak explains that critical perspectives can 'radicalize the field of preparation so that simply boning up on the language is not enough; there is also the special relationship to the staging of language as the production of agency that one must attend to' (Spivak 1998: 189). The translator's familiarity with the text and the processes of its production must be

such that a critically nuanced reading would emerge as its translation. Then the possibility of coming to appreciate how translation works in specific contexts, how translation shapes cultures both at and within their boundaries, would offer a powerful motivation to push on despite the difficulty of the undertaking. This aim is potentially of great consequence, not just for Literary Studies and Translation Studies but also for the future of the cultures involved which would bring the theoretical frameworks within which translation studies are conducted and the practice of translation under constant review.

Our attention so far has been on the nature of the relationship of the translator with the SLT. Let us now look at the other shore, of the target language. It is expected that the translator is proficient in the language of transference and is sufficiently knowledgeable about the literary and cultural history. No doubt the poststructuralist notion inspired by Derridian theories that all communicative language is a form of translation in which it is an illusion to speak of the original, has problematized the role of translation. More disturbing is the contention that since each language constructs the world in a different way, any translation is bound to force the text into what Peter France describes as the 'disfiguring disguise of an alien idiom' (France 2000a). Yet a translator's task remains an attempt at an approximation of the SLT as the TLT, introducing into the latter the flavours of the SLT. In this regard, the debates over 'word-for-word' and 'sense-for-sense' style of translation have prevailed since the time of Cicero, Demosthenes and Jerome. Actually, the translator's relationship with TLT is a freer one. To illumine the case of discovering a new continent of meaning offered to the sailor-translator, one could appropriate here what Jean Genet says in *The Thief's Journal,* 'Though it was at my heart's bidding that I chose the universe wherein I delight, I at least have the power of finding therein the many meanings I wish to find there…' (Genet 2004: 5). Thus the translator can weave into the TLT the many dimensions of the SLT which her intimate relationship with the text has allowed her to discover, carrying across as much locality and specificity as she can find.

Communication is, after all, meant for some one. When there is an 'addresser,' there must also be an 'addressee' or the receptor of the communicative act. Translation is meant for the reader/receptor. Marking a radical shift in the translation theories of his time, Frederic Schleiermacher presented the translator with a rather dramatic choice: either to leave the reader undisturbed and take the author to the reader in a literalist mode of transference; or take the reader to the author by flouting the norms of the target language in a 'foreignizing' mode. This dilemma has swayed the practice of translation through the ages. For instance, while on the one hand, Walter Benjamin's 'Task of the Translator' seems to suggest that translation fails when it aims at making the communication of the meaning of words paramount, on the other hand, defending his translation of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, Vladimir Nabokov writes that ornamentation must be eschewed to give the readers a precise rendering of contextual meaning. Lawrence Venuti offers a choice to the translator in negotiating either 'domestication' or 'foreignization' as the strategy for transferring the source text into the target language.

As is clear, there can be as many strategies and points of view determining the practice of translation as translators. In the new century, having run through the entire gamut of theories and strategies, translation is poised at a self-conscious moment, calling attention to its 'madeness' or 'the process of its coming into being', as J.M. Coetzee describes:

> Translation seems to me a craft in a way that cabinet-making is a craft. There is no substantial theory of cabinet-making, and no philosophy of cabinet-making except the ideal of being a good cabinet-maker, plus a handful of precepts relating to tools and to types of wood. For the rest, what there is to be learned must be learned by observation and practice. The only book on cabinet-making I can imagine that might be of use to the practitioner would be a humble handbook.

The attention directed at the 'artifice' or the 'madeness' of translation leads logically to what Mona Baker (1998) in her editorial

remarks in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* proposes as the catchword in current empirical research: the movement from *translational* to a more *translatorial* orientation [the concept first developed by Justa Holz-Manttari in 1984 as *Translatorisches Handeln*], which offers a function-related approach to the theory and practice of translation.

In the global marketplace, every stage of production, consumption, and dissemination contributes to the over-all quality of the product. Evidently, the process of producing a translation is a complex and fascinating one involving the negotiation between source and the target text. But the success of the process must be assessed by the consumer, who in this case is the addressee/ receptor/ reader. A reviewer-as-reader [RAR] may thus be regarded as the 'ideal receptor': 'ideal' because certain degree of competence in the subject and expertise in the process involved are taken for granted, which may not be required of any other reader. Standing apart as the 'Other' from the triangular and intimate relationship between the SLT-translator-TLT, the RAR must shoulder the responsibility of providing a balanced assessment of the entire enterprise, rather in the manner of a 'quality-control officer'. This is an extremely important role since the reviewer's assessment very often influences the general response to the product and thereby governs to a large extent the dissemination of the product in terms of its value in the marketplace.

The RAR is thus both desirable and necessary to complete the cycle of production-consumption-circulation of the translated text as capital goods. Hence, the reviewer must maintain a distanced and neutral [non-biased] stance of the 'Other'. There is, of course, every possibility that the reviewer becomes the villain of the piece, capable of souring the idyllic love story of SLT and TLT. The reviewer is of course free of all pressures and must clearly and logically articulate her/his views. However, in this context one would do well to remember Peter France's (2002b) description of translators as 'the post-horses

of civilization,' his reminder that: 'finding fault is not the main thing. It is all too easy to criticize translators for deforming, adulterating, or otherwise betraying the original, but more rewarding to seek to understand and enjoy the variety of translation projects and translation practices. Good translations are good books in their own right, not just reflections of good books' (France: http://www.oup.co.uk/academic/ humanities/literature/viewpoint/peter_france)**.** The blog-like invitation (to the seminar on whose proceedings the present volume is based – Editor) to debate 'How [not] to Review Translation' is therefore both timely and relevant for emphasizing the role of the Reviewer as Receptor whose feed-back is intended to monitor the translatorial acts of future translations.

To add a personal angle to the discussion, I can merely share the experience of reviews of my books. I take the example of a recent volume of mine which presents a composite of women's writing, theatre and translation. The contiguity of the subjects was emphasized through my long Introduction. The volume has so far been reviewed by four 'ideal receptors'. The interesting fact is that three reviewers assess it according to their own area of interest or expertise: that is, the volume as a contribution to either women's writing or theatre studies or translation scholarship – each excludes the other dimensions in considering the worth of the work. Only one reviewer [of the four] tries to synthesize all the aspects in her assessment. Though very gratifying in themselves, the reviews further illustrate the complex terrain of Receptor Evaluation and the challenging task of the Reviewer as the ideal reader.

The sea may be choppy. But travel, one must… in search of new continents and the never-ending love story.

References

Baker, Mona (ed.) (2001) *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies,* London & New York: Routledge.

Bassnett, Susan (1998) "The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies" in Bassnett and Lefevere (eds) *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation,* UK: Multilingual Matters, 123-140.

Bassnett, Susan and André Lefevere (eds) (1990) *Translation, History and Culture,* London & New York: Pinter.

Bassnett, Susan and Harish Trivedi (eds) (1999) *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice,* London and New York: Routledge.

Cheyfitz, Eric (1991) *The Poetics of Imperialism. Translation and Colonization from 'TheTempest' to 'Tarzan',* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Coetzee, J.M. (2005) "Roads to Translation: How a Novelist Related to His Translators' Tongues: On Translation," *Meanjin* 64: 4.

http://www.meanjin.unimelb.edu.au/back_issue_2005_4.html

Cronin, Michael (2003) *Translation and Globalization,* London and New York: Routledge.

Dyson, Ketaki Kyshari (2003) "How hard should we try? – Questions of detail in literary translation", July *Parabaas Reviews*.

http://www.parabaas.com/translation/database/reviews/KKD_Review.html

France, Peter (2000a) Introduction. *Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation,* Oxford and London: Oxford University Press, xix-xxii.

— (2000b) "Peter France on the Art of the Translator"

http://www.oup.co.uk/academic/humanities/literature/viewpoint/peter_france

Genet, Jean (2001) *The Thief's Journa* (rpt. 2004), New York: Olympia.

Gentzler, Edwin (2001) *Contemporary Translation Theories,* UK: Multilingual Matters.

Radice, William (2004) "Reflections on Clinton B. Seeley's Translation of *Meghnad-Badh Kabya*", September *Parabaas Reviews.* http://parabaas.com/translation/database/reviews/radice_meghanad.html

Robinson, Douglas (1998) *Translation and Empire: Postcolonial Theories Explained*, Manchester: St. Jerome.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (1998) "Politics of Translation" in Tutun Mukherjee (ed.) *Translation: From Periphery to Centrestage,* New Delhi: Prestige, 98-119.

Venuti, Lawrence (ed.) (1992) *Rethinking Translation. Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology,* London and New York: Routledge.

— (1995) *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation,* London and New York: Routledge.

Appendix 1

The full essay can be read in *Parabaas (*July, 2003)

"How hard should we try? – Questions of detail in literary translation"

Ketaki Kushari Dyson

…To me, 'What is the purpose of translation?' is the crucial question. What we decide to call 'a good translation' depends on the answer we give to that first question. Whenever I undertake any task of translation, I ask myself: what is the purpose of this particular task that I am taking on? There could indeed be a plurality of purposes in any single task, so the idea of what is a good translation needs to be broad and accommodating rather than narrow and rigid. I certainly think that the quality of literary vitality can be conveyed in translation, and I believe that our attitude to form needs to be flexible. The question of mistakes is an intriguing one. Some mistakes may be of the straightforward kind (say, a word or phrase inadvertently missed out, or a word misunderstood) regarding which we can reach an immediate agreement; with other mistakes, it may be necessary to have quite a long discussion before any such consensus can be reached; and sometimes slightly different interpretations are entirely possible, so that translators (and scholars) will have to agree to differ. A few mistakes do not invalidate the whole work, and shifts of meaning are inevitable when a text moves from the terrain of one language to the terrain of another. In that case, how hard should we try? I think we have to try our best without getting wound up about it. I would like to illustrate this with examples, using some English translations of the Bengali poet Vijaya Mukhopadhyay which have been published as a booklet. I hope to focus on concrete examples in the spirit of a workshop. Through such focusing we can raise our awareness of the practical issues involved in the craft of literary translation and improve our skills.

…I think most practising translators would agree that nowadays there is far too much preoccupation with theory in academic circles and not enough understanding of the nitty-gritty of the actual task. I would like my contribution to be as in a real workshop, a hard-nosed dive into details. At the end of the day, literary translation is a creative and imaginative art and a practical craft in its own right, requiring very special writing and problem-solving skills. I shall take all my examples from a booklet of translations from the poetry of the contemporary Bengali poet Vijaya Mukhopadhyay (b. 1937), entitled *No symbol, No Prayer,* published by Cambridge India (Educational Publishers), Calcutta, in 2001. The translators are Carolyne Wright in conjunction with Paramita Banerjee and Sunil B. Ray, and in collaboration with the author. I have chosen this booklet as the basis of my presentation as it is a serious and on the whole reasonably competent effort, and yet certain 'problematic' areas remain in it, even after—or is it partly because of?— such a collaborative effort, and despite the close consultation with the poet which is supposed to have taken place. Vijaya is an articulate woman and I would have thought quite capable of discussing fine points with her translators; nevertheless, the residual 'problems' indicate how easy it is for gaps to develop when, as in this case, two or more parties with different cultural backgrounds and professional trainings, and varying levels of ability in the two relevant languages, are trying to communicate.

Certainly, what I am referring to as 'problems' do not invalidate the whole work, but if the main purpose of issuing a book like this is to generate interest in the work of a particular poet amongst those who cannot read his/her original texts, to capture a new readership for that poet, then is an even finer attention to detail required to do justice to the poetry and to capture the attention of new readers in an age when fewer and fewer people are reading poetry in the first place? Twentieth-century poetry is frequently dense and concentrated, with a special reliance on images and oblique innuendoes, and more often than not there is no story-line to carry the reader through. Modern poetry in translation is therefore particularly vulnerable to flagging reader-attention: if the translated texts lack vitality and vibrancy, if

they lack the accent of poetry and sound prosaic, readers soon go to sleep. There is no *one* way, or *perfect* way, to translate a poem, but I believe that we can sometimes see better ways to do this or that, and that translation skills, like any other craft skills, can be polished and improved.

Vijaya, a qualified Sanskritist, is a poet who uses words extremely carefully. Her poetry is lean and taut, characterized by precision, economy, irony, and acerbity. A rigorous and masterly approach to language is needed to capture the distinctive flavour of her poetry.

…My goal is to improve our understanding of the nature of the task, to see how we may tackle problems on the ground and refine our techniques. We can never hope to improve our techniques unless we learn to focus on details. And it is the overall competence of the translators that makes such a focus all the more rewarding and educative. My queries and suggestions are offered with humility, and with due respect to all the translators. Looking at smallish samples is dictated by the format of this workshop and the time-limit. So let me plunge into the job *in medias res.* My first bundle of notes is called:

Some simple examples

কাগজ পোড়ানো ঝুরো টিপ পর কপালে
সন্ধ্যামালতীর থোকা গুঁজে দে খোঁপায়
('পুঁটিকে সাজে না')

on your forehead put a dot of "bindi" powder/ made from
burnt postal cards,
put a sprig of jasmine in your hair ('That's not for Puti')

I am not sure that 'sandhyamalati' is jasmine. I suspect it is a local name for a completely different flower. As far as I know, it is a small bush with purplish flowers. If Vijaya Mukhopadhyay had really meant jasmine, would she not have written 'jui'? The editor of *Parabaas*

and myself have had a lot of discussion about the identity of the 'sandhyamalati'.

Mirabilis jalapa, sent to us as*sandhyamalati* by the photographer Arunangshu Sinha.

What some of us know as 'sandhyamalati' is called 'sandhyamoni' or 'krishnakali' (the *Mirabilis jalapa*) by some others. This flower blossoms in the evening ('sandhya'). There is also considerable diversity in the interpretation of the name 'malati'. If it is interpreted as 'jasmine', as it sometimes is, then 'sandhyamalati' could indeed be interpreted as 'evening-flowering jasmine', a sprig of which would be appropriate on a woman's hair...

I was shown the 'malati' plant, a climbing shrub with fragrant white flowers. Does all this matter? That will depend on the translator's overall approach to local details. Personally, I like to carry over as much detail as can be accommodated in the target language without upsetting the poetical balance, and in this case I would have gone for the simple option of retaining the original name and adding a note. I am intrigued why this was not an option for these translators when they took much greater trouble in the immediately preceding line, resulting in a somewhat heavy-footed line, where six words have become fourteen, and the poetry has been compromised by a cumbersome explanation. The Hindi word 'bindi' itself requires an explanation, as does the process of 'tip'-making referred to, neither of which is provided. To attract new readers, the translation of poetry needs to be 'sharp' and rhythmic, not bland or tired or stale. One could have written:

'*put a dot of burnt-paper powder on your forehead*,
stick a sprig of sandhyamalati in your coiled hair ...'

and added appropriate notes.

What about the following example? –

সমস্ত বাহুল্য খুলে রাখলাম
তুলে নিলাম ঘোমটা, সোনার টায়রা, সিঁথিমৌর।
('যোগ্যতার জন্য')

'I have removed all my trinkets,
have lifted off my veil, my gold tiara and hair ornaments'. ('To Be Worthy')

I feel there is a question of interpretation here: the philosophical force of 'bahulya' is not conveyed by the word 'trinkets'. What the poetic persona is saying is closer to: *Look, I am divesting myself of all superfluities.* As in the original text, a period would be appropriate after the first line, which is making a general statement, after which come some specific details of ongoing action in the second line. And 'sinthimour' is one detail the precision of which needed to be respected. It is the sola crown worn by bride and groom. The phrase 'hair ornaments', in the plural, is too vague and fudges the issue. After all, 'tiara' is also a hair ornament. The difference between the two needs to be indicated—for the sake of the poetry, because some of the poetry resides in the collocation of such details. We need to keep the end always in view—which, in this type of edition is to recreate the poetry and recruit new readers for the poet.

And here is another one:

হে পাবক
তুমি জান, এ আমার একলা সতীদাহ।
('তুমি না পাবক?')

'O fire
you know, this is my lonely ritual of Sati'. ('Are You Not Fire')

The point is that the woman is burning on her own, whereas in the ritual of sati a woman usually burns with the dead body of her husband, or some emblem to stand for him. The point to grasp is that the poem is not really about sati, but about death itself, its inevitable loneliness. The poet visualizes her own death and the cremation of her body, which is earlier described as 'nirbandhab', 'friendless' (as translated by these translators), but more radically, following Sanskrit, 'without kinsmen'. The function of the image of sati is to sharpen the essential loneliness of death. This poet knows that she will not even have the dubious comfort of company in death. And the word for 'fire' used in the original is 'paavak', the root-meaning of which is 'purifier' and which I am quite sure has been used here deliberately by the Sanskritist poet. The title, echoing one of the lines in the poem, is not quite saying, simplistically, 'Are you not fire?', as in this translation, but something much more like: 'Are you not meant to be a purifier?' So, incorporating the root-meaning of the word 'paavak', and redistributing the words between the lines a little bit for the sake of rhythm, one could rewrite the lines as:

'O Fire, Purifier, you know
this is my act of sati, where I burn alone...'

Reviewing Translations: Translator's Invisibility Revisited

K. M. Sherrif

Abstract

The translator's invisibility is a spectre which still haunts the practice of translation in the West. Theoretical advances in Translation Studies in the last quarter of the twentieth Century have not succeeded in restoring to the translator the inalienable rights of the author. The adoption of the notion of translation as a form of rewriting and the rejection of the duality of 'original-translation' are small beginnings for bringing the translator back to visibility. Other issues like dismantling the copyright regime as applicable to translations have to follow.

Reviewers of translations who describe both the translation and the antecedent text have to reckon with the fact that their reviews may ultimately contribute only to translation theory. Such reviews normally interest only bilingual readers who would not need the translation in the first place. For the monolingual reader there is no way to verify the comparative analyses. The problem can perhaps be overcome by placing the review in a larger context of the interface of cultures or as a symptomatic instance of cultural dissemination/ appropriation/domestication/foreignisation. Another way, of course, is to make the review eminently readable even for non-professional readers.

The notion that the translator is only a role-player is deeply entrenched in most cultures. Willard Trask puts it neatly when he remarks that the translator acts out the role of the author, willingly submitting to the make-believe that the translation is the original text, while producing a 'crib' of the original (qtd. in Venuti 1995: 7). In India, however, this notion is definitely a Western import. As far as

this writer has been able to verify, there was no word to signify 'translation' as it is understood in the West in any of the Indian languages till the beginning of the twentieth century. In fact, there were no 'translations' in any of India's literatures. What existed and circulated were 'renderings' or 'rewritings,' notions which were theorized and accepted in the West only in the eighties of the last century. A common tradition was for poets and dramatists to freely borrow themes and plots from the great epics *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* and render them freely, sometimes making drastic departures and ideological appropriations. The way in which Tulsidas's *Ramcharit Manas* or Ezhuthachan's *Adhyathma Ramayanam* diverged from Valmiki's epic was inconceivable in the West. Ezhuthachan's rewriting of Rama from a mere 'maryada purushottam' in Valmiki's epic to an icon in the Hindu pantheon has no parallels in Western literary history. Unnayi Warrier's *Nalacharitham Attakkatha* radically alters Nala's character as it is represented in both *The Mahabharata* and *Naishadha Purana*.

A reviewer of a translated text normally cannot accept the invisibility of the translator once s/he concurs with two notions on authorship which are today widely accepted. The first is that the translator is an author in her/his own right, the source text being only a launching point from which s/he takes off and the translation a rewriting of it. In the West, the Rewriting-Culture School of Translation Studies theoretically reinforced this notion in the eighties and the nineties of the last century. Andre Lefevere's '"Beyond Interpretation' or The Business of Rewriting" (1987) is a central text in this context. Along with Lefevere, a number of other translation scholars including Susan Bassnett, Mary Snell-Hornby, Theo Hermans, Lawrence Venuti and Mona Baker, to name only the more prominent of them, developed the Theory of Rewriting to show how translation made interventions in many cultures through rewriting texts and how it served as the site for both perpetuation of cultural hegemony as well as resistance to it.

The second is the now well-entrenched notion that 'originality' is only a construct and that there are no essentially 'original' texts.

Many texts which were traditionally considered original are today considered rewritings. The most telling examples can be the epics in many cultures: *The Ramayana, The Mahabharata*, *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Gilgamesh* or *Sagas of Iceland*, the purported authors of which were actually compilers and editors of songs, legends and oral narratives. In translation theory it is time to give up the term 'original text' or even 'the source text' in favour of the more precise term 'antecedent text' which indicates only a chronological precedence.

The central paradox of Descriptive Translation Studies is that they, as such, address bilingual readers who do not really *need* the translations which are being discussed. The monolingual reader has to take the writer's word for the analyses of translation shifts described. Giving a thumbnail sketch of the history of translation in the West, Susan Bassnett notes that translation was mostly only an intellectual exercise for scholars in Imperial Rome who could also effortlessly read Greek (Bassnett 1991: 44-45). Only stray translations from other languages served the fundamental purpose of translation.

The review of a translated text partly becomes a translation study if any aspect of the translation is discussed. However, a review is most often not a disinterested academic exercise. Unlike the reviews in academic journals, most reviews in dailies or periodicals are commissioned, either by publishers of the books or by the publications which carry the review. Apart from the pressure on the reviewer to promote the book, there are problems of space. The reviewer is not allowed to expand on the text, beyond the stipulated number of words. Andre Lefevere lists the review (and the blurb) among the various forms of rewriting, because the review like other forms of rewriting, rewrites the text systematically on the basis of the ideology and/or poetics of the target culture or those which the translator personally embraces (Lefevere 1987: 21). The guidelines for reviewers of translations posted on the website of PEN does not go as far as to call the translator an author in his/her own right. It limits itself to calling a translation a work of 'collaboration.' But its suggestions are interesting:

1. Reviewers should state that the work is a translation and should mention the translator's name. Although this may seem obvious, the translator is in most cases not acknowledged. Reviewers might also mention the translator's previous works, along with awards or other distinctions. If the translator has written a preface indicating his or her approach to the work, this too should be considered.
2. The reviewer should avoid nitpicking. A review is not a crossword puzzle. What the reviewer perceives as errors or mistranslations may actually be carefully worked out strategies to support the structure of the work. 'Focusing on minutiae out of context deflects from the overall evaluation of the book and the translation.'
3. If the translated text is a classic or a well known work, the reviewer can ideally address such issues as the need for the present new translation, what it omits or highlights differently from previous translations, whether its idiom suits contemporary readers and whether it offers new emphases or insights.

But PEN also recognizes ground realities. Most reviewers of translations today do not know the source language. PEN's advice to them is quite conventional:

> Even so, they are certainly equipped to address matters of style, coherence, and narrative tone. For instance, at the simplest level, does the language flow naturally and smoothly? Does the author present any special stylistic or other challenges that the translator has successfully—or heroically—met? In a work of fiction, is the dialogue persuasive and idiomatic? Does the tone shift to represent different characters' voices?

Discussing the globalization of translation, Venuti points out that domesticated translations have virtually become the norm for multi-national publishing houses (Venuti 1998: 160-168). They have

found that translations which cater to the ideology and aesthetics of the target audience at the expense of the ideology and aesthetics of the source culture have a steady market. The ideology of the global market is clearly at work. The origin of the product is much less important than the packaging and the demands of the target market. Billions of dollars are spent every year to make advertisements politically correct to target audiences. The translations are so thoroughly domesticated that a bilingual reviewer with liberal views on cultural relativity and political correctness is forced to turn his/her review into a charge sheet against the translator for his/her transgressions.

A review of a translated text legitimizes itself fundamentally as a culture study. It becomes a study of an instance of cultural interface. In this form it is not promotion material for the book (a review which is intended as promotional material normally effaces the identity of the translator). Such a review does not restrict itself to the 'quality' of the translation, and goes on to delve into its ideological and aesthetic implications. As a cultural study, it addresses such issues as the relations between hegemonic and marginalized cultures (a central issue in Lawrence Venuti's Translation Studies) reflected in translation, the role of translation in canonization, translation as the site for (mis)reading of cultures and translation as political action. As a culture study it does not really matter whether the review appears in the source language or the target language. It need not necessarily be even a scholarly, academic exercise. It may often interest the non-professional reader as a journey into un-chartered territory. Cultural interface in all its various manifestations is a fascinating phenomenon.

References

Bassnett, Susan (1991) *Translation Studies (*rev. ed.), London and New York: Routledge.
http://www.pen.org/page.php/prmID/269

Lefevere, Andre (1987) '"Beyond Interpretation' or The Business of Rewriting" , *Comparative Literature,* 24:1, 17-39.

PEN (2004) "Reviewers Guidelines For Translated Books".

Unnayivariyar (1977) *Nalacharitham* V. Subramania Iyer (trans.) Trichur: Kerala Sahitya Akademi.

Venuti, Lawrence (1995) *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation,* London: Routledge.

— (1998) *The Scandals of Translation,* London: Routledge.

Re-Viewing Reviews: Scholarship and Translation in India

Mahasweta Sengupta

Abstract

There has been almost a total saturation in the field of Translation Studies in India during the past decade: everyone seems to be an expert on the very difficult matter of 'Translation' just because they happen to know two languages. It seems to me that there is a need to discriminate between translators who are engaged in the act of translation and scholars who analyse those texts in the larger socio-historical context. While it has been assumed in the Anglo-American world that the translation theorist needs to be a translator first, I think that in India this situation does not work. Here, there has to be a distinction between the two in a large majority of cases because most of these translators are not simply aware of the academic discipline of Comparative Literature which initiated the study of translation as a viable mode of analyzing inter-cultural transfers. This paper proposes to deal with the pathetic situation of Translation Studies in India in spite of the fact that a lot of good translations are being done here at this time. My personal experience of being a student of the discipline of Translation Studies would form the base of this paper.

Does a poet need to be a critic or is the critic always a poet? The question takes us to the core of the problem we are trying to negotiate: is a 'translator' a Translation Studies scholar or, is she/he capable of commenting on the academic 'discipline' of Translation Studies? I feel that it is absolutely necessary now to resolve this issue in India, because the act of translation has assumed enormous proportions in the country now and there is a need to decide on what

Translation Today Vol. 5 No. 1 & 2 2008 © CIIL 2008

is relevant and what is not at this point of time. This is the reason why I consider this occasion to be very important, the question of 'translation-reviewers' is being asked at the right moment when everyone in the country imagines herself or himself to be an expert in translation if she/he happens to know more than one language.

Let me go back to the question with which we started: is the poet a critic, or is a critic necessarily a poet? We know that Rabindranath Tagore or T. S. Eliot wrote both poetry and critical speculations on the nature of poetry; actually, they were masters in both spheres and produced classic material in both. But this fact does not entail that all poets are born critics and therefore they have the power to speculate on the nature of writing. Sometimes, they can talk about their experiences, but that does not make it either theoretically relevant or meaningful. I think there is a need to give the poet the right to exist without asking her/him to be an expert on the art of poetry; she/he does not have to critically comment on the poetry that she/he has written. In fact, we all know how unreliable poets are when they comment on their own work; actually, they maintain a freedom to entertain whatever point of view they think is relevant at the moment. To establish a parallel, I would remind you of Sunil Gangopadhyaya's remark on the translation of his path-breaking Bangla novel where the translator had left out huge chunks because she could not find the right discourse for translating it into English; the writer simply said, she has taken the right decision to edit those parts where she could not find the right English discourse to translate. Here we are speaking of a novel where the language plays a major role; the evolution of language is co-existent with the evolution of the social process and the change of characters. The simple observation that has to be made is that once a text is produced, the writer has no exclusive right over its translation and she/he may choose to say whatever she/he feels like. Remember that rules are proven by exceptions and there would always be some gifted scholars who would be good at both. We are looking at the general situation and not at the exceptions.

As scholars in the area of Translation Studies, we are facing a very complex situation in India. Remember that most of our translators

are translating into English, and most of them are teachers or students of the 'discipline' of English which has a structure and form since the time it was introduced in India in order to propagate a certain view of the colonizer in the colony. We know that the discipline was initiated here and then transported to England, and there was a specific need for the creation of a canon; a certain ideology was being foisted on the people who learnt the discipline, it was a way in which we moved over to discourses that addressed the western world, in their terms and through their paradigms.

In fact, we are trained by the same system where there has hardly been much change or re-thinking of the critical paradigms that we employ to appraise the discipline. I am certainly not saying that there has not been any change; I am simply saying that change has been slow and rather faltering; you would have a hard time finding scholars who are consciously trying to get out of the ideological binds of English studies in India. What happens in such a situation is evident to all; anyone who knows two languages and is interested in the act of translation thinks that Translation Studies as a discipline is under her/his expertise; if I am able to translate a text from Telugu into English, I am also capable of commenting critically on the act of translation. In other words, if I can write poetry, I can also be a critic. Actually, you need very different kind of attributes to achieve both.

This is where the problem seeps in. This is the reason why reviews of translated texts are largely comments on the original text; almost all reviewers speak at length on the characters, the plot, the structure and other formal qualities of the original text as if that is what they were asked to review; as Enakshi Chatterjee wrote to me: 'all earlier reviews of my translations were comments on the original novels, as if Tarashankar Banerjee had written the text in English.'[1] How do we make it clear to the reviewers of translated texts that they need to comment on the translation act and not on the original?

I would like to take some time to locate myself at this point. My interest in the discipline of Translation Studies grew from my

interest in Comparative Literature—not in the sense of 'comparing' two different texts written in two different languages, but in terms of reading literature across national boundaries, beyond limits imposed by narrow national interests. I was always interested in the history of ideas, and my Ph. D. thesis in English was on literary theory of the romantic and modern kind (of the canonical British variety). When I became a student of Comparative Literature in the eighties, I was asked to teach a course in International Short Story to undergraduate students in an American university. I was sure that my syllabus would include stories from India and of course there would be one by Rabindranath Tagore. So I spent days in the library to find a translated short story by Tagore, and failed to find one that would appeal to the students. I was surprised by the very strange translations of the stories that were simply superb in the original; they did not feel the same in the translation. In spite of the difficulties, I did ask the class to read one 'Khokababur Pratyabartan,' the story of a baby being washed away by the mighty river next to his house. The exercise was absolutely unsuccessful; the class hated the story, and I was unable to establish any kind of meaningful relationship between the story and the readers.[2]

This led me to the study of Translation Theory/Studies in detail. I took four three-credit courses on Translation Studies in Comparative Literature, and was exposed to the fascinating world of inter-cultural transfers. Scholars in the discipline of Comparative Literature who were actually interested in Translation Studies that involved an inter-disciplinary approach to the topic taught these courses. Remember that this was the time of Post-Saidean historicism in the Anglo-American academy and inter-cultural transfers exposed fascinating details that were being unearthed for the first time. I worked with the auto-translations of Tagore and came up with a dissertation on the subject. You all know the work of Tejaswini Niranjana who looked into Orientalist translations of Sanskrit texts and exposed how meanings were construed in terms of the demands of the colonizers. There were many others who worked in this fascinating area and produced remarkable readings of translations done between two languages within which the power-relationship played a major role.

Why am I saying all this? I am trying to aver that being a Translation Studies person involved a disciplinary process; there was a lot to learn and a lot to think about. It is not that we agreed with dominant assumptions of the Anglo-American academy. In fact, I was opposing one basic tenet of western Translation Theory — that the translated text had to fit into the target culture in terms of the demands of that culture. I showed how meanings were altered in such cases to suit the paradigms already prevalent in the target cultures, translators did a great disservice to the density of the original text by conforming to such assumptions. This view was directly in opposition to what Susan Bassnett wrote in her introductory book named *Translation Studies* published in 1980, where she clearly upheld the view that translation was always determined by target-accessibility and therefore, had to conform to the norms of the target literary system:

> To attempt to impose the value-system of SL (source language) culture onto the TL culture is dangerous ground and the translator should not be tempted by the school that pretends to determine the original *intentions* of an author on the basis of a self-contained text. The translator cannot *be* the author of the SL text, but as the author of the TL text has a clear moral responsibility to the TL readers. (Bassnett 1980: 23)

Contrary to the Anglo-American view on translation, India has been a multi-lingual habitat, a land where many languages and literatures co-existed for thousands of years. Sanskrit or Arabic-Persian did happen to be the 'Margi' languages, but there were many Indo-European or Dravidian or Austro-Asiatic languages which people used in the multi-cultural regions of India. Translation, whenever it occurred, was a re-interpretation of an original: the epics of *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata* or mythology of various kinds or indigenous narratives were all translated (or re-written according to Lefevere) in various regional languages and all translators had the freedom to offer a particular reading of the text. This freedom was never questioned – think of the rendition of Kasiram Das or Tulasidas – their texts are

marked by the region they come from. The western notion of 'faithfulness' or 'fidelity' was not a criterion for judging translations in India. It was only accepted as a 'reading' and the translator did not face critics in case he deviated from the original.

Now, since we were picking up the academic discipline of Translation Studies from the West, we did go through the phase of blind imitation. We did expect that target-accessibility was the main marker of success in translation; remember what happened to Edward Fitzgerald's rendition of Omar Khayyam in English—we know that he completely altered the original to fit into the culture of Victorian England. So did Tagore change himself to appear as a mystical, spiritual person to early twentieth-century Englishmen; Yeats thought he experienced a new world through the translated poems of Tagore. In the late nineties, however, we are witnessing the resurgence of a distinct idea that translations have to be read through a set of different terms. Sherry Simon and Matthew St. Pierre's book catches the change in the title of their book, *Changing the Terms* (1999).

In spite of all these developments, translation-review in India remains a very sad state of affairs. My reading of this situation might sound odd to you, but I cannot restrain myself from sharing my understanding of the confusion in this regard. First, anyone who knows two languages in India assumes that he or she can be a translator. I have met people who are simply devoid of any literary sensibility, who work in government offices that process ration-cards, who studied English in the college or university just because the system demanded a certain amount of knowledge in English. I have received translated texts from the Sahitya Akademi for review, which were translated in the nineteenth century romantic poetic style; on the other hand, I have met people who are seriously interested in the act of translation. Now, it is quite obvious that not everyone would be capable of carrying through the density of the original into English, some of them did not even know why or how they would re-write the original without distorting or editing it in any way. In fact, they did not see any problem whatsoever in editing parts they could not translate—you must have

seen the size of the translated version of *Gora* done by various translators and how much they differ in sheer length.

While this is the case with translators, the reviewers do not happen to be any better. I am not suggesting that one or two good translators might appear in this motley crowd; what I am trying to point out is the very heterogeneous nature of the aspirants. Their attitude towards translation is summed up in what P. P. Giridhar said after my paper was read in a conference at Osmania University a few years earlier: 'What we translate has to sound like English, has to look like English. We cannot write something which the English-audience would not read.' The question of course is, 'Which English-audience and how does one sound like the English?'[3]

Now the most important question here could be: 'Why do people translate? Or, do they translate for readers who know the original language?' I should admit that this question of Professor Meenakshi Mukherjee[4] really made me think about all the academic or disciplinary issues about translation. Is a translated text meant for one who can read the text in the original language? I think I reached some sort of an understanding when I realized that this happens to be at the root of the problem we are facing: there should be a distinction between a reviewer (critic) who reads a translated text and explores its characteristics, and a translator who is simply busy with the transfer of meaning. In India, the people who review translations are most of the time simply not aware of the academic discipline of Translation Studies. They do not know what they are supposed to do when they are asked to review a translated text. All their attention therefore goes into the dissection of the characteristics of the original, of analyzing what the original text had to offer. Therefore, the 'reviews' turn out to be not a reading of the translation, but a reading of the original. My understanding is that the lack of scholarship on the discipline is a key factor in the degeneration of the whole practice of 'reviewing' into such a farce. I am sure you understand that I am not suggesting that one has to have a formal degree in Translation Studies; I am hinting that one should at least be familiar with the issues in the discipline to comment on a translated text.

Let me mention a recent review that I did for *Book Review*[5] of Aruna Chakrabarti's translation of several Bangla short stories. The book is published by Penguin and the cover tells that the book has been 'edited' by Aruna Chakrabarti. There is no mention of the translator anywhere, but the editor has written a 'Translator's Introduction' where she talks about her experiences in translating and also makes general statements about the discipline. Unfortunately, she is not aware of the developments in the area and her ideas about inter-cultural transfers are rather naïve to say the least. My reading of this is that she should not have made these general comments without being a student or scholar of Translation Studies and she really sounds very odd in these statements. I reviewed the book in two parts—one dealing with the translations, and one dealing with the Introduction. My instinct tells me that translators should not get into the act of pronouncing judgments on issues in the discipline if they are not familiar with the debates or the arguments prevailing there.

Translation requires a certain kind of a talent and a commitment; you not only know the two languages, but you need to know the two languages sensitively enough to disentangle the ambiguities and the polyvalence of the original and transfer it to the target language as best as possible. You may be an expert in English and you may be a teacher of English, but your skills in the native language are essential for comprehending and translating a text. Naturally enough, it is something more than the mere linguistic ability that is needed—just as a poet you need the power to wield language and manipulate it for constructing the intended meanings. As a critic, you need a different set of qualities—you have to be critically aware of the discourses concerning Translation Studies as a discipline; and in fact, that would be inter-disciplinary and wide-ranging. If you are not a scholar in this area, you should not write REVIEWS of translated texts, because then you will end up summarizing the source text or simply recounting the jargon prevalent in the area. It is high time we realized this and restrained ourselves from commenting on translated texts done by people who naturally need better reviewers for critiquing their work.

In fact, I think that a great harm is done by commenting not on the translation but on the original by these reviews – they ignore the work done by the translator in rendering a text from one language to another where very important questions regarding inter-cultural transfers are involved. One can only hope to get out of this situation if reviewers acquired or possessed the disciplinary background of Translation Studies.

Notes

1. In a personal letter to me written after I wrote a review of her translation of Sunil Gangopadhyaya's novel *Pradidwandi*.
2. International Short Story course at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Spring 1986.
3. National Seminar on Translation at Osmania University in 2003. (Since I (=Giridhar) am the person to whom the statement is attributed, I may make the following clarification: Literary translational creativity is all about making the source sensibility wholly, seamlessly and lyrically at home in the target language art. Even with the source sensibility being visibly if seamlessly present in the translation, if it is a creative foreignisation, the translation will sound like being in the target language, and yet have something unjarringly alien in it. An English translation of an Igbo text for instance has to foundationally sound like English even with the Igbo sensibility peeking out of, or standing out in, the other tongue viz English in this case, if you get what I mean. Precisely like what Chinua Achebe did: Igboisation of the English language to the extent technically possible. The qualification is important because the foundational structure of human language (often called 'grammar') has nothing to do with belief systems and cultural ethoses. There can be no denting in the procrustean beds that languages are. Only, in Achebe's case it was not translation. But that is not relevant to the point being made, it seems to me – **Editor**).
4. In a private conversation about matters of translation.
5. Book Review, New Delhi, January 2007.

Reference

Bassnett, Susan (1980) *Translation Studies,* London: Methuen.

Is Gabriel Garcia Marquez a Malayali?

Meena T. Pillai

Abstract

Translations have greatly influenced, enriched and transformed Malayalam literature. Yet one is often baffled by the lack of adequate reviews and studies of these translations in Kerala where translation has occupied a key position in the literary polysystem. Even the reviews that do appear display a propensity to treat the translated texts not as translations but as works 'natural' to Malayalam, thus negating their foreignness and making them prey to too easy an appropriation into the oeuvre of Malayalam literature. Such reviews and readings in turn both promote and breed annexationist translations and also sanctify imitations, adaptations and rewritings often without due acknowledgements of the original. This paper argues that in a culture too ready to invest the foreign language text with domestic significance, the process of domesticating the text continues from the act of translation to that of reading and reviewing. This could be the reason why the reviews too are generally seen to be inscribed with domestic intelligibilities and ideologies, treating the translated work rather as a domestic inscription than as one bearing the function of inter-cultural communication.

Malayalam, which belongs to the Dravidian family of languages, is the mother tongue of over thirty million people, most of whom live in Kerala but many of whom are also dispersed across the globe. As Paniker says,

> Like the speakers, the language also has been receptive to influences from abroad and tolerant of elements added from outside. Malayalam literature too reflects this spirit of accommodation and has over the centuries developed a tradition, which even while rooted in the locality, is truly

> universal in taste. It is remarkably free from provincialisms and parochial prejudices that have bedevilled the literature of certain other areas. To its basic Dravidian stock have been added elements borrowed or adopted from non-Dravidian literatures such as Sanskrit, Arabic, French, Portuguese and English. The earliest of these associations was inevitably with Tamil. Sanskrit, however, accounts for the largest of the 'foreign influences' followed closely in recent times by English. This broad based cosmopolitanism has indeed become a distinctive feature of Malayalam literature. (Paniker 1998: 9)

Malayalam literature has been greatly influenced and transformed by translations and innumerable authors and great books have all found a space for themselves in Malayalam through translation. The first conscious literary endeavour in Malayalam and probably its first epic poem, *Ramacharitam* believed to have been penned in the twelfth century A.D. can be called a translation and is a retelling of the *Yuddha Kanda* of *Valmiki Ramayana*. Probably the first translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* into a modern Indian language was into Malayalam by Madhava Panikkar, one of the Niranam poets in the fifteenth century. In the same century, Niranathu Rama Panikkar translated the *Ramayanam* and *Kannassa Bharatam*. During this time, Sankara Pannikkar made a remarkable condensation of *Mahabharatam* and called it *Bharatamala.*

In the sixteenth century Thunchathu Ezhuthachan, considered the father of Malayalam poetry, translated the *Ramayanam* and the *Mahabharatam*. His *Adhyatma Ramayanam* and *Srimahabharatam* used the 'Killippattu' form where he devised a new narrative technique of using the bird or 'Kili' as the narrator of the poem. Ezhuthachan's bird can thus be treated as a metaphor of the process of translation itself. However, scholars like Ayyappa Paniker have pointed out that Ezhuthachan was not a mere translator but that '… in fact he follows the earlier Kerala writers in freely elaborating or considering the original as he thinks proper. The celebration of this freedom gained in poetic creation is what enlivens and ennobles the hymns interspersed in his works' (Paniker 1998: 30).

It would be worthwhile to examine now the function attributed to translation in that age by these ancient scholars. Cheeraman, the translator of the *Ramayanam* in the twelfth century expounds his aim in writing *Ramacharitam*. He says: '*Uzhiyil cheriyavarkariyumaruna cheyvan*' meaning, enlighten the common folk of this world. The Niranam poets also had the specific purpose of Dravidianization of Aryan mythology and philosophy and together 'they constitute the strong bulwark of the Bhakti movement which enabled the Malayalies to withstand and resist the onslaught of foreign cultures' (Paniker 1998: 23).

As Devy says,

> These translations were made without any inhibition, and they rarely maintained a word-for-word, line-for-line discipline. The categories useful for the study of these translations are not 'the TL and the SL' or 'the mother tongue and the other tongue'. The poets/writers attempting vernacular rendering of Sanskrit texts treated both the languages as their 'own' languages. They had a sense of possession in respect of the Sanskrit heritage. But in translating the Sanskrit texts they sought to liberate the scriptures from the monopoly of a restricted class of people. Hence these translations became a means of re-organising the entire societies (Devy 1993: 149).

One cannot but agree with Devy here, and assert that no theory with an exclusively linguistic orientation can be adequate to understand the magnitude of translation activity in Kerala at that time.

In the modern era, the first play in Malayalam was a translation of Kalidasa's *Abhijnana Sakuntalam* by Kerala Varma Valiya Koyitampuran in 1882. The first attempt at writing a novel was again a translation titled *Ghataka Vadham* (*The Slayer's Slain*). O. Chandu Menon's *Indulekha* (1889) believed to be the first perfect novel in Malayalam was also the result of an attempt to translate the English novel genre into Malayalam. Even the first book printed in Kerala in

1821 was a translation titled *Cheru Paithangalude Upakarartham Englishil Ninnum Paribhasha Peduthiya Kathakal* (Stories Translated from English for the Benefit of Little Children). The Bible translations under the leadership of Herman Gundert and Benjamin Bailey also played a great role in shaping Malayalam prose.

It is also significant to note that very early in the history of Malayalam language there started a plethora of translations from other Indian languages into Malayalam. The first translation of a Tamil text was into Malayalam in 1595 A.D. This was the prose translation of *Thirukural* by Aikaramatho Panikkar. There were numerous translations of the *Gitanjali* into Malayalam. Most of the great poets and writers of Malayalam were also able translators. Kumaranasan's translation of *Ramayana* for children, Changampuzha's and G. Sankara Kurup's translations of Omar Khayyam's *Rubayyat,* Sankara Kurup's translation of *Gitanjali* in addition to the pioneering works already mentioned merit special attention.

To say that translated litrerature has always maintained a key position in the literary polysystem in Malayalam would thus not be an exaggeration. My point in detailing this aspect of Malayalam language and literature is to explicate how, for the relatively small and less dominant linguistic group of Malayalies, translation has always been an activity of inclusion and assimilation as much as resistance and subversion. Almost all the early translations in Malayalam strove to promote native registers, dialects, discourses and style, in the process uniformly struggling to erase the foreignness of the source text. Translation has thus been part of Malayalam literature's attempt to crystallize and strengthen itself by incorporating the experiments, strengths and resources of other literatures. One can safely surmise that in the context of Kerala, translation can be 'readily seen as investing the foreign language text with domestic significance….because the translator negotiates the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text by reducing them and supplying another set of differences, basically domestic, drawn from the receiving language and culture to enable the foreign to be received there' (Venuti 2000: 468).

My argument in this paper is that this process of domestication which begins with the very choice of texts to be translated to the act of translation *per se*, continues in the process of reading and culminates in the review or the absence of it. Thus, the review too in such a context is often seen to be inscribed with domestic intelligibilities and ideologies. This could be one of the reasons why translation reviewing has never been given much importance in Malayalam.

A reviewer of any translation should first seek to answer why a particular work was chosen for translation at a particular point of time. This attempt to correlate the principles of selection to the literary systems of the source and target culture would provide valuable insights into the position and role of the translated work within a given culture and language. Instead most reviews in Malayalam treat these works not as translations but as works 'natural' to Malayalam, thus negating their foreignness and making them prey to too easy an appropriation into the oeuvre of Malayalam literature. Such reviews and readings in turn promote annexationist translations and sanctify imitations, adaptations and paraphrasing often without acknowledging the original. Reviews are often seen to treat the translated work as a domestic inscription rather than one that bears the function of intercultural communication.

Here I would like to cite the example of the renowned critic Kuttikrishna Marar's review of the Malayalam translation of Premchand's *Godan* by Divakaran Potti (Marar 1957: 92-97). The whole review is a vitriolic attack on Premchand whose ideologies and aesthetic ideals Marar could never see eye to eye. The review is a battle between Premchand, the social reformist writer and Marar, an unstinting champion of the values of classical criticism. The review is nowhere a review of the translation of *Godan* but a battle of two clashing ideologies taking place in the Kerala society of the fifties. Marar's review makes possible only a domesticated understanding of Premchand and his rating of Premchand is inversely proportional to the degree of subversiveness that Premchand induces in the domestic. Marar remains immune to the question of whether the translated

Godanam communicates the basic elements of the narrative form of the original or to the analyzing of shifts in translation or to the level of transmission of the invariants or even to the argument of whether invariance is at all possible in a translation from Hindi to Malayalam.

It is easy for the translator, reader and reviewer of a minority linguistic community to deflect from the foreignness of the 'Translated Text' and focus instead on the degree of its conformity or opposition to dominant domestic ideologies and interests inscribed in it. Such agendas, strategies and interests are often determined by the function that is attributed to translation in a particular culture. In the case of a reformist work like *Godan* that had received wide readership all over India, the translation could become the site for a reviewer like Marar to challenge or contest the upcoming trends of an era of change. Thus Marar uses *Godanam* as a context to foster a community of readers who would oppose the progressive socialist, reformist trends in literature in Kerala. For this, he adopts a universalist stance, rejecting the specificity of the translated work and focusing instead on its broad and general aspects. What Marar in fact attempts to do is to position *Godan* in the novel tradition of Malayalam and attack Premchand for not conforming to the norms and conventions of this tradition. Thus, what Marar finds in the translation discourse of *Godanam* is so familiar a subversion of his own critical conventions that he seems to mistake Premchand for one of his Malayali adversaries of the Progressive Writers Forum.

Such a lack of perception on the part of reviewers stems, I feel, not from the lack of knowledge of the nature and scope of translation or its norms. It stems from a willing suspension of such norms in the larger interest of a socio-cultural function attributed to translation by a cultural community. Translation does not take place in a vacuum and it is the target culture's 'needs' and objectives that largely govern the translational activity taking place in that culture. Thus when the transnational behaviour and responses taking place within a culture start manifesting certain regularities, one can safely surmise that the norms that particular culture attributes to translation

have manoeuvred different shifts of validity and reached a fairly stable axis of normativity. Translations in Malayalam are largely acceptability oriented and adhere to target culture norms. For example, the large number of Russian and Marxist literature which found their way into Malayalam, is beyond doubt due to the popularity of leftist ideology in the state. Thus the translation policy regarding the 'choice' of what to translate seems to predominate over other translation norms like operational norms and textual-linguistic norms that govern the relationship between the ST and TT and the selection of linguistic material to formulate the TT respectively.

Any translation, which according to Berman ought to be 'a trial of the foreign,' (Berman 2000: 284) often becomes its negation, acclimation and naturalization. Often the most individual essence of the ST is radically repressed and this is where one feels the need for proper reviewing and reflection on the ethical aim of the translating act of receiving the foreign as foreign. A review that does not respect the linguistic and cultural differences of the ST, in fact, promotes bad translation ethics and helps in creating a tribe of ethnocentric translators. The absence of proper reviewing and studies of translation could also lead to the neglect of translation norms which further pave the way for weak, entropic, lacklustre translations.

As a land that has witnessed since ancient times scores of foreign influences and interactions from Chinese and Arab travellers to the Portuguese, Dutch, French and English Colonial interventions, Kerala has remained remarkably open to the complex heterogeneity of the historical and cultural discourses thus generated. In the twentieth century, one can see two things which probably brought in a definite agenda to translation activity in Kerala and connect the pre-modern with the modern. The first is of course a compulsive need to be part of a pan-Indian consciousness in the backdrop of the independence struggle and the awakening of a spirit of nationalism. The second is the anxiety of a small socio-linguistic group to negotiate the boundaries between the local and the international during its engagement with the language of modernity. These contradictory impulses signal the

rise of translation from other Indian languages like Bengali and Hindi on the one hand and from foreign languages on the other. Nevertheless, this rise in translation did not create a corresponding theoretical discussion of Translation Studies or create the need for a realistic historiography of translation criticism. Kerala and its people, having been exposed to multiple languages and cultures, have a 'translating consciousness' as Devy (1992) would call it. But this consciousness has been made so familiar and humdrum that it has not been thought worthwhile to invest any effort in discussing the aesthetics of translation or its theorization. Thus, translation, which should have brought in a new strength to Malayalam literature, falls short of this function by remaining constricted by an overpowering native culture and unhoned by sharp critical tools. Therefore, the failure to capture the vital and transitory energy of a cross-cultural enterprise in any systematic framework also leads to the lack of evolving an appropriate methodology for studying translation. This leaves the average reader seriously crippled by neither knowing what to expect of a translation nor having any critical tools to judge it. Though any critical analysis of Malayalam literature cannot overrule the great role of translation in shaping its literary tradition, it is indeed a shocking revelation that there have been no studies of the history of literary translation or its critical postulates, nor does it find any serious mention in any of the prominent texts on literary criticism in Malayalam. Thus there is an imperative need for a reorganized historical perspective of literary criticism in Kerala with a more punctilious scrutiny of the process of assimilation of the 'foreign' and 'other Indian' traditions and texts into Malayalam.

Even as we acknowledge the fact that this little strip of a land ensconced between the Arabian Sea and the Western Ghats experienced waves of alien influx on its soil from time immemorial one is reminded of Devy's statement,

> 'Colonial experience releases several conflicting tendencies in the colonized society. It creates simultaneously a revivalistic romanticism and a hardheaded political

> pragmatism. This simultaneous release of several conflicting tendencies results in a strange, superficial cultural dynamics. A colonized culture becomes violently progressive and militantly retrogressive, and in consequence tends to remain static. In order to understand this cultural immobilization, an appropriate historiography is of prime importance' (Devy 1992: 4).

This violent progression and militant retrogression are evident in the profusion of translations in Malayalam as also in the apathy to review them. Translation is a voracious activity in Malayalam but this untrammelled appetite coupled with the lack in efficacy of the intellectual tools of Malayalam literary criticism to review or assess the process and act of translation leads to a state of literary dyspepsia. Though it can be said that translation in Kerala has a history of nearly eight hundred years, the continuing practice has not given rise to any significant and original translation theory. Such theorization would have helped bring in some critical rigour in the analyses of translation praxis.

Without acknowledging the original Spanish language or culture from which it was translated into English and not revealing whether it is a translation of the Spanish original or the English translation by Gregory Rabassa, translations such as *Ekanthathayude Nuru Varshangal* in fact situate themselves in an ambivalent space between two languages and cultures. No review of the translation has raised the question of what the direct source text of the Malayalam translation is, whether it is the Spanish *Cien Anos de Soledad* by Marquez or the English *One Hundred Years of Solitude* translated by Rabassa.

If the Malayalam translator has used the English translation, is he equipped to translate the inscriptions of the original Spanish text or has he been forced to adopt the English version as 'the transparent vehicle of universal truth, thus encouraging a linguistic chauvinism, even a cultural nationalism'? (Venuti 1998: 92). Thus, what is called

for urgently is proper reviewing of translated texts so that the issue of translation is not side stepped in the process of celebrating the taming of the foreign by over-valorizing the native language and culture.

The translation of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* carries two studies of the original which again fail to anchor the text in its historical and cultural context, resulting in a translation which appears free-floating and unhinged from the specificities of history to occupy a universal realm which transcends linguistic and cultural differences.

The grave handicap of studies and reviews not recognizing a text as translated leads to a seriously limited and provincial understanding of texts. Reviews of translation in Malayalam thus need a double focus and should aim to look at the foreign text and culture as well as the translating text and culture. Such reviews could then generate translation discourses and methodologies that would help view culture not as a monolithic concept but as a space where heterogeneous histories and languages commingle and also seek to look at the differential levels of power and privilege under which such activities take place. Such reviews could help reveal how 'different forms of reception construct the significance of the foreign text, and also which of these forms are dominant or marginalized in the domestic culture at any historical moment' (Venuti 1998: 94). Reviews, which can unravel the varying degrees of subordination, which most translations inflict on the source, would thus help reveal the hierarchy of domestic values that produce appropriative movements in the translation encounter and asses the cultural and political significance of such attempts at domestication.

The influence of Chinese, Portugese, Dutch and British cultures in Kerala and the immigration of Keralites in large numbers to all parts of the world in the twentieth century raise certain fundamental questions about identity. Even as Malayalis within Kerala raise a rallying cry against globalization and the hegemony of multinational economics, can one really close one's eyes to the flow of global capital in the State or the exodus of Malayalis moving across

every permeable national boundary in the world? The term Malayali has itself thus become the epitome of 'hybridity,' of 'in-between-ness' that postcolonial critics like Bhabha celebrate.

Within the discourse of hybridity that so permeates the Malayali psyche, it is possible to argue that translation is also an act of subversion, which seeks to topple the originality of the original. Thus translation could also be a devouring, a ritualistic eating to assimilate the vitality of the source text in the process of rejuvenating the target language and literature. Such vampire translations which have thrived in Kerala reject the concepts of 'imitation' and 'influence' and come to represent today a typically postcolonial attitude towards cultural dialogues with dominant ideologies, as vampirism, whereby the translator sucks out the blood of the source text to strengthen the target text, as transfusion of blood that endows the receiver with new life, can all be seen as radical metaphors that spring from post-modernist post-colonial translation theory' (Bassnett 1993: 155). But I would argue that such translations were in currency in Kerala even before the knowledge of post-colonial theory and is a powerful statement of instances of native resistances to colonial power hierarchy, be it Sanskrit or English which privilege a particular text as 'original' and relegate the 'other' as 'translation'.

It is western literary and critical theories that have 'suffered' most at the hands of such 'vampire translations.' In Malayalam, literary and philosophical theories ranging from structuralism, cultural materialism, feminism, post-structuralism and deconstruction and a host of other ideas formulated by eminent philosophers and critics from the west have found their way into Malayalam indiscriminately and over-zealously with no proper introduction or acknowledgement, through translations, adaptations and paraphrasing.

It is interesting to note in this context how John Bunyan's famous allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress* was translated into Malayalam by no less than Herman Gundert, the most important name among colonial missionaries who worked in Kerala in the nineteenth century

and became famous for his Malayalam-English dictionary. In Gundert's Malayalam translation, the hero Christian, as he traverses through the valley of blood, bones, ashes and dead men, comes across 'Rakshasas' he had not met in the English version. They are 'Vigrahasuras' who are attended by the likes of Rama, Krishna and Narayana. A little further on, Christian meets 'Mohammed Rakshasa' the arch enemy of the 'Vigrahasuras' who has a sword in one hand and the Quran in the other. Even as this translation leaves one appalled, it speaks volumes of the necessity of making translation visible as an intensely political activity, and in the light of the lack of any concerted critique or efforts to study it, forces a reassessment of the cultural and pedagogical practices that might rely solely on such translated texts. However, even as I argue that translation in Kerala is an intensely political activity, often without the Malayali being conscious of it being so, there is still the need to theorize its political and cultural implications and study the different methodologies that could effectively be used to make it truly interdisciplinary and intercultural. It is high time critics and reviewers gave serious attention to translation policies and strategies and attempt to mend their conceptual inadequacies and evolve a concrete methodology to tap its subversive potential.

References

Bassnett, Susan (1993) *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction,* Oxford: Blackwell.

Berman, Antoine (2000) "Translation and the Trials of the Foreign" in Lawrence Venuti (ed.) *The Translation Studies Reader,* London: Routledge, 276-289.

Devy, G. N. (1992) *After Amnesia: Tradition and Change in Indian Literary Criticism*, Hyderabad: Orient Longman.

— (1993) *In Another Tongue: Essays on Indian Literature in English*, Madras: Macmillan.

Marar, Kuttikrishna (1957) *Danthagopura,* Kozhikode: Marar Sahithya Prakasam.

Paniker, K. Ayyappa (1998) *A short History of Malayalam Literature*, Thiruvananthapuram : Department of Public Relations.

Venuti, Lawrence (1998) *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference,* London: Routledge.

— (2000) "Translation, Community, Utopia" in Lawrence Venuti (ed.) *The Translation Studies Reader,* London: Routledge, 482-502.

Translation Review: A Review of Reviews

Meenakshi Mukherjee

Abstract

This paper will look at some of the primary issues in reviewing translations — by whom, for whom, when, and how. Examples will be drawn from twelve reviews that appeared in the December 2006 issue of the journal 'The Book Review'.

All the questions to be discussed cannot be enumerated here, but here are a few:

a. *Who should be preferred as the reviewer of a translated text: one who knows the original language or one who does not (the intended reader)?*
b. *Who should the reviewer be addressing? General reader? Those concerned with Translation Studies? Readers within the country? Readers anywhere who know the language of the translated text?*
c. *How much emphasis should be given in the review to the year of original publication? How important is it for the reviewer to know if the text had been translated earlier? If it is an older text, is it necessary for the reviewer to foreground her awareness of the changes that happen over time— in language use, in social practice, in literary taste?*
d. *What should be the priority for the reviewer: providing the context, analyzing the text, commenting on the act of translation?*

This paper is written neither as a translation theorist nor as a practising translator, but in my capacity as a long time reader of

translated texts, mostly fiction. I have literally grown up reading translations. (Indeed most of us have. I am not claiming any uniqueness in this, but merely taking my case as an example.) From the time I could read fluently, I have been devouring, in Bangla translation, a range of English texts — from children's books like *Alice in Wonderland* and *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* to what our parents considered classics, *A Tale of Two Cities, Ivanhoe, Les Miserables* and *Don Quixote,* oblivious of the fact that some of these were actually edited or abridged versions. Later as a student of English literature in the university we read Ibsen and Strindberg, Tolstoy and Balzac, Dostoevsky and Thomas Mann in English, without anyone ever alerting us to the fact that as translated texts these books should be approached differently. The writers through whose work literary modernism came to be institutionalized in the English-speaking world included authors like Proust, Kafka and Camus, none of whom were available to us in their original language. When I started teaching I taught Homer's *Odyssey* in the Penguin prose translation by E. V. Rieu to English Honours students in Delhi without once wondering in class about the Greek originals of unusual metaphors like 'the wine-dark sea.' In those sylvan pre-theory days there was hardly any awareness that what we were reading were mediated texts and we should take into consideration the possibility of loss or alteration in transit. In maturer years I have gone on to read and enjoy Gunter Grass, Milan Kundera, Italo Calvino and a host of other novelists—including the South American magicians Marquez, Lhosa, Allende and Borges without losing sleep over the fact that I do not have access to the original. In 2004, I discovered a novelist — he continues to be a favourite — Orhan Pamuk who probably sells more in translation today than in the original Turkish. Rather than participate in the online hair-splitting on the quality of different versions of Pamuk in English which some scholars have been engaged in, I would much rather spend time reading all the six Pamuk books so far available in English, specially because in the absence of any knowledge of Turkish on my part, such discussions can at best be abstract and polemical.

This disquisition is an empirically oriented one rather than

theoretically formulated, and might run the risk of being academically, if not politically incorrect. I have in the past done some actual translation myself — one novel from Bangla to English and one novel from Hindi to Bangla — but that is not the experience I draw from in this paper. I write in the role of a reader who is addicted to reading fiction not always stopping to discriminate between a translated text and an original text. When I read Paul Zacharia or O.V. Vijayan, I am only marginally concerned about the fact that the original language of their books was Malayalam. I read that hilarious novel *Raag Darbari* by Srilal Shukla first in a Bangla translation; although since then I have gone on to read the Hindi original as well. Thus I represent the general reader who reads novels because she enjoys fiction, and reads reviews because they help her to decide which titles she should choose to read. Quite fortuitously, when I was looking for a peg to hang my ideas on, the December issue of the journal *The Book Review* came to me and I thought of focusing on the 13 reviews of translated books in this issue to make my points and to use these reviews as illustrations of different kinds of practices.

The broad issues that I would take up can be divided under four categories:

a. Who should be preferred as the reviewer of a translated text: one who knows the original language or one who does not (the intended reader)?

b. Who should the reviewer be addressing? General reader? Someone concerned with Translation Studies? Readers within the country? Readers anywhere who know the target language?

c. How important is the temporal dimension in a review? If it is an older text, is it necessary for the reviewer to foreground the aspects of changes that happen over time—in language use, in social practice, in literary taste? If an earlier translation of the same text exists, should that also be a relevant reference point?

d. What should be the priority for the reviewer: providing the context, analyzing the text, commenting on the act of translation?

Even though I am enumerating the issues neatly, I am aware that they cannot be disentangled completely. Out of the thirteen reviews I have before me eleven are done by persons who know the original language. Evidently the editors of the journal consider such people more suitable than the ones who know only the target language. I do not know their reasons for this preference, but I can think of a few advantages: such reviewers can place the author in context, situating him in the tradition of that particular language, as Satchidanandan does in reviewing a novel by M. Mukundan (*Kesavan's Lamentations: A Novel*) by comparing Mukundan's style with O.V. Vijayan's and Anand's, two other contemporary Malayalam novelists available to the reader in English translation. He also compares this recent novel with Mukundan's own earlier books, telling us about the 'bricolage' mode, its novel within a novel structure, and its dissolving of the boundaries between biography, fiction and descriptive prose.

In addition Satchidanandan joins issue with the Introduction in the English version written by the well-known scholar of intellectual history K. N. Panikkar. Panikkar seriously believes that the central theme of the novel is 'the formation and articulation of the Left political consciousness of Kerala' with the figure of E. M. S. Namboodripad at the centre. Satchidanandan argues — with examples that convince me completely — that the author's intention is entirely parodic and subversive. If it is indeed a history of left consciousness in Kerala, it is a tongue-in-cheek history.[1]

Satchidanandan's review is quite exceptional, and I should say, exemplary. Very few of the other reviews take the trouble to contextualize the book in hand. The general pattern of reviews seem to be a summary of the story (or stories) followed by a routine pat on the back for the translator in the last paragraph or a sharp rap for not doing a good job. Such a routine exercise does not need the expertise

of a native informant. The reviewer of Sivasankari's stories does not even use the word 'Tamil' except in the last sentence—she is content to talk vaguely about the 'South Indian' ambience of the stories, which for her are contained in the mention of idli and utthapam! Reading her you would imagine that Sivasankari is the only story writer in Tamil and the only one ever to talk about idlis. Take another reviewer who knows the original language. Talking about Premchand's film translations he gives us the astonishing news that Satyajit Ray's film *Sadgati* was based on Premchand's story 'Kafan' when anyone remotely connected with either Premchand or films knows it was Mrinal Sen who made the Telugu film *Oka Oori Katha* based on 'Kafan' while the original of Satyajit Ray's film was a story also titled 'Sadgati'. What special knowledge is the Hindi-knowing reviewer bringing to us?

The negative aspect of choosing a reviewer who knows the source language is that he is not likely to be satisfied with any translation because it will never approximate to the original. Also if he has read the original, he is probably using that memory to write the review, rather than read the translated version with care for the purpose of comparison—a tedious job at best of times. I have three English translations of Tagore's novel *Chokher Bali* sitting on a shelf for a year and I have the good intention of writing a comparative review one of these days. But I know it would never get done because nothing can be drearier than going through a familiar text again and again for the sake of academic nit-picking.

It is not enough to know the original language, one must be a habitual reader in that language, familiar with its literature and the tradition in which this particular text has to be placed. A more important qualification for the reviewer—whether one knows the source language or not—is an involvement in the larger translation scene as a critical reader. I would like to be assured that the reviewer reads translated texts often and of her own volition, and not only when she is asked to review. I am not suggesting that a Telugu-knowing person should make a habit of reading Telugu novels in English translation. That would be

absurd when she has access to the original. But to be taken seriously, a reviewer should have read enough Hindi, Marathi or Malayalam novels in translation to know what the issues to be highlighted in this particular review are. She must also be familiar with the scene well enough not to be taken in by wily publishers who try to pass off old translations as new. One particularly gullible reviewer in this issue naively discusses David Rubin's translation of Premchand's *Nirmala* as if it is a recent publication (Orient Paperback indeed presents it as such) when it had first appeared some time in the eighties. '*Nirmala* deserved a better translation than this one,' the reviewer sighs sanctimoniously, blissfully unaware of Alok Rai's later translation published by OUP. In fact more and more publishers are playing this trick today, Rupa being the biggest culprit, especially in their reissue of old Tagore translations—most of them sadly dated in style and atrocious in the liberties they took with the original—giving them new chocolate box covers and withholding the fact that the translations were done long ago. It is the reviewer's job to call the publishers' bluff.

Another innocent reviewer (presumably Hindi-knowing) starts off her review of an anthology of contemporary Hindi stories with the statement 'Ever since the translation of indigenous literature, mainly into English, was initiated almost a decade ago, it has triggered off reams of publications and gradually evolved into a specific genre.' I have at least three problems with this first sentence. One: What is indigenous literature? Two: If she does not have the elementary knowledge that Indian language novels have been translated into English for more than a century, she is not a person whose opinion about any book needs to be taken seriously. Lastly, why should translated books constitute a 'specific genre'? If a travel book is available to us in translation it would still belong to the genre of travel writing, if an autobiography is available in translation it still belongs to the genre of autobiography, and even among novels, the distinctions between detective fiction, romance, pulp fiction, political novel, historical sagas all remain valid in their translated avatars. This attempt to homogenize all translated books into one category I think has done serious damage to their dissemination and reception.

In case any of you are wondering about the existence of detective fiction, pulp fiction, etc., in translation, let me show you a random page of book advertisements from the most recent issue of the Bangla magazine *Desh*. It lists the complete works of Sherlock Holmes and Agatha Christie in Bangla translation, novels of James Hadley Chase, Alastair Maclean, Nick Carter, Harold Robins. On the same page we find mention of Jim Corbett, Edgar Allan Poe, Jules Verne and so on. This is a huge industry Translation Studies scholars do not take into account. A vast market exists for these, and gives a lie to the claim of the reviewer I quoted just now that most of the translation work in the last decade has been from 'indigenous literature' into English. I am giving you examples from Bangla, but I will be surprised if similar activities are not taking place in Malayalam or Hindi and other languages. These books are seldom reviewed, but they are read widely.

Let me presume that we discuss reviewing of only serious books of literary value and only other language texts translated into English. In that case our parameters are clearer. If I am reviewing Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul*, something I have actually done, I would look at it as a memoir that connects the author with his city and not comment on the quality of Maureen Freely's translation because I have no qualification to do so. But if I am reviewing Bankinchandra's *Anandamath* in English translation —also something I have done— I can vent my anger against the translator for mercilessly truncating the original and for making simplistic choices in order to become accessible to an imaginary foreign reader.

If the reviewer is engaging with matters connected with the act of translation, s/he has to do so in specific terms, and with actual illustrations. General observations about 'good translation' or 'bad translation' mean nothing. In this issue of the journal on reviews, the only reviewer who makes intelligent comments that would interest those in the field of Translation Studies as well as the general reader is Mahasweta Sengupta. She raises two questions while reviewing an anthology that brings together a century of Bangla short stories. One

is about diachronic changes in the source language and the need to reflect that change in the target language. In the volume she is reviewing, an older story (the author born in 1880) and a contemporary story (the author born in 1950) are translated in the same idiom. This might make for easy readability but does it not sacrifice some amount of specificity? she asks. Parsa Venkateshwara Rao, reviewing a similar anthology of Telugu short stories, might have also raised this question, but he seems content to summarise the stories he likes and listing the stories he does not like. He is singularly unconcerned with the texture and quality of the language of translation. Mahasweta's second point is about the deliberate confusion created by the publisher by calling Aruna Chakravarty the editor of the volume and never mentioning the fact that she is the translator as well. This is very likely not an oversight. It arises out of a belief (probably right) that books in original English sell better than books that are translated. There might be just a chance that the casual buyer in a book store will pick up the volume as a book written in English. Chakravarty writes an Introduction which is full of platitudinous wisdom on the act of translation, but even she forgets to mention that she is herself the translator. The reviewer rightly chides her for the dated assumptions in this Introduction.[2]

Not many reviewers in my sample are concerned with these translation related issues or any larger issue of any kind. The reviewer of a Marathi novel translated into English is not only unconcerned with the fact that the book in hand is the translation of a translation (done from a Hindi master copy as is the practice of NBT) but she also neglects to mention the date of the original. Since she invokes Tagore's *Gora* and Forster's *A Passage to India* in comparison, presumably the book is of early twentieth century vintage, but there is nothing in the review to confirm this. The other book from Marathi reviewed here is a play *Kirwant* and even if it does not discuss translation issues in any detail, this one satisfies most of my criteria of a good review. It talks about the time lag between the original performance of the play (1991) and the date of the English translation published by Seagull (2005) to point out how much Dalit discourse has changed in the meanwhile. It also locates the playwright's

controversial position in the Marathi literary milieu by pointing out how his humanitarian concerns (in this play he focuses on the exploitation of one set of Brahmins by another) alienated him 'from the literary coterie of both the brahmins and the Dalits.' The translator is a well-known Professor of English but the reviewer also informs us of his active association with the parallel theatre movement in Marathi for more than three decades. The reviewer himself, apart from being a lecturer in English in Wadia College, Pune, is also an actor, director, theatre teacher and theatre critic. There is something in this review that reconfirms my already existing view that drama is one of the most vibrant and alive sectors of translation activity in our country. It is done out of a real and immediate need (performance) and there is a spontaneous feed back from the audience. From the seventies—when playwrights like Badal Sarkar, Mohan Rakesh, Utpal Dutt, Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnad used to be performed simultaneously in Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune in four different languages, till today, as with the plays of Mahesh Elkuncvar or Mahesh Dattani, the practice of translating plays for performance has continued unabated in theatre circles even if their printed versions do not always become available to the public. Drama reviewers evaluate the performances as theatre and not as translation.

To come back to my sample of thirteen, among the few that satisfy me, one is an excellent essay by Susan Viswanathan combining reviews of two books *Legends of Kerala* and an anthology of women's short stories from Malayalam. She does comment on translation in passing but much more rewarding is her sociologist's perspective that places the books in a larger frame of reference, talking of magic and religion in the light of recent work done in different parts of the world in reviewing the first book. Even her review of the collection of short stories—admittedly the most difficult genre to review---refreshingly steers clear of the plot-summary school of reviewing. Uneasy with the monotony of the victim complex of second rate feminist writers, she raises the level of discourse by theorizing rape in unexpected ways. She can recall earlier stories by Sara Joseph while commenting on the present one included in this anthology and raise questions about the

truth value of fiction. I quote a line randomly from the review to indicate the quality of her response: 'A.S. Priya's "Onion Curry and the Nine Times Table" is hilarious, the only really funny story in the lot, which captures an existential sadness with the delicate tracery of un-slit veins.'

It is ultimately the quality of the mind of the reviewer, her intelligence, her awareness of the different dimensions of life that come together in a text and her willingness to do the homework for performing the task at hand that matter in a review, not her chance affiliation with the language of the original or her casual experience of translating a text or two on assignment from a publisher. You cannot lay down a fool-proof recipe for the success of any review–translated text or not. I would at the most venture to suggest a three point formula. We expect the reviewer to provide the context (historical, political. linguistic, comparative—within the language tradition or across language—whatever is relevant. All that we want is that the book should be located). Next we would like to know about the text—not the summary of its content, but more about its scope, its focus, its mode of operation—something that will not only describe the text but critically engage with it. Lastly, if there are specific issues about the translation that the reviewer would like to share with the reader that would be welcome, but please, no recycling of stale wisdom about translation bridging cultural differences or platitudes about languages being jealous mistresses or the impossibility of capturing the local flavour of idioms. It is better to skip that mandatory concluding paragraph about translations if the reviewer has no fresh insight to impart.

Notes

1. Here are two extracts from the novel quoted by Satchidanandan in the review:

> 'Appkuttan would be lying (in his cradle) moving his little arms and legs and looking at E. M. S's picture. He would talk in his own language to E. M. S. and laugh. As long as he could see E. M. S he felt no hunger, no thirst.'

> . . . 'Kesavan quipped that his chair was arthritic. The trouble was within its joints. Let it tilt either to the left or to the right (but) hasn't any kind of tilt become irrelevant after the advent of perestroika and glasnost?'

2. Mahasweta Sengupta writes:

> 'The assumptions that underlie this Introduction are dated. … The Introduction appears to be pleading for the consideration of "local" or "regional" cultures by the "international" and "powerful" of the world. This is disturbing. I thought that we had outgrown our intention to serve our goods in the English-speaking world just because we want them to consider our existence on this part of the planet. I thought that our identity did not depend on the acknowledgement of the so-called international or the cosmopolitan…'

Always in the Limelight: Critical Responses to *English Geetagalu*

Shivarama Padikkal

Abstract

This paper shall attempt to capture a few moments in the history of the reception of 'English Geetagalu'[1] *by the Kannada reading public by way of reading some of the critical responses to it so as to sketch the 'primary role' it has supposedly played in fashioning modern Kannada literature. It argues that the text 'English Geetagalu' bears the marks of the discourse of colonial modernity that produced it as a canonical one. Also, in the context of 'English Geetagalu' it attempts to revisit the question of 'invisibility' or the 'marginality' of translators—a question that has been raised time and again in Translation Studies. It would argue along with Tejaswini Niranjana that the translator's preoccupation with the method and eagerness to present the translated text as a unified and transparent whole results in the exclusion of the translator from the text to which the translator gives an after-life. Despite their exposure, training and explicit belief in the humanist tradition of the West, the early Kannada translators such as B.M. Srikantia* (1884-1946) *seem to overcome this predicament in their practice.*

Any analysis of the reviews of translated texts must situate the translated texts and reviews in the larger context of literary production and consumption at a particular point in time in history. We need to discuss the different kinds of reading public and their perception of literariness, their literary sensibility, institutionalization of literature and so on. Such a study also involves an analysis of the

production and consumption of translated texts in a particular literary culture. Secondly, any literature is a production of culture and in that very process of production it re-produces culture or modifies it according to the social aspirations of the social group that creates such texts. Review, reception, critical engagement etc., therefore represent the nature of the emerging culture at a point in time in history.

As most of us are aware, systemic theorist Itamar Even Zohar, while discussing the position of a translated text in the literary poly system, has noted that translated texts either play a primary or a secondary role in the literary poly system of the receptor language. When they play a primary role, translated texts change all the literary relations in that language and breathe in a fresh air and rewrite the history of literature. They even inaugurate a new literary movement in a given literature. Indian languages have witnessed this role of translated texts in the late nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century. Translators were most visible during this period. For example, as I have noted elsewhere, B. Venkatacharya has translated almost all the novels of Bankimchandra directly from Bengali. He went to Calcutta, learnt Bangla in order to translate these texts. His translations were regarded as 'Venkatacharya's novels' in Kannada and very popular in the first decades of the twentieth century. Readers also consider him 'Kannada kaadambariya Janaka' (Father of the Kannada Novel), for his translations attracted the reader to the fascinating world of the novel and many new writers tried their hand at that genre later.

English Geetagalu, a collection of translations of some English poems from *Golden Treasury* by B.M. Srikantia, the first joint professor of Kannada and English in Mysore University, is another text that has always been in the limelight. It practically provided a model for new poems among Kannada readers who were looking forward to have such a model. Many critics think that *English Geetagalu* marks the beginning of the 'Navodaya' literary movement in Kannada.

B.M.Sri, as he was popularly known, has mostly translated the texts of English Romantic poets in this collection. It first appeared in book form in 1926. And within ten years it acquired a canonical

status. And B.M.Sri is the only writer in Kannada to receive the first felicitation volume in 1941. His birth centenary year 1984 witnessed five centenary commemoration volumes in Kannada. He was the President of Kannada Sahitya Parishat and a Kannada activist. But as far as his literary contributions are concerned, apart from *English Geetagalu* he has published only one collection of poems *Honganasugalu* and one play and translated Greek tragedies into Kannada.

Why did B.M.Sri choose to translate the English Poems? In his preface to *English Geetagalu* he says that he wanted to bring the universal themes of poetry such as war, love, death, patriotism, nature, love for god, beauty etc., into the realm of Kannada poetry. He felt that traditional poetry was not suitable to fulfil the aspirations of the modern self. We need to write differently in a language and a different theme, argued B.M.Sri.[2]

B.M.Sri was conscious of his translation project. He was a builder of Modern Kannada Language. He intended to regenerate Kannada language through modern poetry. He decided to translate so as to provide a suitable model before the young Kannada writers. So he says:

> I don't think that all the poems translated in this collection are the best of English poetry. Not all of them represented over here are the best English poets. I have selected those poems, which I thought I could manage to translate. I liked and enjoyed most of them. Also I wish to show how the English poets treat the theme of love with seriousness and sensitivity. In this collection such love poems are more in number.
>
> I hope that from these shells thrown on the Kannada beach by the great waves of English Poetry our readers will experience the beauty, radiance, fragrance, and taste of that great ocean. (Srikantia 1985: v)

The strategy followed by B.M.Sri in translating these poems is also interesting. B. M. Sri believed in a certain kind of Universal Humanism and therefore he thought that the themes he has chosen could be rewritten in the Kannada language so far as they represent the same universal experience in Kannada. So he did a creative rendering of the English poems. But During those days poetry had to be metrical and had to follow the second syllable alliteration in Kannada. Before B. M. Sri, Hattiyangadi Narayana Rao had translated some English poems into Kannada as *Angla Kavitavali*. He maintained all the metrical rules of old Kannada poetry. B. M. Sri did not follow this tradition, but instead violated it. He researched into several Dravidian meters available in folk songs and rearranged them while translating the English poems. Interestingly, he did not use the term poetry like Narayana Rao but used the term 'Geetagalu' or Songs. Kannada has a rich tradition of Folk and Dasa songs and B. M. Sri chose to follow them rather than write in the epic tradition of Kannada. Consequently, the new poetry in Kannada appeared in the form of songs with a certain rhyme and rhythm. They became immensely popular.

P. B. Shelley's 'To' begins with the lines

'I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden
Thou needest not fear mine' (qtd. in Srikantia 1985: 103)

'hedaruvenu na ninna binnaNakele heNNe
Hedaradiru niinu nanage' (Srikantia 1985: 102)

Or Walter Scott's 'The Pride of Youth'

'Proud Maisie is in the wood
Walking so early' (qtd. in Srikantia 1985:92)

'Cimmuta niriyanu banadali bandaLu
binkada singari' (Srikantia 1985: 93)

Domestication is another strategy followed by B. M. Sri. In the above lines too women characters that appear in the Kannada translation are the new Kannada women, not the English ones. In the same way, 'Auld Robin Gray' becomes 'Old Rame Gowda' in his translations, Lord Ullin's Daughter, 'Kaari Heggade Magalu'. B. M. Sri not only changes the names, locations and rhythms of English Poetry but also modifies the traditional structures of Kannada songs in order to create a completely new range of communicative network.

B. M. Sri's translations are actually a practical demonstration of his larger agenda for the regeneration of Kannada language. In his famous speech to Kannada Vidyavardhak Sangha in 1911 he has put forward his views on the regeneration of Kannada. He clearly argues that Kannada should stop imitating Sanskrit blindly. Sanskrit could be the base but one cannot move forward if he/she doesn't come out of the clutches of tradition. English is the path that can lead us to a new future. We need to create a cultural ideal blending the best ideals of Kannada and English. Further he says:

> Use new Kannada for all writings. Old Kannada should be used only for the texts that have to be understood by the educated class or for great epics. We should not mix these two. The standard Kannada should not be infiltrated by rustic words. It has to be the language of the educated and upper caste people. By teaching this language in schools, we can make it popular.
>
> (Srikantia 1985: 254)

Though B. M. Sri worked on Kannada songs, in actuality, he standardized them in his translations. His attempt was to create a standard Kannada that can be spoken and written by women, men, children, elders, Brahmins, and Vokkaligas, who are the new reading public. B. M. Sri's project of cultural regeneration is very clearly related to the idea of the construction of a normative Kannada sensibility and Kannadaness**.** This normative Kannada subject is the English-educated, rooted in tradition but an open-minded humanist.

He also represents a refined literary sensibility. In fact B.M. Sri's own generation of English-educated Kannadigas represent the kind of secular self he was trying to give voice to through his translations. Hence, *English Geetagalu* acquired fame immediately after its publication.

There are umpteen number of writings on *English Geetagalu*. I have chosen to present before you two or three representative commentaries and readings done at different points of time.

The first set of critical responses is completely appreciative of B. M. Sri's effort. For example, M. V. Seetaramaiah, in his introduction to *English Geetagalu* calls it a gem of a translation. For him selecting the poems from English romantic poetry is a significant decision. This choice of Romantic poets such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley etc., deviated from the classical tradition in order to take poetry closer to the people. In Kannada too there was a need to come out of the 'Pandita Sampradaya' (scholarly tradition) to rejuvenate Kannada literature. *English Geetagalu* is a significant step in that direction. Relieving Kannada poetry from the clutches of the compulsory Sanskrit metrical arrangements of 'praasa', 'anuprasa', 'kanda', 'shatpadi' and experimenting with indigenous prosody was yet another goal of *English Geetagalu*.[3]

Most of the writers who were later considered as makers of Kannada literature such as Shivarama Karanth, D. R. Bendre, Masti Venkatesha Iyengar, V. Seetaramaiah, K. S. Narasimha Swamy follow this line of argument that *English Geetagalu* not only brought new themes to the realm of Kannada but also served as a model for modern Kannada poetry.

However 'traditionalists' criticized *English Geetagalu* for corrupting the Kannada/Indian tradition. In what we today consider as the 'old Mysore' area, comprising the districts around Mysore and Bangalore, it is said that writers belonged to two main camps. One is the Hirannayya tradition. Hirannayya is a philosopher who translated

the Sanskrit *Alankara Shastra* into English. He was of the opinion that we have to develop an aesthetic tradition based on *Alankara Shastra*. The other tradition was B. M. Sri's that strongly stood for transformation of Kannada literature along the lines of English. They were criticized for their love towards English in the other circles. The traditionalists did not like B. M. Sri's efforts. However, modern Kannada poetry moved forward on B. M. Sri's model.

The third set of readings represents the progressive writers. Though they acknowledged the historical significance of B. M. Sri's translations, they criticized the romantic themes projected by B. M. Sri. They strongly argued against the 'people with close collar coats and gold threaded shawls, against 'rajasevasaktas'. Their contention was that B.M. Sri did not respond to the realities of princely Mysore. While people were suffering from poverty, *English Geetagalu* provides romantic poetry to them. B. M. Sri had immense respect for Mysore Maharaja and the Colonial government. They cite the example of the translation of 'Rule, Britannica' and several such English patriotic songs in justifying their argument. A modernist critic G. H. Nayak also criticizes the elitist and Brahmincal agenda in *English Geetagalu.* He argues that B M Sri was very clearly accepted as the role model of English education and supremacy of English literature. *English Geetagalu* is dedicated "To my students in the University of Mysore who believe in the blending of the soul of India and England" (Nayak 1988: 140).

The fourth set of comments is by the new critics or those who belong to the Navya movement in Kannada. For example, critic M. G. Krishna Murthy (MGK) criticizes B. M. Sri for his lack of critical judgment in the selection of poems from English Romantic poetry. He argues that B. M. Sri is not a critical reader of English poetry and was completely influenced by the contemporary fads. MGK's criticism is that it was unfortunate that B. M. Sri did not choose to translate English metaphysical poetry. He suggests that if B. M. Sri had translated English metaphysical poems, modern Kannada poetry would have been fashioned in a very different way (Krishnamuthy 1970: 60). It is true

that Kannada has a rich tradition of reflective poetry such as 'vacanas' of 12th century, 'lavanis' of 18-19th century, 'dasa' songs of 15th century, the 'sufi' tradition and so on. However, he does not give us any reasons why others did not bring in those traditions to modern Kannada. MGK is very unhappy about the choice of Romantic poems, for they are too simplistic.

The last set of readings is by very recent scholars such as V. B. Tharakeshwar. Tharakeshwar attempts to read the role of English in constituting the Kannada language and literary culture against the backdrop of the caste politics of princely Mysore under colonial rule. He concludes:

> If in the context of *English Geetagalu* we look at how Kannada Nationalism and Indian Nationalism responded to the backward communities it is clear that the English educated elite were in the forefront of the nationalist movement and how in princely Mysore they were controlling the means of intellectual production. They successfully tried to co-opt others into the movement by negotiating with these communities through the discourse of Kannada against the colonial discourse and using the same discourse is the strategy adopted by B. M. Sri in his *English Geetagalu.* In other words, during colonialism the local elite trained in terms of master discourse experiences an anxiety about his own identity. In order to regenerate his/her culture the elite turns to the master narrative and changes the terms of that narrative in such a way that it sounds local. There exists already a readership for such literary texts. (Tharakeshwar 2002: 237)

This is a possible explanation for the success of *English Geetagalu* and its canonization. In my opinion *English Geetagalu* writes modernity into Kannada language and culture. B. M. Sri also translated Greek tragedies into Kannada. Here also he takes the form and then fills the Kannada content into the form. Thus Ajax becomes Ashwattaman in Kannada.

One of the significant things that we observe among early Kannada translators is that they felt free to interpret the text. The question of fidelity did not bother them much. They also never said that they were translations to bridge the gap between two different cultures. Their main aim was to write new kinds of texts for the new generation and to bring in new ideas into Kannada.

They were trying to fashion a new language that could be used for the new political purposes. They also thought about texts that they were translating as their own texts. They never seem to have felt the marginality. These translations were also received and discussed as independent texts in Kannada. B. M. Sri wrote a prefatory poem in *Geetagalu.* It is titled 'Kanike' (offering). This poem is a demonstration of B. M. Sri's cultural project as well as his translation strategy:

'Kannada tongue; our girl,
The girl of our garden;
Later she grew up with others
Then came back to us,
Ripe new fruit
Came near us.

The golden girl of western sea,
The breath of my life, my eyes,
Taught me, made me happy and
Made me dance with her;
Once that girl, once this girl
Are making me dance

I felt joyful
I weighed both the loves
Tried to by dressing
The one with the other's beauty;
By putting the ornaments of one on the other
I tried to sing'[4]

This comfort with other texts and the confidence had disappeared with the advent of western notions of translation. Notions

of fidelity, truthfulness etc., begin to dominate the scene in Kannada after the age of the early translators. Translation is also seen as a linguistic translation and transfer of the original meaning. In such a situation the translator is bound to become a mere artist or craftsman or a scientist as the dominant theories of translation inform us. When translators think that they are outside the text and are transferring the original meaning, their position is deemed to be marginal. As Tejaswini Niranjana (1992) has argued, it is the translators who exclude themselves from the text in order to present it as a unified and transparent whole. The commonsense that prevails in India about translation is constituted by such humanistic notion of translation. In my opinion, this is one of the major reasons why reviewers do not mention the translator.

Notes

1. 'Only English literature can rejuvenate our Kannada literature; only English can assuage the ills of our poetry that has been handed down to us from Sanskrit' argued B. M. Srikantia (1884-1946), popularly known as 'Kannada Kanva' and the 'Acharya Purusha' of modern Kannada literature. He published *English Geetagalu,* a collection of translations of English poems into Kannada in 1926 with the intention to re-energize Kannada as a modern literary language. *English Geetagalu* soon attracted a lot of critical attention and acquired the canonical status within ten years of its publication. Different communities of readers in the last ninety years have read and received it differently. *English Geetagalu* is seen as a text that has inaugurated the Navodaya literary movement in Kannada; provided new meters, rhymes and rhythms to modern Kannada poetry; represented the strength of Kannada in the process of translating; brought in the flavour of English poetry without losing the essential Kannada identity and so on. There were also, critical readings of *English Geetagalu* criticizing B. M. Srikantia's lack of critical acumen and his tendency to go along with the 'contemporary' fashions of English poetry while selecting the English poems for translation. But such a stance is an exception. The critics for various reasons consider *English Geetagalu* as a model text ever since it has been published.

2. B. M. Sri's 'Preface' as quoted by V. Seetaramaiah in his 'Introduction' to the first edition of *English Geetagalu* published by B. M. Sri Smaraka Pratisthana, Bangalore in 1985.

3. Ibid vii.

4. B. M. Sri's Poem 'Kanike' as translated by V.B. Tharakeswar.

References

Krishnamurthy, M. G. (1970) *Adhunika Bharatiya Sahitya Mattu Itara Lekhanagalu***,** Heggodu, Sagara: Akshara Prakashana.

Nayaka, G. H. (1988) *Nijadani*, Heggodu, Sagara: Akshara Prakashana.

Nayaka, H. M. (ed.) (1983) *Sree Sahitya***,** Mysore: Prasaranga, Mysore University.

Niranjana, Tejaswini (1992) *Siting Translation: History, Post-Strucuralism, and the Colonial Context,* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Panditaradhya, M. N.V. (ed.) (1985) *Hattiyangadi Narayanarayara Angla Kavitavali,* Mysore: Prabodha Pustaka Maale.

Srikantia, B.M. (1985) *English Geetagalu*, Bangalore: B.M. Sri Smaraka Pratisthana.

Tharakeswar, V.B. (2002) *Colonialism, Nationalism and the "Question of English" in Early Modern Kannada Literature,* Unpublished Ph. D Thesis: University of Hyderabad.

Reviewing Translated Texts:Challenges and Opportunities

Sachidananda Mohanty

Abstract

Most deliberations in the field of translation tend to regrettably leave out the crucial task of reviewing. In a multilingual country like ours, reviews of translation serve as the prism through which (literary) texts get disseminated across linguistic and cultural barriers. While translation enthusiasts give reviewing a mandatory nod, most critics seem to think that it is an institutional matter that involves the predilections of editors and so called reviewers, over which others have little or no control. Consequently, reviewing of translated texts gets done in a haphazard and shoddy manner. Usually, the stress is on the biography of the authors, his/her cultural context and milieu, and predictably, the gist of the text(s) translated. At the end, the reviewer may in passing throw in a paragraph or two about the -quality of translation without going into the specifics. This paper will underline the crucial importance of reviewing, a totally neglected field, and offer a thumb rule account of what an ideal reviewer could do or hope to achieve. Examples will be cited from published pieces to substantiate aspects of bad reviewing while signaling features that could act as constituents of a good review.

We may begin this exercise by stating the obvious: that reviewing of translated texts is a form of reviewing, a genre that has managed to hold its own in the domain of public culture. Beginning with the era of print capitalism and the emergence of a leisured reading class, the act of reviewing took centre stage. At its best, the form has attracted some of the best literary minds. It has served as a forum for discursive analysis and creativity. With lesser practitioners, however, the medium has lasted as a second rate activity that fills up journalistic space.

Translation Today Vol. 5 No. 1 & 2 2008 © CIIL 2008

While reviewing is rightly recognized as widespread and influential, the principles of all good reviewing are seldom articulated or publicly debated. They are assumed to exist in the ideal prototype. Like all good teaching, good reviewing, it is believed, is recognised when seen and encountered.

In a significant sense, the problems of reviewing translated texts are practically the same as the problem of reviewing in general. The pressure of time, the constraint in publication space, the proneness to hype and sensationalism, so characteristic of our times, the perceived shallowness of popular taste—all these remain the bane of both the activities.

And thus, there seems to be a mismatch between the so called ideal vis-à-vis the real types in the art of reviewing. Consequently, a good literary review, it seems to me, may ask the following: Is this work basically a derivative piece or does it break new ground? Does it enhance our understanding or does it merely confirm what we already know? Does it provoke us to new thinking by raising fundamental questions or does it merely chronicle facts? Does it use new information and offer new insights or does it rehash old arguments? The possibilities are virtually endless.

Reviewing translations clearly entails greater challenges. All translations are a form of negotiation, between cultures, ideologies, texts and politics. Translations, as George Steiner instructively told us, are not a matter of fidelity or betrayal of the so called original text. They draw attention to the process rather than the product. They draw out insightfully the deeper layers embedded in the literary artefact. Many questions thus become important. Who is the translator? Where is he/she located? How does he/she deal with the translated text? How does he/she handle the textual traditions and the contextual factors? What knowledge of intellectual or publication history does he/she bring to bear on the reviewing of translations? For the more sophisticated and astute reviewer dealing with an exceptional piece of translation, there may be further questions: How does it become a

shaping force for literary change and development? How does it create new genres and shape the literary sensibility?[1] One may think of the sonnet form that originates in Italian and in the space of two centuries spreads across the European literatures, changing its nature very slightly as it goes so that by the time we have the Shakespearean sonnet it is very different from the Petrarchan. And then there is the instance of the translations of T.S. Eliot into modern Indian languages[2]. The corollary too may be raised: Why do some texts not become a shaping force for literary change?

Another challenge for the translator and the reviewer is to determine the ethics for good translations. In a conversation with me that appeared in *The Hindu*'s Literary Review dated Sunday, 20 December, 1998, this is what Susan Bassnett said:

> The question of ethics is a very interesting one. It has not been fashionable in North America or Europe to talk about morality and literature. And I think the tide is turning now. I think now the moral and ethical questions are coming back on the agenda. If you look at the actual terms of reference of the International Federation of Translators, with reference to instructions to translators, there are ethical questions raised there. One of them is that if the translator does not agree with the ideology or contents of a text, he or she should not translate it, that the translator himself should not go against his moral principles. I think the question of the morality of the translator is probably something that is going to occupy us over the next few years. I can see this becoming a very big issue. And linked to that of course is the question of quality. This again is a problem because Western literary tradition has for 20 or 30 years not wanted to make value judgments. Of course, we all say, this is a good translation, that is a bad translation. So we must have some criteria. And I think it is important to remember the historical dimension. What was deemed to be a wonderful translation in 1860 might be hopeless in 1920, fashionable in 1950 and dead in 1990. So we need to take this aspect into account"[3]

Clearly the question of the ethics of the translator is as important as the ethics of the reviewer. In the McWorld global culture that affirms the primacy of the English language and monoculture, how does the responsible and discerning reviewer deal with the question of multiple languages and traditions that all translations presuppose? In the post-colonial context, as U. R. Ananthamurthy once said, the more educated we are, the less number of languages we speak. And so also about readership.

The editors of journals, to be fair to them, are in a way, trying to cater to what they think their audience is capable of and willing to access. It is true that they have a role to educate their readers. But then that requires risk and courage. Even the best of journals like *The Heritage* and the *Indian Review of Books* folded up due to financial reasons. This remains one more challenge before the reader.

The ground reality is known to most of us. Shoddy translations that show a blithe ignorance of many of the basic principles underlined above, commissioning editors that are more interested in flaunting personal controversies to boost circulation sales, banal plot summaries with inane comments lifted from the blurbs and jacket covers. Malice, personal prejudice and predilections often masquerade as the reviewer's judgment. The modern reader, including that of the translated text, it is somehow assumed, is a dumb and passive creature who is interested basically in the storyline. He/she has no time or interest to fathom the world of cultures, texts and literary traditions, of contextual factors and the fascinating play of ideas that intellectual history brings in.

In all these, the reviewers have been at fault. This remains a great challenge and it can be turned into an opportunity. Good reviewing of translation is part of the larger battle against bad reviewing in general, and in the final analysis, against the dictates of the globalized culture that seeks to level down all differences, specificities and diversities. One cannot hope to win by fighting a lone local battle, one needs to establish coalitions with like-minded critics, writers,

translators, editors and the reading public. We must subject ourselves to greater amount of professionalism. We must be willing to judge our acts as rigorously and as critically as we treat those of others. We must avoid coterie or group activity that sacrifices individual judgments for mercenary ends.

Lest I sound presumptuous and self-righteous, I must also be willing to assume part of the blame myself. Some feel that one could review a book even if one does not know the source language. I have my doubts regarding this. But then, why did I accept to review a book translation from Konkani? How much did I know of true Konkani or its writing traditions? Such efforts inevitably end up in plot summaries and the mandatory last para of critical advice. On the other hand, I believe I have functioned best when I handled a text and its traditions moderately well. Again, the response is going to vary depending on whether I am writing for the *Book Review* or *Biblio* or for a literary journal.

An idea that appeals to me is the need to review one's translated text. Katha regularly asks its translators to narrate their experience. This is a challenge that many translators do not undertake. Here again, I have benefited as a translator when I have subjected my task as a translator to all that I hold as essential to the job of a reviewer. The reader would be unaware of this effort. Nevertheless, a broader knowledge of the contextual and literary traditions would contribute to a more mature handling of the translated text.

Thus, reviewing translated texts entails both challenges and opportunities. There could be individual and institutional responses. At the institutional level, in our Departments of English, Comparative Literature, Translation and Media Studies, we need to frame innovative courses that focus on the art of reviewing. Editors of journals could always pass on their guidelines to the reviewers, just as they have in-house documentation styles passed on to potential contributors. The problem may appear daunting but one can begin in a modest manner.

In the final analysis, we must remember that the real challenges in reviewing are not to uphold aesthetic and normative principles important as they are. It is to uphold literary and cultural diversity and the many imaginative ways in which we can respond to cultural globalization. It is the larger battle we must fight even as we choose to train our gaze on the more immediate task at hand: How to review a translated text.

Notes

1. It has to be noted that "following the appearance of Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, more and more Lawrence works were translated into Chinese and published one after the other. Nevertheless, there were only a few occasional reviews, and those mainly concerned with the artistic aspects of Lawrence's works. The important Lawrence themes—sex and religion were not accidentally neglected, as sex had always been a literary taboo in China", See D. H. Lawrence Studies in China: A Checklist of Works by and about Him.' By Youcheng Jin in *D.H.Lawrence Review*, 23.1,1991 (pg 47-42). I am grateful to Prof. B. R. Bapuji for this reference.

2. In a separate context it is interesting to note that Christian missionaries had been active as early as the 16th Century in preparing word lists and grammatical descriptions of the languages of the conquered peoples in European colonial empires…a good analysis of a language greatly facilitates the creation of a writing system for it and subsequent translation into it, such analyses have become important preliminary steps to the process of Christianity', See *The Politics of Linguistics*, by Frederick J. Newmeyer, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press,1986.

3. 'Translation as a form of Negotiation' Conversation with Susan Bassnett, *The Hindu*, Sunday, December 20, 1998. Also see, *Translation Studies*, by Susan Bassnett, London: Methuen, 1980.

Reviewers Never Change Their Spots - Or Do They?

Sindhu Menon

Abstract

The problems that the translators of books from English to other Indian languages face, including being almost ignored totally by reviewers, however irritating, is not a new phenomenon. This paper intends to demonstrate this by going to the archives and showing how the reviewers of the earliest review journals in England acted towards translations and translators from Greek, Latin and on very few occasions from other European languages. Even the mighty were not spared. So, nothing has really changed about the reviewers, they condescend to refer to the translator only when they want to comment on the deplorable work done, otherwise what one gets is a brief, laudatory essay on the original, complete with footnotes! It is as if the intermediary, the translator, does not exist, he is an absent presence. Yes, reviewers have never changed, at least until now, but the healthy trend is that the translators and the reading public have started to exchange opinions directly, leaving the now outsiders, the reviewers, out of the picture in several cases.

"The original is Unfaithful to the translation"
(Borges)

Combining my Anglophilia and my interest in antiquity, I decided to take for my primary texts in this paper, not contemporary translations, say from modern Indian languages into English and vice versa, but Translation from Greek and Latin and later from other European languages mainly into English and the reviews of those translations. Since many of those texts, critical as well as 'literary'

have become part and parcel of the ENG LIT (English Literary) canon anywhere, including India, I felt that this was the apposite time to remind ourselves that we were conveniently forgetting the fact that Aristotle and Plato, who inevitably figure at the top of any critical course outline, actually wrote in Greek and that Homer, whose epics are welcomed with red carpets edged with purple into almost every English classroom did not even write, but recited in Greek. Horace and Virgil are also quite welcome and the fact that they were translated from Latin is conveniently forgotten. This applies to religious studies also; when we regularly debate in English classes if The Book of job is 'Literature,' we generally participate willingly in a mass agreement not to dwell on the fact that the original Bible was written in Hebrew, then underwent a stint in Latin and only after that was translated into English and even later, in the wake of the missionaries who followed the postcolonial trail, into the indigenous languages of some of the erstwhile colonies.

This train of thought led me to recognize that we also had no problem apparently with the contemporary texts in Literary Theory, most of which are translations from French, German or Russian. And this was not a matter for theory alone; Brecht and Ibsen as well as Racine or Voltaire was welcome, but a hard battle would have to be fought to include a translation of Ngugi's current writings.

This was an extremely ironic situation indeed where the entry of a text in any African language or in Malayalam or Hindi translated into English, for example, would be challenged at the gateposts, while the earlier translations from classical languages were not even regarded as translations any more and the contemporary translations from other European languages were admitted without any queries regarding their status. Indeed, one has to pause and wonder that while Chaucer could just about be managed with a good glossary, who but specialists in Old English could now cope with *Beowulf* without a 'translation'?

I wondered at this point if this had been always so, and if the reviewers of these early translators were all praise for their efforts.

Current reviews of translated texts are largely summaries of the originals, and in several cases if the translator gets mentioned at all it is to face a series of accusations regarding her lack of fidelity to the source text. Today's reviewers of translated texts seem to be having their cake and eating it too with remarkable ease. On the one hand, the forcefulness with which they point out the translators' 'mistakes' and 'inaccuracies' is tantamount to a volatile re-accusation of the Italian adage '*traduttore, traditore*' meaning 'translator, traitor,' while on the other hand they parade their expertise in both the source and target languages and suggesting oh-ever-so-innocently that they could have done the job much better.

Review Journals had of course flourished in English from a very early period, and I must admit that I started my research with the idea, or perhaps with the hope that things were better in those good old days. I am now in a position to affirm that that was not the case. As my title says, reviewers have not suddenly changed their spots, though today they lack the cut and thrust ability of riposte which had at least made the early reviews readable and are therefore easily caught out or spotted in their posturings. The one good aspect, in my opinion, about this initial stage in the translator vs. reviewer battle was that the early translators gave as good as they got, with both translator and reviewer indulging in extremely interesting if extremely unparliamentary language.

Today, a large group at least, among the translators seem to have either resigned themselves to the reviewers' criticisms or put on a mask of dignity which prevents them from retorting in the same manner. However, this is rarely perceived as dignity by the general reading public, who take the mass media reviewer as their mediator and guide and if her statements go unchallenged, then that is regarded as the ultimate proof of their veracity. Under the circumstances, it is definitely a worthwhile task to consider and discuss how or how not to review a translated text as it at least gives a reasonably clear indication of the fact that the translators are at last attempting to break their supposedly dignified silence and fight back.

Reviewing has now become an almost mechanical activity, with the progressive steps to be followed set out with mathematical precision in books that can be called nothing other than set text books, and once these steps are internalized, it does not seem to make much difference whether the work under review is a translation or not. To give just one example, I will reproduce here the orderly, numbered steps arranged for the reviewer in *Reviewing for the Mass Media* (Hunt 3-8). There are eight specific points with elaborations of which I will only present the headings or rather dictates.

1. Above all, the reviewer informs his readers.
2. He raises the cultural level of the community.
3. He imparts personality to the community.
4. He advises readers how best to use their resources.
5. He helps artists and performers. (We are not talking about just book reviews here, but reviews of all forms of mass media).
6. He defines the new.
7. He records an important segment of history.
8. Not least of all, he entertains.

The last aspect at least cannot be denied its veracity in the initial stages of reviewing. As I mentioned earlier, the major bearable/ readable part of the early reviews, whether of translated texts or not, was their entertainment value. Who could not help being amused by Dorothy Parker's comment in her 'Constant Reader' column of *The New Yorker* of October 20, 1928, while reviewing Milne's *House at Pooh Corner* (1928) that when Pooh, in what she calls 'cadenced Whimsy', tells Piglet that 'I put that in to make it more hummy' (Rees 2003: 623) that "And it is that word 'hummy,' my darlings, that marks the first place in *The House at Pooh Corner* at which Tonstant Weader fwowed up?" And can anyone manage to keep a straight face when Ms. Parker remarks in an as yet unidentified novel: 'This is not a novel to be tossed aside lightly. It should be thrown with great force?' And who would not laugh at Eugene Fields' comment on a performance of *King Lear*? [1]: 'Mr. Clarke played the King all evening as though

under constant fear that someone else was about to play the Ace?' (Rees 2003: 339).

One has to remember, however, that entertainment is but one and that too the last one in our list of 'certain - success guaranteed - in - eight – steps' reviews manual. (And in all honesty, let us also admit that the entertainment value of most contemporary mainstream reviews has fallen far below the standards set by Dorothy Parker & Co.) Still, after reading this manual of sure fire reviewing, one starts to feel really sorry for the writers and the translators. When mediating, defining, selecting, guiding and finally entertaining too are supposedly included in the reviewers' province, what exactly is left for an author to do, and from those scraps, what falls to the part of a translator?

It is indeed a relief to go somewhat further back from the witty repartee of the Algonquin Table and see that during the early stages of translation into English, the translators were quite capable of holding their own against any reviewer—and that was extremely necessary—considering the vituperative rather than witty nature of the expressions adopted by most reviewers.

Almost any student of English literature asked to name a good translator of Homer into English today, is sure to blurt out the name of George Chapman, whether they have read a work of his translation or not; as Keats' laudatory and memorable 'On Reading Chapman's Homer' (1884) is a must-read on most graduate English syllabuses. Unfortunately this tribute and its after effects came far too late as Chapman had finished his literary labours and passed away in 1614.

The reviewers of his time found fault with his translations, but he had little fear of them and his language was as vituperative as theirs, one of the milder terms he applied to his critics being 'envious windfuckers'! (Logue 2001: vii).

Ironically, the charges brought by reviewers and critics against those who dare to translate have remained unchanged in several

respects from the Elizabethan era to the present century. The primary accusation is that of lack of fidelity to the original, of taking unwarranted liberties with the source text which ought to be regarded as sacrosanct. We see this charge in the review pages of contemporary newspapers and also as far back as the comments made by Chapman's detractors. Chapman's robust and confident stand, defending the liberties of the translator can be taken as a model reply to several carping reviews of even today. In his 'Preface to the Reader', published along with his translation of the *Iliad*, Chapman remarks:

> How pedanticall and absurd an affectation it is, in the interpretation of
> Any Author .... to turn him word for word, when (according to Horace and
> Other best lawgivers to translators) it is the part of every knowing and
> judiciall interpreter, not to follow the number and order of words, but the
> materiall things themselves. (Logue 2001: vii)

There were, of course, other translations of Homer, in both verse and prose, but before I approach the next most significant name in the area, that of Alexander Pope, I think a brief digression into John Dryden's opinions on the act of translation itself is justified. While conceding that his translation of the *History of the League* (1683) from French was undertaken by royal command and no real internal compulsion, his terminology in describing the process is still significant. While in the actual preface to the finished work, Dryden is extremely careful to make the work sound like a labour of love and also extremely urgent, his casual comments in the preface to a later verse collection is far more honest and revealing. In the preface to his *Sylvae,* Dryden tells us:

> For the last six months I have been troubled with *the disease of translation*, the cold prose fits of it, were spent on the History of the League, the hot, on this volume of verse miscellanies. (Winn 1987: 395)

'The disease of translation'—an incredibly relevant description indeed, from a sustained analysis of which one could probably garner the basic assumptions of the various attitudes of various times which have consistently implied and stated that translation is at best a secondary activity, never one which can measure up to the act of original composition irrespective of quality and is at best a utilitarian and profit oriented task unworthy of the true creative muse. From here, the move to Pope's comments in his 'Preface' to his translation of the *Iliad* are while chronologically close, quite a distance ahead in tone. Certainly, compared to Chapman's aggressive assertion and Pope's own well known talent for invective, the comments in the 'Preface' seem incredibly tame and compromising, but at least they place the activity of translation in a higher position than Dryden accords to it. Pope comments:

> It should then be considered what methods may afford some equivalent in our language for the graces of these in the Greek. It is certain no literal translation can be just to an excellent original in a superior language, but it is a great mistake to imagine (as many have done) that a rash paraphrase can make amends for this general defect, which is no less in danger to lose the spirit of an ancient, by deviating into the modern manners of expression. If there be sometimes a darkness, there is often a light in antiquity, which nothing better preserves than a version almost literal. I know no liberties one ought to take, but those which are necessary to transfusing the spirit of the original, and supporting the poetical style of the translation; and I will venture to say, there have not been more men misled in former times by a servile, dull adherence to the letter, than have been deluded in ours by a chimerical, insolent hope of raising and improving their author. It is not to be doubted, that the fire of the poem is what a translator should principally regard, as it is most likely to expire in his managing; however, it is his safest way to be content with preserving this to his utmost in the whole, without endeavouring to be more than he finds his author is, in any particular place. It is a great secret in writing, to know when

> to be plain, and when, poetical and figurative, and it is what Homer will teach us, if we will but follow modestly in his footsteps. Where his diction is bold and lofty, let us raise ours as high as we can, but where his is plain and humble, we ought not to be deterred from imitating him by the fear of incurring the censure of a mere English critic. Nothing that belongs to Homer seems to have been more commonly mistaken than the just pitch of his style, some of his translators having swelled into fustian in a proud confidence of the sublime, others sunk into flatness, in a cold and timorous notion of simplicity. Methinks I see these different followers of Homer, some sweating and straining after him by violent leaps and bounds (the certain signs of false mettle), others slowly and servilely creeping in his train, while the poet himself is all the time proceeding with an unaffected and equal majesty before them. However, of the two extremes one could sooner pardon frenzy than frigidity, no author is to be envied for such commendations, as he may gain by that character of style, which his friends must agree together to call simplicity, and the rest of the world will call dullness. There is a graceful and dignified simplicity, as well as a bold and sordid one, which differ as much from each other as the air of a plain man from that of a sloven: it is one thing to be tricked up, and another not to be dressed at all. Simplicity is the mean between ostentation and rusticity.
>
> (Barnard 1973: 67)

The dispute regarding the proper function of translation, as to whether it is to provide a mimetic duplicate or to convey a sense of the potential of the original to the reader by deliberately creative and original methods, seems to have confounded even Pope to the extent of making him provide statements in his 'Preface' which really subscribe completely to one viewpoint or the other. But indeed, when, instead of using the hammer blows which Pope could counter easily through inclusion in his *Dunciad*, his critics went in for swift thrusts like this by Richard Bentley. 'It is a very pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but

you must not call it Homer' (Johnson 1905: 54). It is small wonder that even Pope who excelled at invective should have his doubts about the position and ranking of the task he was undertaking.

Indeed, the constant dual accusations levelled against translators, one best exemplified in Robert Frost's comment that 'Poetry is what gets lost in the translation' which charges the translator with 'losing the fire of the original' or the other which accuses her of not following the original slavishly and of daring to innovate with the source text which is to be regarded as sacrosanct are enough to confuse the most confident translator. Indeed, the English terms of source text and target text fail to convey the imperativeness of the second attitude which is made extremely clearer in the Indian terms of 'Swami-Bhasha' (Master Text) and 'Dasya-Bhasha' (Servant text).

Even under these circumstances, one could rank Chapman and Pope among the more fortunate as they are at least remembered as translators. The fate of their contemporaries who must have laboured equally hard in the translations of prose texts like those of Aristotle or Plato is far worse—obscurity or complete invisibility. How many of us today, who teach or learn Aristotle, Plato, Horace or Longinus, to name the canonized few in English Literary Criticism classes, know or even care about the identity of the translator? And while deconstruction for instance, retains some of its novelty, Spivak may be fortunate enough to be remembered as the translator of Derrida, but observing trends till now, her reputation, if it is to be sustained, must remain based on her 'original' writings; as translators of Foucault, Barthes and several others are relegated to mentions in a corner of the copyright page, Spivak's fame or rather notoriety is sustained far more by her 'Introduction' condemned by many as more incomprehensible than Derrida himself, and cannot be expected to prop the work up forever.

While there are new names being coined now, from transcreation to rewriting, the fact remains that translators get very few of the bouquets and far more than their share, of the brickbats.

The situation in India is extremely peculiar and perhaps unique, while we accept translations from both the ancient European languages such as Greek or Latin, or from contemporary works of theory or fiction from French, German, Mexican or Russian without the slightest qualm as 'English' into our classrooms and canons, all hell breaks loose when a similar translation from any of our own 'regional languages' are attempted to be included in the syllabus.

The reaction, especially visible in the review columns where the reviewer insists on the worthlessness of the translation, principally as it amounts, irrespective of quality, to a degradation of the original Indian language, would be incomprehensible if we did not have what I would call two opposing colonial models already in front of us. These two methods, which were applied to the translations from Indian languages produced by the orientalists could be called the 'Macauleyan' and the 'Millean' respectively—the first embodied perfectly in Macaulay's Minute and consists of brushing aside the very existence of such translations as irrelevant, and the second exemplified by James Mill's technique of using the translations of fictional and legendary texts for precisely the one purpose they were most unsuited for—that garnering so-called historical (and mainly condemnatory) 'facts.'

The prejudice that reviewers and critics of the colonial and initial post-colonial period applied to translations considering these degrading uses they were put to, is understandable. But surely, the time for a change of attitude has come, when we are technically at least more than a good century away from the colonial period and the translators are no longer Coloniser-orientalists with suspect motives, but Indians with a sincere desire to make texts in one 'regional language' accessible to those who are ignorant of it. It would indeed be a utopia if all translations among Indian texts could be from one 'Indian' language into another, but utopia is always by definition over the horizon, and even if we overlook the sheer numerical contrast between the number of translations and those of shared reading communities such a project would involve, it is surely high time that we acknowledged that as aunty-tongue or mother-in-law tongue,

English is now as much of an Indian language as any other, and therefore one with which we can afford to take liberties? Such a recognition should ensure that the translators into English are not automatically regarded as betrayers or polluters of the original language.

The question of how to or how not to review translated texts, gains importance especially therefore in the Indian context, where the reviews can decide the acceptance or dismissal of a translation. There is indeed no doubt that readability still remains an important aspect of reviews, but this need not and indeed should not take the role of personal vindictiveness, which merely spurs further offensives and counter offensives in the midst of which the text sinks without a trace. Also, if there are 'faults' so to speak, it is certainly a part of the reviewers' task to point them out. This had to be done with a much belated awareness that reviews are not the places to parade one's own scholarship to the detriment of the work under consideration. And as far as translations into English are concerned, it would be well if the reviewers remembered that the issue at stake here is not merely one of whether the work shall sell or not and that there is an ongoing struggle in the academia, sadly problematical though absurd as it is, to convince syllabus makers that if Tolstoy and Plato, and Marquez and Borges are acceptable in English class rooms, there can be no reason why English translations from Malayalam or Telugu or Urdu or Hindi cannot be accorded at least the same status. Unfortunately we can still see the attitude; adopted perhaps because of an overzealous patriotism, of continuing to regard English as the enemy. This, often in conjunction with a mean spirited desire to parade the reviewers' own multilingual skills as far better than the translator's could delay the acceptance of texts translated from Indian languages. To those reviewers of the first persuasion one can but strive to point out that time has not stood still, while those who adopt the second attitude need to be firmly informed that half a page review columns are not meant for such parading of virtuosity and any such desire would be better represented if they too were to go and engage themselves in the actual act of translation.

Note

1. Field was referring to Creston Clarke's performance of *King Lear* in Denver in 1880.

References

Barnard, John (1973) *Pope: The Critical Heritage*, London: Routledge.

Chapman, George (1998) in Allardyce Nicoll (ed.) *Chapman's Homer: the Iliad*, Princeton: California University Press.

Hunt, Todd (1972) *Reviewing for the Mass Media*, Philadelphia: Chilton.

Johnson, Samuel (1905) "Life of Pope" in G.B. Hill (ed.) *Lives of the English Poets* 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon.

Logue, Christopher (2001) *War-Music,* London: Faber and Faber.

Rees, Nigel (2003) *Cassel's Humorous Quotations,* London: Cassell.

Winn, James Anderson (1987) *John Dryden and His World,* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Translating and Reviewing:Some Ruminations

N. Venugopal

Abstract

This paper will attempt a theorisation of my experience of translation and reviewing. I have about a dozen reviews of translations into Telugu from other languages and about a half dozen of them of translations from Telugu to English. I want to add my own experience as a translator to these ideas as a reviewer. Among my foci are faithfulness and creativity in translation, cultural roots of the original text and differences of a target language audience, reviewer's general rigidity in looking at the translation from either of these two.

I think translation is a kind of reviewing, and reviewing involves translation. One cannot review without translating and similarly one cannot translate without reviewing. Reviewing a translated text becomes reviewing an already reviewed text, maybe a derivative of a derivative. Thus translation and reviewing are intertwined in an ambivalent relationship where one has to review the text one is translating and vice versa.

To throw more light on this difficult relationship between translation and reviewing, I give examples from my own experience as a translator. The books I translated include texts from Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Japanese and African that came into English as well as some in original English. With hindsight I can say that I was reviewing the texts before I translated each sentence, paragraph and chapter. Maybe it is impossible to translate a text without reviewing and assessing what to be brought into the target language, what turn of phrase in the target language is nearer to that in the source, and at least in abridgement, what could be avoided.

Translation Today Vol. 5 No. 1 & 2 2008 © CIIL 2008

The translator will also have the duty to edit the original text keeping in view the sensibilities and linguistic and cultural traditions of the target language. This editing as part of translation might appear blasphemous, but my own readings and comparisons of translated texts with originals demonstrate that each translator has his or her own way of 'editing.' I would like to argue that even the difference in syntactical structure itself leads to editing. A typical sentence in English cannot be translated with similar stress on subject or object or verb into a different language where the sentence structure completely modifies that stress. I would argue that this is natural editing unintended by the translator—natural in the sense that it is characteristic of the target language and unintended because of the sense of faithfulness on the part of the translator. However, in abridgement and free translation, editing becomes intentional, besides being natural. This editing might be a result of ideological position of the translator or just a lack of understanding of the source language nuances.

What appears as a beautiful expression or passage in the source language might lose its charm completely in the target language. Similarly a clumsy phrase in the original might blossom into a wonderful passage in the target language. A translator might think that the writer knowingly or unknowingly was giving expression to his or her own agendas and included several unnecessary passages in the text and all that has to be pruned in the translation. For example, the Telugu classic Viswanatha Satyanarayana's *Veyipadagalu* has a number of arguments that glorify 'varnaasramadharma' running into pages. Any ordinary reader would think those arguments are unnecessary for the smooth flow of the narrative. A translator cannot but prune those arguments. To give another example, Sahavasi, an accomplished translator in Telugu, had done a rendering of William Hinton's *Fanshen*, pruning all the political arguments from the book, yet the Telugu translation was regarded as a great work. Again Sahavasi's highly successful translation *Edutaraalu*, of Alex Haley's *Roots,* brought only three generations into Telugu as against seven generations in English. In contrast, Ranganayakamma's Telugu translation of Charles Bettelheim's *China Since Mao* became double

the size of the original with translation additions and explanations, of course, in foot notes. I think all these additions, deletions, modifications, pruning and icing are part of reviewing without their being called so.

Here I would like to make an attempt to illustrate this from my own example. I translated a Chinese novel *Song of Youth* by Yang Mo in 1985. This huge novel of about 700 pages portrays the student movement in the wake of a patriotic united front against Japanese invasion of China during the 1930s. Being a historical and period novel, it had woven a lot of things together from student life to romance, sentiments, betrayal, patriotism, Kou Min Tang, Communist Party, armed struggle, the united front of nationalist forces against foreign aggression, etc. My Telugu translation of the novel came at the height of radical student movement in Andhra Pradesh, five decades later.

First of all, though *Udayageethika* was a translation of *Song of Youth*, they were separated in time and space. *Song of Youth* had a lot of patriotic fervour of students in the face of a foreign invasion against their motherland. But my target audience was part of a class struggle and they would not be able to relate to the situation of a foreign invasion. Thus there was a marked difference in the context of the novels theme and the novel's readership. The novel also drew a lot from Chinese history and my readers would be at a loss to understand all of that. The novel's length grew because of its portrayal of love affairs between students who were part of the movement and my readers primarily were in a mood of dismissing all that love and sentiment as middle class nonsense, whether I liked it or not. There was a marked change in the value system. Of course, above all this, the Telugu market would not allow me to publish a novel of that size. Indeed, if I had done a true translation, it would have become an unmanageable 800 page tome.

Thus I had to become a reviewer first and edited it to half the size. I had to carefully choose what was needed to have a smooth flow, at the same time taking precaution not to lose any significant

ideas and scenes. I had to read the original novel as an ordinary reader for the first time for the pleasure of it, as an editor-reviewer another time to prune or abridge it, and then translate it keeping the target reader in mind. Looking back, I would say this process was very complicated, painful and dynamic where reader, editor, translator and reviewer are one and the same as well as transform one into the other constantly.

Reviewing books is a genre that is not receiving its due attention these days. Except in a couple of specialized journals and newspapers, the review sections in several newspapers are passing off mere paraphrasing or unnecessary and unrelated opinionated pieces as reviews. At worst, some so-called reviews are what are given by the publishers of the books. To give the reviewers their due, the space limitations set by the editors are to be blamed. I remember one of my editors, a very knowledgeable person, directing the reviewer to limit the review to 100 words or 200 words depending on the size of the book.

A good review, in my opinion, should help future readers, extend new insights to those who already read the book and correct the writer's fallacies, if any, and highlight the positive contributions of the writer.

In order for a review to be good, I think, it has to have five ingredients: contextualizing the book, elucidating what the text tries to say, bringing the formal, stylistic and linguistic nuances of the text into sharp focus, pointing out the pitfalls in the text, and abstracting the novel and topics worth-researching in the book and putting them in perspective. Maybe this is more than what one could expect from a reviewer, but unless a review involves all these elements, it would be as good as a promotional blurb on the back cover.

Now let me turn to the business of reviewing translated texts. Again this is a very complicated and problematic arena. Continuing from rather high demands mentioned just now, contextualizing a

translated text requires a reasonably sound knowledge of the source and target languages and literary contexts. Then the reviewer has to have a clear knowledge of the content of the book and whether there is any incongruence between the original and the translation. The third aspect of the formal, stylistic and linguistic elements requires a reviewer to have a good understanding of these nuances as a writer would have. Pointing out pitfalls doesn't need any elaboration as that is being done amply. Listing out new and path breaking aspects of the text needs a fine sense of reading and an insightful and visionary outlook on the part of the reviewer.

If the reviewer knows the original language, the first thing that happens is a comparative study. And most of the time this comparison would lead to disastrous consequences. There is no denying that if one text is the translation of another text, one would tend to compare. But translation is not just copying from the original to the target language; the translator would have to be as creative as, if not less than, the original author. Thus a reviewer should approach a translated text also as he or she would approach an original text.

However, reviewers, even if they do not know the original language, would be put off with the translation of idioms, proverbs and other linguistic nuances, rooted in the particular culture of the original language. Here again we have a dilemma. Those who know the original language grumble that the translation was not faithfully done and those who don't know the language complain that it is clumsy and incomprehensible.

I'll try to touch upon my experience as a reviewer. Though I have done some Telugu reviews of translated texts into Telugu and I made some comments on the translation, I would like to leave them aside and take the examples of my reviews of texts translated into English.

Let me confess that I could not stick to what I stated just now. I was comparing the translated English text with the original Telugu

text and finding fault with the translation. This could be seen from two perspectives: one, there were some real errors in translating idioms, proverbs, phrases and cultural specificities and as a reviewer it was my duty to point them out. Two, rooted in the traditions of my mother tongue, or the original language, I could not overcome my affection for the language and the writers. I thought any deviation from the original, even if done to add value, was a sacrilege and I criticized the translators. In the process I forgot that the translated text was aiming at a reader who doesn't have any acquaintance with the original language, literature or the particular writer. Now in hindsight I can say my experience over the years made me realize how not to review a translated text. I think that a realization, rather unlearning, solves half of the problem and the rest is to learn how to review a translated text.

Point of (Re)View

Subashree Krishnaswamy

Abstract

This paper focuses on why translations should be reviewed differently from original writings. What are the different ways in which a translation is usually reviewed? Is there really a best way to read a translation? Is it necessary for a reviewer to know the source language? Why should the reviewer be translation-sensitive? The paper draws on experiences of the author as an editor of a review magazine ¾ 'Indian Review of Books' ¾ which regularly reviewed literatures in translation.

Should a translation be read differently from an original piece of writing? I am always nettled that such a question should even be entertained, even though as editor of the review magazine *Indian Review of Books* (IRB), I was asked precisely this any number of times. After all, isn't it evidently clear that the reader is not encountering the author's work, only the translator's rendering of it? As the well-known translator and critic Lawrence Venuti put it succinctly in his article, 'How to Read a Translation': 'A translation has to be read differently from an original composition precisely because it is not an original…' (Venuti 2009) That the work comes to us 'filtered' through the 'translator's lens' can never be forgotten or ignored.

A number of scholars have noted the various ways in which reviewers read translations, and I can only reaffirm what they have said. (I first came across the terms 'translation-blind', 'translation-aware' and 'translation-sensitive' in Anne Milano Appel's excellent essay on reviewing in the *ATA Chronicle* and I am taking the liberty of using them in this essay since they so aptly describe the situation in India as well). I will be only touching upon translations into English because that is what I have worked closely with for a number of years.

Translation Today Vol. 5 No. 1 & 2 2008 © CIIL 2008

First, there are those reviewers who are 'translation-blind,' who disregard — deliberately or otherwise — the fact that the book under review is a translation, lending credence to the popular notion of the translator's invisibility. Are these reviewers under the impression that they are flattering the authors, or do they unquestionably believe that the translation is perfect? The book under review, they affirm, is after all in English, and must be treated like any other of its genre in the language; when questioned closely, they disclose that it is the English version they are bothered about, and in any case they do not know the original language and much less do they care about the origins. They are therefore merely interested in advising the reader and not bothered about the process at all. Often, publishers themselves are guilty, unwilling as they are to advertise that the books are translations — the translator's name is usually printed in an obscure corner. Perhaps this in-built block attached to translations has much to do with marketability.

The second kind of translators is 'translation-aware': they usually pay token respect to the fact that the book is a translation. But they are also the ones who usually summarise the book, borrow happily from the blurb/introduction without acknowledging, and punctuate their writing with 'graceful' or 'excellent,' without ever furnishing examples of sentences that demonstrate the worthiness of such epithets. Among this category are also the ones who want to say something, but don't know what to say, really. Perhaps the reputation of the author intimidates such reviewers, and therefore when confronted with staccato or flat, functional prose, they make the translators the scapegoat, clearly forgetting that no translator can take it upon himself/herself to fix the prose. This is not to say that pedestrian writing should be condoned, but a few examples would certainly be in order.

We all know the nitpickers of course, the ones who are familiar with the original, but usually review only to pick holes. They are the ones given to sweeping statements, which are however left unfailingly unexplained. 'This does not do justice to the original' is a favourite refrain. Surely all translators work on the premise that something will

inevitably be lost in translation, especially if the target and original languages straddle different cultures. So what is the purpose in saying that one ought to read it in the original? This is not to say that bad translations should never be slammed, but if a book is *that* bad, does it merit a review at all in the first place? Of course if an unworthy book has earned unwarranted publicity and notice, it might be useful to enumerate the flaws.

Nitpickers also review to triumphantly show off their knowledge and home in on the odd error or two; it could be something as inconsequential as 'soft hair' on the arm mistakenly translated as 'soft skin.' Yes, this is a mistake that ought to be pointed out, but to devote entire paragraphs to something merely descriptive, which doesn't contribute in any big way to the narrative, is mere quibbling or bragging. It was an oversight on the part of the translator, but surely just three or four tiny errors in four hundred odd pages of otherwise competently translated dense material are excusable. A vigilant translator would certainly correct them in the next edition, but to judge his/her competency on such trivial matters is petty and meaningless.

A few words about the question of invisibility are in order. All of us, translators included, are quite happy to hear praise such as 'it reads so well that one forgets it is a translation.' In fact, it is always presumed that the better a translation reads, the less we think about the translator and the more invisible the translator becomes. Is this really fair? To quote Lawrence Venuti once again, **'**We typically become aware of a translation only when we run across a bump on its surface….' (Venuti 2009) If the bump is occasioned by the visibility of the translator's hand—not error in usage or a confused meaning that may seem intentionally comical—which allows the cadences of the original language and culture to be heard, then it is a good translation. Nowadays translators do not want the original language to be tamed by English; rather they strive to expose readers to the uniqueness of the other language. And rightly so. The bumps in our books usually take the form of kinship terms, forms of address, expressions, proverbs, idioms, and dialogues which use English as it is spoken today with all the regional variations.

Which is where translation-sensitive reviewers score. They are reviewers who never lose sight of the fact that the book is a translation and view the translator as a special kind of writer, possessing not an originality that competes with the author's, but rather an art which uses the stylistic devices that tap into the literary resources of both the languages. A translation communicates not merely a text but the translator's interpretation of it. Sensitive reviewers, often familiar with the target and source texts, make judicious comparisons and also manage to talk about the issues that informed the work and culture of the original work.

Does that mean that every reviewer should know the original? That is the ideal situation, of course, but not entirely feasible. Besides, translations are meant for readers who don't know the original language. We at IRB carried out an interesting experiment. We commissioned two reviews of the same book, one by a reviewer familiar with the original and one by a practising translator in another Indian language. The one who didn't know the original was delighted, even grateful, for the competent translation, which introduced him to a stalwart who would otherwise have remained unknown to him. But the one who knew the original was clearly unhappy with certain choices and elaborated upon them.

How does one judge then? We realized that there was no *one* perfect way to review translation. Every reviewer brings a different set of abilities to the task. But good reviewers always keep certain things in mind—they never ignore the fact that it is a translation they are reviewing; they are clear that what they are reading is not merely the author's writing, but a translator's rendering of it; and they are also aware that they are looking at a work through the lens of a translator. They will unhesitatingly use expressions such as 'as rendered by the translator,' affirming that a translation is an independent text and it is only courtesy the translator that a reviewer can access the original.

Was IRB an exemplary magazine then? Sadly not, and the reasons were many. Like most things literary, we were always strapped

for cash. This meant that we sometimes had to accept mediocre reviews even after sending them back for rewriting since we owed it to the publishers who strongly believe that any publicity was better than no publicity at all. Reviewers accepted books with alacrity, but remorselessly reneged on deadlines. Had we a corpus, we would have set aside a tidy amount to take care of 'kill fee.' Receiving two review copies from publishers wouldn't have hurt either since it was often only in hindsight (when we read the book) that we realized that some reviews were clearly unjust. Which is why heated, lively letters from readers sustain a good review magazine, and of that I'm glad to say we received in plenty.

It is high time seasoned reviewers remove their blinkers. A word of caution however: a translated text cannot be seen with the naked eye, it needs the lens of an able translator.

Reference

Venuti, Lawrence (2009) 'How to Read a Translation'
http://www.wordswithoutborders.org/?lab=HowTo

Views & Reviews

N. Kamala

Abstract

A book review calls for a number of points of information that most critics seem to accept. But when the subject of a review is a translation, there is a new angle of commentary that has shown the most diverse of opinions and positions that vary from the absence of mention of the fact that the work under review is a translation going through the passing comment about the fact that the book is a translation to the almost obsessive nitpicking about each and every aspect of every turn of phrase. But what constitutes a good translation review depends on a number of parameters attendant on its intended audience. This paper will attempt to outline a certain typology of criticism of translations and deliberate whether a methodology of reviewing translations can be established.

A book review requires and should disseminate information about a number of factors, a fact that most critics seem to accept. Starting from the book's place in the literature of its genre or period, the style of the author and the influences upon her, her performance in this book, a general book review also comments on the author and the author's other works if any, and gives information regarding the particular edition and so on and so forth.

While this brief check list is not exhaustive, it is indicative of a satisfactory review of any literary work. But when a translated work is under review, there is an added or maybe even a different angle, a completely new set of factors that have to be taken into account. However, we see a great deal of diversity in opinions and positions in reviews—this varies from the absence of the mention of the fact that the work under review is a translation, to reviews that contain a passing

comment about the fact that the book is a translation, to the almost obsessive nitpicking about each and every aspect of every turn of phrase. But what constitutes a good translation review depends on a number of parameters attendant on who is its intended audience based on which kind of publication it will come out in. This paper will attempt to outline a certain typology of criticism of translations and deliberate whether a methodology of reviewing translations can be established.

Sujit Mukherjee pointed out nearly a quarter of a century ago that there are four kinds of reviews of Indian literatures into English based on the reviewers' knowledge or lack of knowledge of the source language and their own literary, linguistic tradition. According to him, first there is the reviewer who 'reads the original so well and rates it so high that no translation can satisfy him' (Mukherjee 1994) and only reads translations to reassure himself that his reading is far superior to that of the translator's! The second kind reads translations only into his own language and wonders whether it is at all necessary to read translations into English! The third reads only English and is not competent in any other Indian or European language and can only comment on the quality of the English language in the translation, a reviewer for whom the translation performance is based on how well the English reads. And the last kind is one who is a translator himself who can only find fault with translations that are not his own! And of course, in his own inimitable style, Sujit Mukherjee accuses us scholars of belonging to this category (Mukherjee 1994: 58). So I wondered whether we could make a typology of reviews of translation now that would look at reviews from the different approaches that characterize reactions to translations at present. Having done reviews myself for *The Book Review* (*TBR*) and newspapers I thought it would be of interest to study some of the kinds of translation reviews in *TBR* and some of the newspapers to see what patterns they followed.[1]

There seems to be three major kinds of reviews broadly speaking. The first is the kind that reviews the work as if it were the original, as if the fact that it was a translation had no impact upon its reception. They go on at length about the style, i.e. the choice of words

and turn of phrase etc. of the authors (as if they were reading it in the original), the plot and structure etc. but offer no insights into the translation product or process. The work under review is commented upon to expatiate on the tastes and views of the culture that produced such a work and many newspaper reviews fall into this category and only some from the *TBR*. This is what may be termed a 'Literary Criticism'[2] approach reflecting what Edmond Cary said about literary translation—that it was a literary operation and not a linguistic one. In this category there is at best the name of the translator(s) in the bibliographical details given at the beginning. Or even if note is taken, the emphasis is still on the importance of the original as in this case of a review of Ramanujan's work:

> Ramanujan has set such high standards for translation in his own work that we are left to wonder at the quality of the translation of his writings translated by others. […] Whatever the complications and the implications there, it is simply wonderful to have more of Ramanujan in English.
>
> The choice to write about the past in Kannada, the language of their pasts, adds to the poignancy of trying to retrieve sensory memories, for languages hold sights, smells and tastes deep within themselves, guarding them jealously against the weapons of cultural equivalence. It is fitting that, I suppose, that we receive what is probably the last of Ramanujan's writings in the language that this man … first spoke.
>
> [Interesting to note this in a review of the English translation!!]

The sub approach to this is one where due note is taken of the fact that the work is translated and lip service is paid to it:

> 'The National Book Trust of India must be thanked for bringing it out in English…'[3]

> 'The translation in question … is absolutely apt and entirely in tune with the overall spirit of the play.'

These may sound like positive judgments but in most cases the terminology used is varied and nuanced such as 'reads like the original, transparent, clear, sensitive, vivid, faultless, immaculate, accessible' and so on. But the public at large is left wondering in what way these adjectives qualify the given work as there is not a single example or even explanation for these comments. In most of these cases, it is my belief that the reviewers did not know the original language and had based their comments on the English versions and how far they liked the English style of the translation.

The second point of view is at the other end of spectrum which is what I would call the 'Comparative Stylistics' kind. The critic goes at the translation hammer and tongs and then with a fine tooth comb picks out every case of mistranslation or missed translation and all but dismisses the translation as not worth being published! 'The altered title is virtually untranslatable for it draws upon a range of meanings that the English term *Relationships* does not come close to capturing. The translation is otherwise extremely smooth and competent.'

For example, in another case, the reviewer tears apart the translation by raising objections from the editorial oversight of not mentioning previous translations of the same text, to the bad literal translation that misses the ideological angle. He criticizes the lack of adequate attention to context and lack of research on the translators' part, to omissions that are *not* harmless, the lack of annotations and notes and so on, only to conclude in the same breath that 'all said and done, the translators have done a commendable job in retrieving one of the iconic Indian novels from relative obscurity and placing it centre stage.'

This brings to mind what André Gide condemned when he said, 'In general, I deplore that spitefulness that tries to discredit a translation (perhaps excellent in other regards) because here and there

slight mistranslations have slipped in … It is always easy to alert the public against very obvious errors, often mere trifles. The fundamental virtues are the hardest to appreciate and point out.' (O'Brien 1959: 90)

Talking mainly of loss in translation is a pessimistic point of view and it is obvious that languages represent the culture that first spoke it to talk of the world surrounding them. So there are necessarily differences in environment, food, dress, social customs and so on that get reflected in the language used by a particular culture. Having said that, there are however some universal common factors such as life, death, emotions, that can be found in all languages and can therefore be translated.

The linguists among us could cite Roman Jakobson: 'All cognitive experience and its classification is conveyable in any existing language. Whenever there is deficiency, terminology may be qualified and amplified by loanwords or loan-translations, neologisms or semantic shifts, and finally by circumlocution' (Jakobson 1959: 234). And the reviewer could thus perhaps analyse what the gains were in the translation rather than just citing the losses. Because this negative approach stems from the concept that translations of literary works are impossible and always result in loss, so what we have here is a literary work and therefore this translation is impossibly lost! This kind of review is normally written by those who know both the source language and target language, with the sole exception I found of one review of my translation of Toru Dutt done by a Bangladeshi professor of English who argued vehemently about certain choices in two or three examples because he was comparing them to the translation done by his student whose version he far preferred, though he admits that he does not understand a word of French, but his student's version read more poetically and felicitously than did mine! (*The Daily Star* 23rd July 2005).

The third major kind of approach is what I term the 'Translation Studies' approach, one wherein the reviewer looks at the

work not simply as a literary work, nor from the point of view of linguistics or stylistics, but as a translated product that constitutes the necessary corpus for cultural and ideological analyses, and thus highlights the implications of the choice of the work that has been translated, the why, the wherefore and the how, and to look at the politics of the whole process and product.

As one reviewer has put it, 'In any event, the more translations there are that bring the wealth of Indian literatures into English the better. There is no other way to counter the absurd proposition that India's best writing lies in English' [!] or as another has put it, 'As a nation, we have, so far, paid a woefully inadequate amount of attention to literary history… This translation […] renders just such a service by presenting an otherwise inaccessible text, recovered from the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris…' (*The Statesman* 6th March 2005).

The subsidiary approach which falls under this category includes reviews where the reviewers state what they believe to be a 'translational approach':

> 'Not all cultural nuances translate smoothly into English; this is not necessarily a flaw in the text, for these moments of awkwardness reminds us of the 'translatedness' of these plays, underscoring the cultural differences that remain an irreducible feature of Indian writing.'

> And finally a word must be put in for the sensitivity and skill with which the novel has been adapted into English from its Bangla original. The translators have not allowed the translation process to obscure the ambience of the Bangla countryside… Rather than attempt a word for word "accurate" correspondence between the Bangla original and the English adaptation, the translators have used their discretion and left several key words untranslated. This has kept the regional flavour of the narrative…'

It is surprising how often we find remarks of this kind in translation reviews. But in the examples that I saw at least the readers were spared some usual cliché or quotation showing off the reviewer's reading. But let us pay attention to the reviewers' views on what constitutes a good translation, what is the benchmark for retaining the 'ambience of the original'—a term of predilection for most reviewers which is how far the 'original flavour or ambience' has been preserved or recreated! The closer to the original, the better, according to these reviewers. As in the example quoted just now, they would laud the translation if words are left untranslated. In other words a 'non translation' equals a good translation however antithetical that may sound! And then there are translations that always obscure the original ambience. Or the fact that awkwardness is welcome as it reflects the translation process that the product has undergone. We can take issue with these statements but at least it has been made clear to us what the personal viewpoints and propositions of the reviewers themselves are.

Of course, there is the fourth category of reviews that are found in the translated works themselves under the 'Translator's Notes' which we shall not analyse at this juncture but which could be a very good point of entry for most reviewers.

Let us move away from this typology of reviews to a possible methodology of reviewing translated works.

But what constitutes a good translation review depends on a number of parameters determined by its intended audience. These include the nature and type of publication in which it will appear, therefore the kind of readers that it should address, and of course constraints of time and space. Therefore where, when and whom it addresses will have an impact on the nature of the review. In academically-oriented publications the audience is normally very different from those of a newspaper's book column.

We shall first look at a very different kind of review that we have not considered so far and which is becoming more and more

necessary as university departments, especially in English Studies, prescribe Indian literatures in English translation as well as suggest further reading lists for their students. And mention must be made of even foreign language departments that have introduced such courses.

The critic here is an indispensable tool for deciding on which texts could be prescribed and why. The review will be similar in many ways to any other kind of review of translations. But what is primordial here is the special focus on the translator's work, the product and the process that went into producing that product. This informed commentary will help those who will not know all the languages in question, especially as in our country, the various languages that find place in curricula may not and for the most part are not the languages that the university departments' teachers are familiar with. The critic's contribution will lie in underlining that particular language and literature's contribution. It must perforce be a judgment about the choice of the author, the text, and the points that have been retained, lost, modulated in the passage to another language. Examples have to be given to justify the judgment passed. These include not just the negatives but also the positives as all these are important points for the future teacher of these texts. The reviews should first of course include literary considerations of the original and its position in the source literature before tackling translation issues.

The translational challenges could include among others common difficulties in translating proper nouns, be they of places or persons; culturally loaded words or deliberately archaic terms or neologisms in the language of the author. How far the sonority especially in poetry or lyrical passages has been rendered is also of great interest to teachers of literature. If more than one translation exists, as is sometimes the case, say of Mahasweta Devi, comparing two translations is a very useful measure to show the politics at play. Quoting the same passage in translation from each of these versions will also make manifest the choice that the departments have to apply and what their political stance is. The 'Translator's Notes' are also a great point of entry to understand and appreciate the final product.

They could well be the point of entry to start the section on transformations that inevitably arise in translations.

The critic is therefore expected to be familiar with the original literary system and the translated one to be in a position to form a well founded judgment. She has the advantage of knowing both the original and the translated literary contexts and can hence situate the original clearly in the receiving culture. Maybe in Comparative Literature departments abroad there would be no need to situate the language or the author of other western language areas, but in the specific case of non western texts, their needs would be similar to departments here, and the general background of the language, literature, the author and the specific book have all to be explained and located so that teachers teaching these texts do not do disservice to the literary work in question. This is relevant information of use to both the teachers and later on to the students who read these texts in translation, along with other texts from other linguistic traditions, so that each work retains its cultural moorings and its importance is shown in its respective context. The critic should be aware of the politics of choice and justify it accordingly in this instance of academic choice as the authors chosen will go on to 'represent' their language and culture and speak for their people.

This type of academic reviewing requires to show that the text is not just based on a previous translated work and is an 'original' translation, it also has to highlight whether it has come through a filter-language, that is, done from another translated language, which was the 'source text' for this version. This systematic kind of analysis will facilitate the recommendation or rejection of a particular text for academic study.

This brings us to the next kind of review in what we shall assume to be a well-known journal of academic kind either entirely devoted to reviewing like *The Book Review*, *Biblio*, to name but two in India or in literary or Translation Studies journals. The audience here is well informed, and likely to read with interest a review that does not stick to the merely mundane. In that case what a critic must

look out for is, and we can take the help of E. O. Simpson here, who said that 'The first part of the translation critic's work … is a sort of two-column "good" and "bad" inventory reflecting the exactitude, or otherwise, with which the message has been rendered' (Simpson 1975: 256). It is of course to be expected that most competent translators arrive at correct translations with due attention being paid to the domains of grammar and idiomatic usage. So when the word 'message' is used, it is to be understood as that 'which is charged with information as to possible context and situation.' It is not just meaning. Let us for example, cite the oft quoted sentences, 'Give me your money' and 'Your money or your life' which have the same meaning but would point to very different situations and contexts.

The second step of the analysis should show the reasons for the 'bad' translations i.e. mistranslations or missed translations like wrong tone, use of false associations of words, *faux amis* (false friends), and suggest a correct rendering if possible. But the most important point in my view is to show, as Gide had suggested, why it is a 'good' translation. In most cases we have seen the former column is well carried out, but it is the latter that finds rare mention. We can assume that the major part of any translation is likely to have been done competently, so there should be a short listing of striking examples of the translator's skill and a discussion of the skill involved. Especially instances where the personal solutions arrived at by the translator to overcome specific difficulties should be highlighted. How literal or literary the overall effect is can be gauged so as to arrive at general conclusions about that translation.

While the general newspaper kind of translation would not be able to entertain such a review, there are however some points that need to be considered and that must figure in a translation review. To this end, I took the help of a translation review that seemed ideal to me done by Sujit Mukherjee of Tagore's *One Hundred and One: Poems by Rabindranath Tagore*, which I thought could be used as a template for a methodological approach to reviewing translations (Mukherjee 1994: 59-62). The points that are essential are:

1. The name(s) of the translator(s), if more than one, then all of them, must be mentioned without fail.
2. The date of the original work should figure along with the date of the translation.
3. The translation policy followed by the translator(s). The Translator's Notes, if any, are 'conventional combat weapons' in translated works as he says and the critic can see whether the translator has achieved his or her result based on the translation approach s/he had adopted.
4. Lack of any mention of a translation policy should also be pointed out.
5. The editorial policy of the publishing house: whether this is a first translation, a self translation, or a re-translation should be made clear.
6. The presence or lack of a preface or introduction to the author, work, literature in that language. Therefore reasons for the choice of author and work. As well as the inclusion or exclusion of certain elements for translation.
7. Explanation of certain features in the translation that stand out, such as unusual expressions in the target language for what is a common idiomatic phrase in the original.
8. And finally, what are the positive points in the translated work that deserve mention.

This list though not exhaustive is really an initial inventory of what good translation reviews should include by way of rendering service to and acknowledging the fact of the wonderful work most translators do to make an otherwise inaccessible text in the source language accessible to readers in their respective languages.

Notes

1. The examples are mainly taken from issues of *The Book Review* of 2006. Others are based on reviews of my translation of Toru Dutt's novel in French. Names of reviewers have not been provided here as this paper is not meant to target any individual reviewer but look

at different reviews as representative samples of some general tendencies in reviewing translated works.

2. See Felix Douma's old article in *Meta* for a very interesting treatment of translation reviews as part of literary criticism. He also looks at Beckett's translations as an interesting case study.

3. 'Biography of a City' by Madhavi Apte, a review of *Prarambh: A Novel* by Gangadhar Gadgil in *The Book Review,* vol. XXX, no, 12, p. 28.

References

Douma, Felix J. (1972) "Reviewing a Translation: A Practical Problem in Literary Criticism", *Meta* 17: 2, 94-101.

Jakonson, Roman (1959) "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation" in Reuben Brower (ed.) *On Translation*, Cambridge (Mass): Harvard University Press, 232-239.

Mukherjee, Sujit (1981) *Translation as Discovery* (rpt. 1994), Hyderabad: Orient Longman.

O'Brien, Justin (1959) "From French to English" in Reuben Brower (ed.) *On Translation,* Cambridge (Mass): Harvard University Press, 78-92.

Simpson, Ekundayo O. (1975) "Methodology in Translation Criticism", *Meta* 20: 4, 251-262.

Reviews

The Book Review XXX. Nos. 1-2, 6, 8, 12; 2006.
The Daily Star, 5, no. 411, 23rd July 2005.
The Statesman, 6th March 2005.

Translations of Phakir Mohan Senapati's Autobiography: A Review

Panchanan Mohanty
V. Ramaswamy
Ramesh C. Malik

Abstract

Phakir Mohan Senapati (1843-1918) was a versatile genius of modern Oriya literature and also the father of Oriya autobiography. His autobiography 'a:tmaji:bancarita' has been translated by two different translators into English. It was John Boulton of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, who first translated it as 'My Times and I' in 1985. Later Jatindra K. Nayak and Prodeepta Das have translated it again with the title 'Story of My Life' in 1997. But what is surprising is that Nayak and Das have not even written a foreword to their translation when it is expected of them to state as to why they undertook the task of translating the book again when a translation was already available. So we thought it would be a fruitful exercise to compare, review, and conduct a readability test which would evaluate both the translations.

> "Why is it that each generation (as George Steiner points out) retranslates the works of classical writers? It cannot be only for profit or prestige. It is surely because each age is dissatisfied with the translations of the previous age. But even efforts to 'update' old works, to give them a 'modern flavour', often fall flat."
>
> (Duff 1981: 63)

Translation Today Vol. 5 No. 1 & 2 2008 © CIIL 2008

Introduction

According to Tytler (1791) there are the three principles of a good translation which are as follows (Malmkjaer 2005: 8):

1. The translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original, which requires the translator to have perfect knowledge of the language of the original and good grasp of its subject matter.
2. The original's style should be retained, which requires the translator to be a competent stylist.
3. The translation should read like an original work, and easily, so that if the original is faulty (obscure or ambiguous), then the translator should amend it.

We have used these criteria to decide the quality of a translated text and evaluate one translation of the same SLT against another.

Horowitz remarks that autobiography is 'the representation of self for social immortality' (Horowitz 1977:178). Regarding writing an autobiography, Cellini (1500 –1571) had stated this about five centuries ago: 'All men of whatsoever quality they be, who have done anything of excellence, or which may properly resemble excellence, ought, if they are persons of truth and honesty, to describe their life with their own hand; but then ought not to attempt so fine an enterprise till they passed the age of forty' (qtd. in Symonds 1934: 71). Phakir Mohan Senapati (1834-1938) possessed all these qualifications. He was the father of social realism in Indian fiction. His first and most important novel *chama:Na a:ThaguNTha* (Six and one third acres) '…is not only free from all traces of the Bankim tradition, but it created a new world of fiction which was further expended and enriched later

in the century by several writers, and well-known master-chroniclers of social realism. Like Premchand, Tarashankar Bandhopadhyay, Takazhi Shivasankara Pillai, Pannalal Patel and Gopinath Mohanty.' (Das 1991: 296-7)

Senapati's autobiography, which is *a:tmaji:banacarita* in Oriya, was first serialized in *Utkala Sahitya* and published as a book after his death. It will attest that his accounts are very honest, vivid and interesting. It will not be out of place to mention here that he wrote and published his first short story *rebate* at a ripe age of fifty-five after his retirement at the age of fifty three. He lived for seventy-five long years. So we are all grateful to Senapati that he has left behind an extremely fascinating autobiography.

In one of the earliest and most influential papers on autobiography Gusdorf (1980: 39) has made a very significant point, i.e. that an autobiography is culture specific. In this context we should mention Toury who also says:

> Translation activities should rather be regarded as having cultural significance. Consequently, 'translatorship' amounts first and foremost to be able to play a social role, i.e. to fulfil a function allotted by a community – to the activity, its practitioners and/or their products – in a way, which is deemed appropriate in its own terms of reference. The acquisition of a set of norms for determining the suitability of that kind of behaviour, and for manoeuvring between all the factors which may constrain it, is therefore a prerequisite for becoming a translator in a cultural environment. (Toury 1995: 53)

He further states, 'Verbal formulations of course reflect awareness of the existence of norms as well as of their respective

significance.' (Toury 1995: 55). The translator should also be fully aware of culture specificity of the SLT because 'culture specific concepts of the SL text will have to be substituted by the target culture concepts' (Kussmaul 1995: 65). Against this background, we wish to read closely the two published translations of Senapati's *a:tmaji:bancarita*. It was John Boulton of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, who first translated it as *My Times and I* in 1985. Twelve years later, Jatindra K. Nayak and Prodeepta Das have translated it again with the title, *Story of My Life* in 1997. It should be noted here that Nayak and Das have not even written a foreword to their translation though it is expected of them to state as to why they undertook the task of translating the book again when Boulton's translation was already available. On the other hand, in his 'Introduction', Ganeshwar Mishra has mentioned the reason to be that '…a classic calls for more than one translation.' (Mishra 1997: xiii). Coming back to the issue of comparison, Jin and Nida state the following: 'Comparing different translations of the same underlying text can be highly instructive. One may learn much from the mistakes that some translators make and even more from effective rendering of certain expressions' (Jin and Nida 2006:16). So translation review and comparison need to evaluate the translated text as well as the translators' intention behind translating a text. For these reasons, we thought it would be a fruitful exercise to compare, in this paper, both the translations with reference to the Oriya original, and try to determine which one is better. We will consider the following criteria for comparison.

Grammatical Features

Let us start with a close look at the linguistic strategies employed in the two translations that provide an understating of the goals the translators wanted to achieve. This involves an analysis of the use of the two kinds of voice, i.e. active and passive and the two kinds of speech, i.e. direct and reported, and the interrogatives.

Considering such aspects through examples and by comparing them with the original, statements can be made upon evaluation as to which of the two translations is closer to the original as far as syntax is concerned.

- **Voice**

A careful comparison between both the translations reveals that Boulton markedly makes use of the passive voice throughout the text. For instance, in Chapter 14, he says:

> 'He was housed in the corner of a cramped little ruin on the verge of collapse.' (Boulton 1985: 57)

This kind of use of the passive deepens the passive role played by the subject in the specific context.

Such an effect is lost when Nayak and Das (1997:53) use the active voice quite frequently. The same sentence has been rendered by these translators as follows:

> 'He was sitting silently in one corner of a small, dilapidated room.' (Nayak and Das 1997: 53)

Another instance of the passive-active contrast is as follows:

> 'I had been paid….in advance, by the Raja…' (Boulton 1985: 54)
>
> 'The king had made an advance of …' (Nayak and Das 1997: 50)

- **Speech Form**

Bulton makes use of the direct speech quite consistently in the context of conversational passages and remarks. A few examples would substantiate this observation:

> 'An Entrance Pass is nothing special, it seems. Our Sundar Babu's rickety lad's got through, so it can't be all that difficult.' (Boulton 1985:18)

Nayak and Das make use of the reported speech very often, as can be seen in the following examples:

> 'They all felt that if a skeleton of a boy like Radhanath could pass this examination it could not be that difficult.' (Nayak and Das 1997: 16)
>
> 'Who's asking prices? Give me as much rice as you can for it.' (Boulton 1985: 28)
>
> 'Who cared what the right price was? People took whatever they got.' (Nayak and Das 1997: 26)

As a result of this difference, two other significant differences arise – change in the tense and in the person.

Boulton's rendering involves use of the present tense and also the first person in the narrative whereas Nayak and Das's rendering reflects a preference for the past tense and the third person viewpoint in the style of the narrative.

Thus, a comparison with the original clearly shows Boulton to be closer to the original.

- **Interrogatives**

Two kinds of interrogatives are in use. Boulton employs tag-questions as in the following examples (from Chapter 16):

> '…those trucks can't run across fields across footpaths, can they? (Boulton1985: 79)
>
> 'It'll cost a pretty penny to lay tracks, won't it?' (Boulton 1985: 79)
>
> 'It could cost as much as five thousand rupees, couldn't it?' (Boulton 1985: 79)

Nayak and Das make use of wh-questions as equivalents of these. Sometimes question-forms are even absent. For example:

> 'How can that cart run through these cornfields?' (Nayak and Das 1997:73)

They also used simple statements:

> 'It will cost a lot.' (Nayak and Das 1997:73)
>
> 'The cost may be as high as five thousand rupees.' (Nayak and Das 1997:73)

It can be argued that Boulton makes use of question tags since they are used in English, and as Oriya lacks these Nayak and Das prefer not to use them in their translation.

Notice that the latter examples from Nayak and Das are not questions. On the contrary, Boulton's questions are all straightforward interrogatives. Here it is found that Boulton is closer to the original.

- **Number**

In respect of the use of number, Boulton in some instances makes use of the plural, while Nayak and Das use the singular number. For example:

'issued warrants' (Boulton 1985: 62)

'issued a warrant' (Nayak and Das 1997: 57)

'apartments' (Boulton 1985: 117)

'home' (Nayak and Das 1997: 106)

'Astrologers' (Boulton 1985: 119)

'Astrologer' (Nayak and Das 1997: 108)

However, in Chapter 19, Boulton uses the singular number when he says:

'Do you have a pistol?' (Boulton 1985:104)

unlike Nayak and Das, who translate the same as

'Do you have any pistols?' (Nayak and Das: 95).

In both the instances, it has been observed that Boulton is more in touch with the original.

Lexical and Phrasal Constructs

At the morpho-syntactic level, let us look at the choice of words and their collocations, with special reference to words used for address and reference, idiomatic and phrasal constructions, choice of lexical and clausal categories, aspects of compounding, use of Indianisms and Anglicisms.

- **Words of Address and Reference**

It has been noticed that in the use of native words like 'Maharaja' and 'Maharani' (Ch.10), Boulton is closer to the original than Nayak and Das, who use 'King' and 'Empress' (XIX)

Similarly, Boulton's 'To Bholanath, the storekeeper' (Ch.19, p.108) is a better rendition of the original than Nayak and Das's 'Dear Bholanath' (XIX: 98).

In the use of 'Babu' (p. 32) and 'Saheb' (p.21), Boulton maintains a consistent closeness with the Oriya pronunciation of these words whereas Nayak and Das use 'Baboo' (p.30) and 'Sahib' (p.19) which are not common in Oriya speech.

- **Idioms and Phrases**

Nayak and Das have been found to use more of idiomatic constructs than Boulton. These sometimes are markedly Indian whereas Boulton's usages have a wider appeal and aacceptance. Consider the following examples.

Example-1

'The well-to-do engaged private tutors.' (Boulton 1985: 7)

'People of means employed private tutors for their children'. (Nayak and Das 1997: 6)

Example-2

'But no one's fortunes run smooth for even ups and downs are a law of Nature.' (Boulton 1985:15)

'But time does not run even; every rise has to have a fall.' (Nayak and Das 1997: 13)

Example-3

'When the Salt Offices closed down ....' (Boulton 1985:16)

'... the salt agency was wound up.' (Nayak and Das 1997: 14)

Example-4

'Many of the wayside Shopkeepers were either dacoits themselves or their accomplices.' (Boulton 1985: 19)

'The owners of some wayside shops, thieves themselves, were also hand in glove with them.' (Nayak and Das 1997: 17)

Example-5

'Never did I enjoy the sympathy of friends and relations.' (Boulton 1985: 120)

'My own kith and kin showed no sympathy for me.' (Nayak and Das 1997: 108)

The above examples show that the idioms and phrases used in Boulton's translation are more natural than those found in Nayak and Das's translation.

- **Choice of Phrasal Classes**

Considering the choices made in lexical and phrasal classes, it can be observed that Boulton's language shows a preference for nominals, while Nayak and Das seem to prefer more of adjectives and sometimes verbs. For instance, Boulton uses 'merchants from Holland, Denmark, France, and Britain' (Boulton 1985: 15), whereas, Nayak and Das use 'Dutch, Danish, French and English merchants' (Nayak and Das 1997: 13). Similarly, when Boulton says 'lodgings' (p.20) or 'contractors' (p.13), Nayak and Das say 'rented a house' (p.18) and 'took contracts' (p.11) etc.

- **Compounding and Phrases as Opposed to Single Words**

Compounding, as a strategy to indicate socio-cultural semantics, is used differently in both the translations.

In Nayak and Das, compounds or phrases are used while referring to foreign terms or concepts, but the English equivalents used by Boulton are single words. Nayak and Das use 'riverbank' (p.11), 'fellow-preachers' (p.20), 'full poem' (p.20), and 'song in English' (p.20). On the other hand, Boulton uses 'quays' (p.5), 'brethren' (p.22), 'couplets' (p.22) and 'hymn' (p.22) respectively.

In the context of cultural expositions, Boulton uses phrases and compounds for cultural terms, while Nayak and Das use single words.

For example, Nayak and Das have used 'horoscope' (p.64), 'rituals' (p.116), 'tumblers' (p.18), and 'fakir' (p.5), whereas Boulton uses 'birth chart' (p.70), 'religious observances' (p.128), 'water pots' (p.20), and 'Muslim saint' (p.5) respectively.

With regard to style, Boulton uses compounded collocations whereas Nayak and Das use single words. the following examples are illustrative:

Example-1

'Some had children in their arms, just skin and bone, with lips glued to those hanging skin-flaps.' (Boulton 1985: 28)

'Some had in their arms withered babies sucking at thier emaciated breasts.' (Nayak and Das 1997: 26)

Example-2

'.... I saw sweepers take three and four cart-loads to the river each day.' (Boulton 1985:31)

'I have seen with my own eyes sweepers daily taking corpse-laden carts towards the river.' (Nayak and Das 1997: 28)

Example-3

'Very devout and god-fearing,…' (Boulton 1985:37)

'She was very devout and pious.' (Nayak and Das 1997:35)

Example-4

'I had never seen her laid up with anything but filarial fever, which troubleed her every three or four months.' (Boulton 1985:37)

'The only illness I have ever seen her with was an attack of filaria every three or four months.' (Nayak and Das 1997: 35)

Example-5

'I got hold of a copy of the First Book.' (Boulton 1985:40)

'I got hold of a primer.' (Nayak and Das 1997: 37)

Anglicisms and Indianisms

Besides general lexical items, a special mention of terms used for units and measurements can be made here and it reflects clearly the distinct flavours of the 'English' and the 'Indian' cultures. The following examples are illustrative:

Example-1

'Three quarters of them were salt-carriers ....' (Boulton 1985: 13)

'Seventy five percent of these carrying salt....' (Nayak and Das 1997: 11)

Example-2

'I discovered that the present king had already managed to inflate the slight remaining debt to a solid quarter of a lakh.' (Boulton 1985:118)

'I found that, thanks to the present king, the small parental debt had increased to twenty five thousand rupees.' (Nayak and Das 1997:107)

Example-3

'The other two or three palm-leaf manuscripts and a garment about nine cubits long.' (Boulton 1985:07)

'Two or three palm leaf manuscripts and a piece of cloth about three yards long on the other.' (Nayak and Das 1997:06)

It can be seen that the expressions used by Boulton are closer to the original and not the ones used by Nayak and Das.

Certain other lexical contrasts that denote culturally distinct linguistic items are as follows:

Example-1

'Finally she triumphed, and I began to convalesce.' (Boulton 1985: 5)

'At last, Thakurma won, and I grew better.' (Nayak and Das 1997: 5)

Example-2

'The illness ceased: I survived.' (Boulton 1985: 6)

'The illness was over: I survived.' (Nayak and Das 1997: 5)

Example-3

'The teaching was limited to how to correspond with one's father and brothers and how to appeal to the law-courts.' (Boulton 1985: 12)

'His job was confined to teaching students how to write letters to their relatives and letters to the court.' (Nayak and Das 1997: 10)

Example-4

'If the sails were too large, the vessel might capsize in a high wind.' (Boulton 1985: 13)

'If the sail was too large, a strong wind might overturn the ship.' (Nayak and Das 1997: 11)

Example-5

'I studied grammar and lexicon with the school pandit.' (Boulton 1985: 17)

'With the help of the pundit, I learnt Sanskrit vocabulary and grammar.' (Nayak and Das 1997: 15)

Example-6

When Gadei got wind of any, he sent out his underlings to rob them. (Boulton 1985: 16)

The Gadei, their chief, would send his men to attack. (Nayak and Das 1997: 16)

Example-7

On the roads, the river-ghats, by bathing tanks and in the woods, wherever you looked, you saw only corpses. (Boulton 1985: 28)

The village streets, the bathing ghats, the jungle-all were strewn with dead bodies. (Nayak and Das 1997: 26)

Example-8

The Government, recalling, we presume, the commissioner's earlier letter telegraphed, 'you telegraphed to send rice, but rice can not be sent by telegraph.' (Boulton 1985: 30)

The Government, possibly with the Commissioner's earlier letter in mind, wired back – you have asked for food grains, but food supplies cannot be sent by wire. (Nayak and Das 1997: 28)

Example-9

Radhanath Babu said: 'The way you established the Utkal Press should be chronicled in letters of gold.' (Boulton 1985: 36)

Radhanath Baboo looked in my direction and said, "History will record in letters of gold the hardships you endured in order to found the printing company." (Nayak and Das 1997:33-34)

Example-10

She possessed but three bamboo baskets: a small one filled with various roots and medicaments; …. (Boulton 1985: 38)

Her worldly goods consisted of three bamboo chests. The first was full of all sorts of herbs and roots; … (Nayak and Das 1997: 36)

Example-11

The school was entirely financed by subscriptions. (Boulton 1985: 41)

The school was run on donations. (Nayak and Das 1997: 38)

Example-12

I replied, 'in the presence of a nephew, no bastard can become heir.' (Boulton 1985: 49)

I replied, 'According to article 25 of the Garjat code, the son of a concubine can not become an heir while there is a nephew alive.' (Nayak and Das 1997: 38)

Stylistic Devices

Distinctions in style emerge from the differences in the social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds of the translators. Let us now consider some such stylistic differences in both the translations.

Titling of Chapters: In comparison with the original, it has been confirmed that in almost all cases, it is Boulton who is closer the original in providing titles. For instance, while Boulton uses 'A Terrible Famine in Orissa' (Ch.8, p.27) or 'Dewani in Daspalla' (Ch.16, p.73), Nayak and Das use 'The Famine (1866)' (VIII, p.25) and 'Daspalla (1884-86)' (XVI, p.68) respectively.

Boulton additionally provides information about the age of the author, along with the chronology of years, in each chapter's title. This, for example, can be seen in: 'Dewani in Daspalla (1884-86).' It reflects that Boulton's scholarship on Senapati is more intensive than Nayak and Das.

Treatment of Oriya Terms: While considering how native concepts and terms have been treated, it should be mentioned that Nayak and Das provide a 52-word glossary at the end of their translation. It can also be observed that the aim of circumlocutory definitions of such terms given there is just to impart a strong native flavour.

Boulton does not provide any glossary. On the other hand, he tries to briefly define these terms, wherever they occur. Since the English speakers are most likely his target readers, he provides English equivalents of these terms.

Cultural Distinctions

People, places, religion, society, food and costumes are the areas where linguistic aspects of culture distinctly show up. Culture-specificity and context-sensitivity are markedly differentiated in both the translations under consideration.

- **Kinship Terms**

Boulton has anglicized the terms for address as well as reference. He uses capitalization to indicate the kinship terms, e.g. 'Father' (p.4), 'Dad' (p.4), 'Uncle' (p.13), 'Granny' (p.1) etc.

Unlike him, Nayak and Das use these terms with the genitive pronoun, e.g. 'my father' (p.4), 'my father' (p.4), 'my uncle' (p.11), or

retain the original term, like 'Thakurma' (p.1). But comparatively speaking, Boulton is found to be closer to the original than Nayak and Das.

- **Costumes**

In the terms used for clothing and other accessories, Boulton's usages are more faithful to the original than those in Nayak and Das's translation.

The expressions like 'breeches' (p.6), 'coat' (p.6), 'washed piece of cloth' (p.7), 'soiled napkin' (p.7) used by Boulton are more befitting than 'shorts' (p.5), 'shirt' (p.5) 'loin cloth' (p.6), and 'dirty towel' (p.6) respectively found in Nayak and Das. Specifically, Boulton's 'Red lacquered cane' (p.6) is definitely better than a 'red walking stick' (p.5) used by Nayak and Das.

- **Food**

Turning to words relating to food and cutlery, Boulton has used 'rice' (p.11), 'paddy' (p.28) and 'toddy' (p.90), and 'liquor' (p.83). For the Oriya word *loTa:* (a small metal container), Nayak and Das, who usually retain the native terms, have consistently used 'tumbler' (p.6) that is conceptually quite different. Boulton uses the word 'water-vessel' (p.7), that is a clear case of under translation, and hence, acceptable.

- **Personification**

Culture is expressed candidly in the case of personification of certain nouns. Despite Anglicisms like 'Death' and 'Ladyluck,' Boulton has been found to be more faithful and his usages are more appropriate. Though Nayak and Das use expressions like 'Yama, god of death' and 'goddess of wealth' they are less appropriate than those of Boulton.

Boulton has tried to achieve through capitalization what Nayak and Das put forth through circumlocutions or redundancies.

- **Occupational Terms**

Equivalence with reference to the occupational terms cannot be compared since Boulton uses English terms 'teacher,' 'Station superintendent,' 'naught pupil,' 'peon,' etc., whereas Nayak and Das prefer to transaliterate the native Oriya terms 'abadhan,' 'daroga,' 'sunya chati,' 'chaparassi' in Chapter-3.

- **Personal and Place Names**

With reference to personal names and place names, three aspects of difference can be considered i.e. spelling, extent of description, and social semantics.

As far as spelling conventions are concerned, Boulton 'ses an Anglicized orthography, as in names like 'Vanamali Vacaspati' (p.130), 'Vaisnava' (p.11), etc., whereas Nayak and Das try to capture the native pronunciation, as in 'Banamali Bachaspati' (p.10), and 'Baisnab' (p.9). The point here is that Oriya does not have /v/ and that is why Oriya speakers substitute it for /b/. Here Nayak and Das are closer to the Oriya pronunciation.

Concerning the extent of description of names, Boulton provides a clear definition alongside the occurrence of the name, e.g. 'Lord Jagannatha's Car Festival' (p.4), 'Jhareswar Mahadev' (p.14). This in fact has been found to be closer to the original than Nayak and Das, who use 'Car Festival' (p.4), 'Lord Mahadev' (p.12).

Place names are identically treated in both the translations, except in a single instance where Boulton has renamed a place actually referred to. The place name 'Rameswar' (p.17) has been reproduced as it is by Nayak and Das, but Boulton has changed it to 'Cape Comorine' (p.20), which in fact refers to another place, i.e. Kanyakumari. This probably has been done for the sake of easy comprehensibility on the part of the Western readers.

While using address terms, Boulton has been found to carry his Anglicization a little too far, especially in the use of words and names like 'gentlemen,' 'Pandit,' 'Saheb', 'Reverend', etc. But in this case, Nayak and Das maintain closeness with the original through faithful renderings like 'Baboo Biswanath,' 'Toynbee sahib', etc.

- **Religion**

A comparison of certain expressions used in both the translations reveals Boulton's religious faith as against that of Nayak and Das,

For example:

Boulton	**Nayak and Das**
'Lord's command' (p.5)	'God's will' (p.5)
'brethren' (p.22)	'fellow preachers' (p.20)
'providence' (p.22)	'fate' (p.20)
'god-fearing' (p.37)	'pious' (p.35)

It is Boulton who uses 'hymn' (p.22), 'brethren' (p.22), and 'Mission Head' (p.23), but Nayak and Das refer to these as 'song in English' (p.20), 'fellow preachers' (p.20), and 'principal preacher' (p.21).

Christianity talks about 'Lord' and 'providence.' Hindus generally refer to 'God' and the deed of one's actions is a word like 'fate' and not 'providence.'

A crucial difference in the religious attitudes can be noticed in chapter-7 where Boulton's Christian sentiment speaks all embracingly through the 1st person pronoun, e.g. 'The Lord Jesus Christ is our Savior' (p.23). For the same sentence, Nayak and Das use the 2nd person pronoun, e.g. 'Lord Jesus is your Saviour' (p.20).

Following the Indian tradition, Nayak and Das use 'Fakirs' (p.5), whom Boulton calls 'Muslim saints' (p.5). Boulton refers to the 'Muhammadan name' (p.5) and 'Persian School' (p.11) while Nayak and Das use the 'Muslim name' (p.5) and 'Parsi School' (p.10).

It is evident through such usages that there exists a gap in the understanding of certain concepts between the two religions set in two different cultures.

Spelling and Orthography

As stated in his 'Note on Spellings,' Boulton avoids the use of diacritics. Spelling should primarily represent the broad or phonemic transcription, because 'it is important for translators to be able to distinguish clearly between sound representation in standard writing systems and the actual sound used in speech' (Malmkjaer 2005: 70). Boulton follows the Anglo-Indian pattern, i.e., standard English spellings for names and terms, e.g. 'Babu' (p.20), 'Visvanatha' (p.21). But Nayak and Das use phonetic or narrow transcription for the same, e.g., 'Baboo' (p.18), 'Biswanath' (p.19).

Though terms are italicized in both translations, Boulton makes use of an extra 'a' in the word-final position to represent the Oriya pronunciation, e.g. 'Ramayana' 'Mahabharata,' 'Apurva milana' (Marvellous Meeting) (p.131). This is not so in Nayak and Das, e.g., 'Ramayan' 'Mahabharat,' 'Apurba Milan' (p.119).

An Evaluation

Finally, a readability test was conducted on the two translations to find out which is more readable and communicable to the readers.

A few pages randomly selected from both the translations were given to ten native English speakers from the United States who were on the University of Hyderabad Campus. The same portions were also given to ten Indian English speakers. For this test, we have used the following five-point scale, i.e. very good, good, neutral, bad, and very bad, and collected answers from both the groups.

Except two, whose answers were not specific, all others agreed that Boulton's rendering was more appealing and described it as being more 'literary', 'aesthetic', 'interesting' and 'natural.'

Conclusion

The following conclusions can be drawn from what has been discussed above:

a) Boulton's translation proves to be more in line with the original and that is why it is a better translation.

b) Boulton's purpose of translating Phakir Mohan was to 'bring him to a wide audience.' He has hinted at this in

the 'Author's Preface' (1985:viii). Being a native speaker of English who knows the Oriya language and culture very well, he aims at a close reading of the original and has tried to provide the same to his readers, who face a new socio-cultural milieu. On the other hand, Nayak and Das are native speakers of Oriya, and that is why they cannot be expected to exploit the linguistic genius of English to the fullest extent. So it supports the position that it is preferable to translate from L2 to L1 not vice-versa.

c) Boulton is a Phakir Mohan scholar, while Nayak and Das are not. This may be an important factor that has helped Boulton to contextualize his translation in a better way than Nayak and Das. So a translator who is also an intensive researcher on the author is likely to be a better translator than a translator who is not.

d) The readability test suggests that both the English native speakers and Indian English speakers found Boulton's translation more literary, aesthetic, interesting, and natural.

References

Boulton, John (1985) *My Times and I,* Bhubaneswar: Orissa Sahitya Academy.

Catford, J.C. (1965) *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, London: Oxford University Press.

Das, Sisir Kumar (1991) *A History of Indian Literature* Vol. VIII (1800-1910), New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.

Duff, Alan (1981) *The Third Language: Recurrent Problems of Translation into English,* Oxford: Pergamon.

Dye, Omar A. (1971) "The Effects of Translation on Readability", *Language and Speech* 14:4.

Gusford, Georges (1980) "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography" in James Olney (ed.) *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical,* New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 28-48. (original French version appeared in 1956)

Horowitz, I. L. (1977) "Autobiography as the presentation of self for social immortality", *New Literary History* Vol.9, No.1,173-179.

House, J. (1977) *A Model for Translation Quality Assessment,* Tubingen: Narr.

Jin, Di and E. Nida (2006) *On Translation: An Expanded Edition*, Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press.

Kussmaul, P. (1995) *Training the Translator,* Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Malmkjaer, Kirsten (2005). *Linguistics and the Language of Translation,* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Mishra, Ganeshwar (1997) "Introduction" *Story of My Life* trans. Nayak and Das*,* Bhubaneswar: Sateertha.

Nayak, Jatindra K. and Prodeepta Das (trans.) (1997) *Story of My Life* Bhubaneswar: Sateertha.

Nalalabantian, Suzanne (1994) *Aesthetic Autobiography,* New York: St. Martin's.

Newmark, Peter (1988) *A Textbook of Translation,* London: Prentice-Hall.

Robinson, Douglas (ed.) (1997) *Western Translation Theory: From Herodotus to Nietzsche,* Manchester: St. Jerome.

Symonds J.A. (ed. and trans.) (1934) *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini Written by Himself* Vol. 1, New York: Tudor.

Toury, Gideon (1995) *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond,* Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Reviewing Translation: Putting Houses In Order

Sudhakar Marathe

Abstract

This paper attempts to address, as exhaustively as possible, all the questions pertaining to the act of reviewing translations. For most it provides detailed likely answers, including both sides of each issue (the translator's and the reviewer's). In addition it attempts to identify some of the major areas in which (a) translators may have to alter their attitude or work or both so that reviewers can (will be forced to) do their job better, and (b) publishers of books, magazines and newspapers need to change so as to bring about a better reviewing atmosphere. The paper also links the reviewing of translations to the general reviewing culture in India, because the former inherits some of the basic flaws of the latter. More importantly than almost anything else the paper proposes, it aims to emphasize the principle that much remains to be improved in the culture of translation itself.

Translation has always been reviewed, at least in the private domain by the translator himself or herself, because like all other writing naturally translation is self-reflexive and the first reader is always the translator. Most translators also have good friends who 'review' their work constructively and bad friends who praise it merely out of friendship, a disservice if ever there was one. Goodness help the work if the translator himself or herself is negligent of the basic duties and responsibilities of reviewing and reviewers of the work. For then only a mediocre work may result at best. It seemed to me appropriate to state this fact at the outset, since in this paper I am setting out to review reviewing and reviewers, and to criticize them

with the desire and hope that, even if my arguments do not engender better reviewing of translation, at least we translators may understand the business of reviewing better. After all, if as translators we are not rigorously and punctiliously honest with ourselves, we would have to relinquish our right to criticize reviews and reviewers.

One might have chosen any item from the generous offering of subjects regarding the issue of reviewing translations. Tempting as the somewhat simple choice might have been to select one such items, I have chosen to respond to nine sets of questions, addressing each, at some point asking other questions, and attempting to answer at least some of them. Of necessity my answers or responses to them will be brief. Still, it seemed worth attempting this exercise because I have been translating for thirty years and I am likely to continue to do so; therefore I feel confident that reviewing 'reviewing' will educate me considerably as a translator. That is my hardly concealed personal motive for attempting this task.

Let us consider the first question: 'Why are most reviews of translated works mere summaries of the source texts?' There are a couple of quite respectable answers to this question and a couple that reveal the ugly side of reviewing:

- first, a sort of summary is obviously required if the reader of a review who has, obviously, not read the translation yet, is to know the basic outline of it;

- second, without a summary the points of criticism or praise the reviewer raises with reference to the work would fail to make sense to the reader of the review for lack of context;

- third, reviews are rarely mere reviews. They also frequently perform the function of 'notices', which are meant to bring texts to readers' attention by *introducing* them.

So there is reasonable justification *per se* for summarising the plot or outline of a text, although filling column space in this way ought to be anathema. On the other hand,

- most Indian reviews of *all* kinds summarize texts (just as most examiners of dissertations summarise them in their reports). Reviews of translation are a mere sub-species of reviews, so one need not imagine that a reviewer has a particular bias against translated texts because he or she summarises their plots;

- besides, summarising fills space in newspaper or magazine columns, a material of extraneous consideration in reviewing. In contrast, I once composed a one sentence review. The book was V. S. Naipaul's *Finding the Centre*. My review was going to be this: 'It does not.' But who would have printed such a review? And perhaps it would have been too clever by far to be of any use to readers.

Let us look at the second set of questions: 'Why is it that reviews of translated works very rarely mention the name or names of the translators? Even when they do mention them, why do they rarely go beyond saying that the works are good or not good?' One can answer this set of questions reasonably, too, on both sides of the issue but with far less justification for reviewers than in the first case.

- first of all, not mentioning the name of a translator is a cardinal sin in a translation review. The reviewer apparently just forgets the name while remembering the original author's name. Indeed, in some reviews one hardly finds any awareness that the work in question *is* a translation;

- one reason for this lapse is that even today in India both readers and reviewers implicitly value the 'original' work and author above a translation. They treat a translation as a mere convenience, purely secondary. Therefore, *its* 'author', the translator, matters little to them;

- but the matter does not begin or end here. Unfortunately, the publishing world itself tends to devalue a translation *vis a vis*

an original. Even after a century and a half of modern translation activity in India, today many publishers refuse to install the translator's name or names on a book's jacket. They appear as unavoidable adjuncts on title pages, but only just. I am afraid reviewers merely 'take a leaf out of the publishers' book,' to pun a little;

- indeed, as the bulk and number of translated work went up during the past half century, so

- much translation turned out to be mediocre or worse, and unsatisfactory on numerous counts, that it has done serious disservice to the trade or craft. On many an occasion it is better that a translator's name remains unknown;

- editors of magazines and newspapers that publish reviews do not hold translation in high regard, and their attitude passes down to reviewers. Unlike some other places, in India reviewers are only very rarely translators themselves, unless they are frustrated translators; so they feel little awareness of the travail of translation; therefore they end up neglecting the translator;

- it is for the same set of reasons that most reviews of translated works actually do not bother to evaluate the success of translation, merely making a judgmental remark or two to the effect that they are good or that they fail to satisfy a 'discerning reader' like the 'esteemed reviewer';

- and finally, editors or review editors rarely seek out respectable or established translators for reviewing, assigning the work to any taker, or worse to an undeserving favourite person. This practice is clearly detrimental to fair and constructive reviewing of translations. A good reviewer (regardless of his or her assessment of a work and bent of mind) knows the

subject, form and craft of the work reviewed. That is not, alas, usually the case.

Now the third question: 'Does this mean that even when he is reviewing translated works, a reviewer is only reviewing the source text? If so, how is the translation different from a reissue of the source text?'

- well, the first part I have already answered: alas in India source texts, especially when they are already well known, take priority as a mater of implicit principle, or more accurately, cultural hangover;

- this is a deep rooted cultural phenomenon, for in India all things old are venerable. It still pervades the Indian education system in which the teacher's word is supposed to be pramana or Brahma vakyam, even when the teacher is utterly wrong or patently ignorant and incompetent; it still pervades family structures, in which the 'head of the house' is still by and large the oldest male; and in Indian bureaucracy almost without exception the nyaya of 'boss-vakyam pramanam' still operates;

- indeed, in effect, except in saying or suggesting that the translation is *of course* inferior to the original, this is a view held especially by reviewers who know both the source and target languages and literatures.

Therefore, in fact a translation *is* often treated like a reissue of the original. Clearly this is an aspect of reviewing that *must* change. But remember that *we* often translate a work *because* it is worthy of special respect and treatment.

The fourth item actually begs the question, because answers to the queries listed in it have been for a *very* long time part of standard or received views of translation. In principle at least we need no longer ask such questions, but for the fact that reviewers and translators alike

flout the givens. The basic query is this: 'Doesn't the activity of translating them [source texts] from one language to another have anything to do with the literary, socio-cultural and political climate of the target language and culture?' Of *course* it does. In fact there is a great deal more to it than even translators normally recognize or acknowledge:

- for instance, despite the popular cry 'Historicize!' they do not recognize that frequently the *era* or *age* from which the source text comes is far removed from the era in which translation is being done;

- neither recognizes the fundamental fact that translating written language automatically and invariably implies translating the way the *sound* of the source language is *heard* and the way it *must be heard* in the *target* language;

- for instance, they do not take into account the register or level and social context of the spoken language in either culture, often coming up with versions that are entirely inappropriate in the target language or do violence to source expressions;

- for instance, far too few translators actually command the source language and its cultural, social, political, economic or historical manifestation or ethos well enough to translate in the first place;

- Recently I was advising someone regarding a translation in which the original (a version of the Ramayana) said that Rama affectionately placed his younger brother Lakshmana 'in his lap'; this was translated into English as 'on his *thigh*'. The translator attempted to justify the version, saying that he wished to preserve the feel of the original language in it; so, for instance, the cultural value of the old habit of placing even a younger same-sex sibling in one's lap was all lost in the purely physiological and pig headed, poor joke non-equivalent word thigh;

- let us not forget either that when we select a work to translate, nine times out of ten we do so *because* it is a very good if not a landmark work in the source language, which is a factor in the valorisation of the source text too;

- and finally in this connection, of *course* at least in theory, a translation hopes to bring something to the 'target language culture', a social input, a literary input, a model of personality or behaviour or ideology, a phenomenon considered historically appropriate for introduction in the given conditions in the target society.

One ought to list all the types of detail which a translator *must* notice, understand, appreciate, and culturally and historically locate in the source language context the text in question *before* he or she attempts to do the same in the target language. Therefore, I exhort all fellow translators never to allow reviewers' failure to take such matters into account to hide the far more damning fact that most translators also fail to do so.

A different kind of question confronts us in the fifth subject: 'What kind of changes (if any) does the translated text seek to bring about in the *target* language *culture* by an act of translation?' This question concerns motivations for translating. And if at times bringing about a change in the *target* language and culture happens to be a motive, however doubtful it may be, it must not be presumed in *every* case. Let us begin with motives at the farthest end from this one:

- today the commonest case of translation involves being *asked* or commissioned to translate something, not *choosing* to translate something; in such a situation initially one has almost no motive except to carry out the assigned work;

- not infrequently, again, a text is translated because it is part of a larger scheme, and either one is asked to translate it or one translates it because 'it comes with the territory'; and while

one may have an 'agenda' for the whole scheme or project, one may not necessarily have one for the specific text in question;

- at times one translates a text from another language into one's mother language or proposes that it be translated into another language because one likes it and believes that others might like it too, therefore it ought to be made available to them;

- on occasion a text is seen as historically important and therefore worth translating; novels or poetry that influenced trends in literature in one's own language are cases in point. But here too one wishes not so much to bring about a change but to make a source of influence available to readers. An obvious example is T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land* and its translations in Marathi or Malayalam;

- on other occasions one translates a work because it happens to be important to someone else, as is the case with a technical document, and once again the motivation is to make it available to 'readers' in the target language. Here is an example from my own work: some years back I translated the Hindu Wedding Ceremony and Ritual from Sanskrit into English (with a great deal of help from a Marathi paraphrase of *course*) for a friend of my daughter who was marrying a Catholic and wanted the groom's family to be able to understand the language and rituals of the wedding;

- the second instance was a translation into Marathi of two T. S. Eliot essays titled 'Studies in Contemporary Criticism' I and II, because in this case, in my opinion Marathi criticism needed an injection of objectivity, which was the main focus of the essays.

Let us now consider the question concerning motivation for translation:

- there are texts which evince some political or other approach or theory that one wishes others to know, either from another language into one's own or vice versa, the idea being to affect thinking on an important subject;

- in a similar category come historical or cultural documents (literary or otherwise) that contain viewpoints or facts or both that are not 'received' but that would change the complexion and interpretation of some important phenomenon or event and one wishes to translate them to effect such a change;

- next comes translation of documents that present models of style, construction, form or subject matter that do not exist in one's language or vice versa, and one wishes to translate them so as to import or export them to affect the literature in the target language;

- then comes translation of documents of which one expects to establish the greatness or level of achievement in one's culture and literature, such as (auto)-biographies of important figures or literary 'masterpieces', with the express desire to alter the evaluation of the literature and culture of the source language in the eyes of the target readership;

- and there is at least one more motivated type of translation, that of documents to fill gaps in knowledge or history, documents of literary, political, historical or cultural kind translated in either direction.

It ought to become clear from this variety that if a reviewer does not know the motivation for a translated work, a review is at least likely to remain partial, or actually become unfair in assessment of the work. Take for instance a translated work of a Dalit writer; if the reviewer fails to take into consideration the enormously

complicated and long linguistic-cultural-historical-political background of Dalit life in India, he or she is unlikely to contextualize the work or make a genuinely acceptable assessment of it. It is equally certain that if a reviewer remains ignorant of the context of the *source* work and the social and other kinds of context into which the *target* work would be received, he or she would be unable to assess the technique and *intended* effect of the translated work. Consequently, again, his or her review must remain partial or become unfair in assessment of the impact of such a work.

I believe that I have already implied in the foregoing discussion the answer to the next question, the changes that a translator may *wish* to bring about in the *target* language and culture: political and cultural changes, reassessment of all kinds of social or literary phenomena, changes in historical perspective either in social or in literary terms, changes in attitude among the readership that might result in such changes, changes even in the laws of a land where translated works reveal lacunae in them. Before India's independence, for instance, it would have been genuinely useful and effective to have translated Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" into Indian languages.

I must say, however, that to expect a reviewer to take all such motivation into account, someone somewhere, *including* the translator, must at least hint at the possibility. The prefatory statement to a work, an introduction, a note sent to reviewers for edification, some such device *must* make sure that the reviewer is forewarned in this regard. I am not sure that translators always do this or that publishers of translations or organs in which reviews appear are bothered to include such explanations in their publications. All the same an even more crucial factor rears its head here: whatever the motivation of the translator, it is a fundamental question whether the translation itself has succeeded in achieving either shape or style or tenor or language that might reflect the contents and tone of the source work that may affect target readership or society. A translator who fails in this regard can hardly blame a reviewer for doing so. Therefore, at this point I would be less than honest if I did not reflect my personal assessment

of the bulk of Indian translation activity either at least into Marathi or from Marathi into English: by and large its results are of inferior quality, so it fails miserably to make any impact at all, let alone making a significant political, cultural or social impact. For this failure it would be unfair to blame either reviewers or reviewing.

The next, the sixth question puzzles me somewhat. For all its potential power, translation is hardly known for affecting the *source* language, work or culture much. It is of course possible that a translator may wish to translate a work in such a way as to bring about a change in the *perception* and *evaluation* of the source text in the *target* language. A significant translation can also reveal qualities or aspects of a source text that readers in the source language or in translation in the *target* language may have missed altogether. If such is the case and such the motivation, either in favour of or against over-valuation or wrong valuation of a work, one can easily understand the translator's wish or desire. I cannot see this happening too frequently, however. It has not happened to Sharatchandra or Bankimchandra in Marathi, for instance, or to any English or European writer that I am aware of. A text worth re-translating *because* the first translation was altogether wrong *may* bring about a reassessment in the minds of the *target* readership or even contemporary source society. A case in point *would* have been available if Vyankatesh Madgulkar's fabulous little Marathi novel *Bangarwadi* had been re-translated into English. But the original publishers chose, *against* the wishes of the writer, to republish after a gap of three decades the first terrible stilted translation. Yet even if a new translation *had* appeared, it could not have retrospectively *affected* in any way the Marathi society of half a century ago. Alas, not even translation has the power to modify history retrospectively.

On the other hand, the second part of the question considered goes way beyond this issue, as it concerns the possibility of effecting changes in the 'climate' of a *source* text. It seems to me impossible for a translation to bring about a change in the social, political, economic, cultural or ideological *climate* in which in the *source* culture a *source* text was *originally* published. It could only happen if the

translation is virtually instantaneous. Yet even then how much effect on the *source* society a translation in a language the source readership does not know can create is a serious question, indeed.

The next, seventh, question directs our attention to 'whether it is necessary for the review to reflect on the quality of the translation,' and whether there is something that may be called the style of the translation that needs to be analysed. Of course a review must consider the quality of a translation. What else can we consider the central or essential task of a review? But if the question implies that reviews by and large fail to satisfy this need, one would have to agree without hesitation. Unfortunately, Indian reviews rarely analyse translations qualitatively. The reasons for this failure are, again, many:

- reviewers who do not practise or understand translation or are incapable of evaluating its quality have no business reviewing it;

- reviewers who dare not approach the subject of quality at all either for fear of exposing their inability or the poverty of a translation have no business reviewing it;

- other questions do arise, especially in newspaper reviewing: for instance, whether it is worthwhile reviewing a *failed* translation, or *how* such a task may be managed, and so on;

- besides, in a country in which honest and relentless assessment of *any* work, whether literary or not, is extremely uncommon, one can hardly expect reviewers of translation to become exceptions and manifest those qualities;

- purely personally, I also believe that the bulk of translated work in India (at least into Marathi or from Marathi into English) would be lambasted by reviewers if they *were* to fulfil the requirement of supplying honest assessment of the quality of translation; whether the situation is comparable in other languages I can guess at but cannot vouch for;

- as for the *style* of a translated work, although my previous remark applies in general, of course any worthwhile translation does have its own style and it ought to be considered, commented upon and evaluated by a review: but reviewers rarely do so mainly because detailed analysis of texts has never been the strong point of Indian criticism in general. So we may be unwise to expect such criticism only from translation reviews.

Such analysis ought to happen, of course. But that requires a spread or expansiveness in a review that neither magazines nor newspapers allow a reviewer. As with reference to most of what I have said before, even this issue brings to the fore the necessity of a new *culture* of translation reviewing, but I shall have more if brief questions to raise on that subject later.

The eighth question is much more to the point, given our main issue: 'Is it necessary for the reviewer to know both the source and target languages? [Or] Is it enough for her / him to be familiar with the source and target language cultures?'

- this too begs the question, regarding whether a reviewer can know *both* source *and* target cultures *without* knowing either language well *and* without being well read in both;

- it does not seem to me at all possible for a reviewer to know both cultures well enough to qualify for reviewing while remaining *outside* the two languages: even purely *contemporary* culture is so complex that to know both well enough without knowing or reading the languages in question seems unlikely enough; but since any culture has a long history, it is impossible to obtain knowledge about it without extensive and sensitive reading in its language, because it is in language that culture is mainly recorded and preserved. That is why I wonder why such a question arose at all;

- all the same, the question whether a reviewer ought to know both the source and target languages of a translated text is a valid one; and I for one would not hesitate to say that, normally, no one should review a translation without knowing *both* languages *and* cultures well *enough* to read the translation meaningfully in the first place;

- in fact, going much further, I would say that like a translator a reviewer must know both languages and cultures *very* well, even if it is only very well. There is no upper limit on such knowledge, of course, but the lowest expectation would still require a reviewer to be well versed in both, for why else would he or she wish to review at all?

But, as before, let me also point out that whatever standards we set for the reviewer must be at least equalled if not topped by the translator. Or we can in turn ask why he or she should translate at all.

The final or ninth set of questions concerns publication of reviews. Whether we have here asked at least all the basic questions or not, clearly this is an important subject for us: 'How important is it for the source text, the writer of the source text and reviewer that a review appears in a regional / national / international publication? Also, is there a difference between a review of a translated text appearing in the source language and a review appearing in the target language?'

- first, surely, the question would concern *both* local *and* national or international publication.

- next, whether it should be local is hardly open to question: at least in the target language reviews must appear in the local organs;

- whether reviews also appear in the source language is a matter of concern in the source community for local literature and its transmission to *other* language communities and cultures; but

ideally reviews of translations ought to appear in the source language as well: in fact, they rarely do;

- whether reviews appear in the national press is a question that would be redundant if a nation had only one or one dominant language, as would be the case of English in New Zealand, for instance;

- the question of publication of reviews on the national level is a natural one in India, however, for we are now so used to considering two stages for Indian languages, local and national. Given this, for the sake of everyone concerned, reviews of at least significant works of translation ought to appear on the national stage as well. Whether there is a place on earth where reviews of *regional* language translations can legitimately appear nationally for the hundreds of works annually translated is another question;

- but whether nationally or internationally, the question would be asked whether a work in either language is significant enough for reviewing. Who can answer that question is a moot point, but it *will* be asked and by and large it *will* be answered in the negative for *most* translated works. Nor does it seem possible for a translator to do much more than hope for favourable reviews on the larger stage;

- and surely there is a difference between same-language reviews and other-language reviews: indeed, same-language reviews would differ qualitatively from others because invariably their major issue and focus would be success in *rendering* the source language; personally, I have always felt that almost no same-language reader or reviewer is likely to be satisfied with a translation, because he or she knows the original text too well to miss the inevitable lacunae in the translation; also let us say that it is almost a 'professional

hazard' for a reviewer to feel that he or she would have translated the work *better*;

- on the other hand a review entirely based on knowledge of source language and culture too must lack the advantage of knowing how effective the *translation* happens to be; such a review may very well be able to opine on the success of a text in the *source* language as *though* the text being reviewed were written in that language, but it cannot evaluate the work *qua* translation.

Now I believe one might spend just a little time on a few important issues I have hinted at several times: the nature and responsibility of reviewing translations; the qualifications of a reviewer; the likelihood of a translation being reviewed at all; the 'standards' or criteria that reviewers may or ought to use; the responsibility of organs such as newspapers and journals regarding reviews; the possibility of initiating and sustaining specialist journals or columns for translation reviews; the gap between being reviewed and not reviewed; being filled by a culture of *notices* in newspapers or journals; and a culture of reading and reviewing translations that is serious enough for it to make a difference to the general culture of our society.

There is little doubt that in India there is inadequate reviewing of translations; that such reviewing as does occur is often beside the point or fails to address core issues; that perhaps we require a set of journals or significant portions of existing journals exclusively devoted to translation reviewing, for which purpose publishers and editors of newspapers and magazines need to be educated concerning the importance of translation; that highly qualified as well as sensitive reviewers alone ought to review translations; but, at the same time, translators ought to be honest and open-minded enough to confront criticism and valuations lower than or different from their own; just as translators ought to take their own work seriously enough to apply *equally* stringent standards to their work in every aspect of translation.

For one thing cannot be denied—no translation will be good merely because the translator considers or wishes it to be good. A work is meant for readership. And while we hope that reviewers, editors and publishers as *representatives* of that readership will work better and with better standards and rigorousness than at present, we could hardly make such a demand of them without making exactly the same demand of ourselves as translators! I must say that I for one am as pessimistic about the latter happening as about the former. Let us set our own house in order at the same time as we demand improvement in the House of Reviews. Ultimately, what happens in reviews of translation forms part of and reflects the general literate culture of a society. And obviously on many fronts we all have a very long way to go to achieve a vital culture of reception of translation. We need, I believe, to collaborate in this regard with publishers, editors and reviewers, rather than assume a posture of confrontation with them.

Re-viewing the Fruits of the Mango Tree: From Linguistic Translation to Cultural Adaptation

G. K. Subbarayudu

Abstract

Using the exchange of the review and response of the recent translation of the classic Telugu play, 'Kanyasulkam' by Vijayasree and Vijay Kumar, this paper attempts to demonstrate the crying need for a very sensitive approach towards reviewing of translated works that would draw out the best from the translator's and the original writer's efforts to preserve the cultural uniqueness and specificity through semantic-cultural adaptation.

When the Telugu Classic Play, *Kanyasulkam* was translated by Vijayasree and Vijay Kumar and published by The Book Review Literary Trust in 2002, the weekly literary review page 'Vividha' of the Telugu daily *Andhra Jyothi* carried a scathing review. Subsequently it also published the translators' rejoinder, the angry and authoritative reviewer's response and some other interventions. What was turning into a debate which could have salutary impact on the practice of review/criticism in Telugu was abruptly closed by the newspaper with a rather dismissive last word by the original reviewer. I made an attempt to play Sydney to Stephen Gosson but Pennepalli Gopalakrishna would have none of it. His contentions, some of which were substantial, were

(a) that the dialectal differences and nuances were not handled suitably by the translators,
(b) that they seemed to be under the 'charm'ing influence of N. T. Rama Rao's movie which was itself a pathetic failure,
(c) that there were innumerable and unpardonable mistakes,
(d) that the translators in this instance English teachers by profession, were unfit to undertake a task of such magnitude

and that from the choice of text/edition/version to the choice of words/expressions the translation was a weave of woeful mistakes.

And Pennepalli's major assertion was

(e) that translations of such classical works ought to be done by eminent Telugu scholars whose literary-historical, cultural and dialectal credentials were impeccable, in collaboration with English/American translators whose authority over English and its dialects/variants would enable them to suggest appropriate equivalents.

This dogma was largely satisfied by Velcheru Narayana Rao's *Girls for Sale* (Indiana University Press, 2007) who blended scholarly pedigree with keen, friendly advice of several academics and comrades, not least among them, David Shulman. Velcheru's translation claims that much was done to give the language a colloquial ease ('bunch of bullshit,' p.8); but Velcheru makes it abundantly clear in his 'Note on Translation and Transliteration' that he, 'made no effort to reflect the dialect variations in [his] translation' (Rao 2007: xv).

Pennepalli's failsafe mantra for translation having been given more than its due, and Velcheru's very title for the classic, echoing Girisam, turning a prize issue for debates on semantic-social=cultural translatability (Girisam says 'yeeDaevainaa,' "selling girls" anagaa kanyaasulkam, dammit! Yentha maathramuu koodadanDi' (Whatever the age, selling girls, that is kanyasulkam, damiit! Should not be…) (Apparao 1007: 40), and the issue of dialectal variations proving rather obdurate, the chief questions that arise are:

(i) Is literary translation possible at all?
(ii) What role may a reviewer play in the translational project?
(iii) Is the reviewer-critic entitled to vitriolic views in defence of the venerable 'original text'?

The basic question of translatability and the practice of translation continue to engage the attention of academics because no easy answers exist. But the practitioner will not, of course, stop for theoretical discussions to resolve themselves before he may reclaim his passion. The role of the reviewer, then perhaps, assumes critical primacy.

That cognitive-perceptual reciprocity exists in some measure or the other, there is ample proof in the incremental corpus of translations from and into various languages. In one sense translation as well as original text are always already indistinguishable, as Probal Dasgupta pointed out in his presentation, "A Roadmap to Civilianisation" at the ACLALS Triennial in 2004. His submission was that *Language per se* was just one unique form of behaviour, and *languages* were different manifestations of the unique behavior, therefore what was manifest in one language was already potentially available in *Language* as its matrix i.e., 'in a permanent state of translation,' and that 'cultures are in a state of translation…,' (Vijayasree *et al* 2007: 114). This is a sound theoretical position but has little practical value for, say a Szymborska whose rich Polish poetry cannot thrive but for the English interventions of translators such as Clare Cavanagh and Stanislav Baranczak. Indeed my own dream project is a Telugu rendering of Szymborska via the English version; and I do not at all feel complacent and reassured by Probal Dasgupta's theoretical position: 'There is, formally, only one human language with various words attached that makes it look as if we speak different languages,' (Vijayasree *et al* 2007: 118). That would be less than fair to a non-English-knowing Telugu readership which would likely find it irresponsible on the part of academics to theorize away great literature by a nice derangement of ideas over practices.

If between Probal Dasgupta's theoretical sophistication and Velcheru's culturally dubious internationalization ('Girls for Sale' smells strongly of flesh-trade, slave trade and promptly catches the attention of the countless in and outside India afflicted by a Katherine

Mayo-Louis Malle syndrome) and the reviewer-critic Pennepalli's vitriolic views in defence of the venerable and sacrosanct 'original text', if the avid reader's eagerness for the variety of world literatures is doomed to dissatisfaction and disaffection, then the translational project itself is called into question. For the theorist, the practitioner and the reviewer are all taking the readers on a roller-coaster ride from which they may emerge not a little dazed if not entirely bilious in their mouths. Instead of translation, would it be more useful to think and practice adaptation? Would that provide a more suitable platform from which to practice the rendering of texts from one language into others? Would that be a linguistic act or a cultural performance which would accept as axiomatic cultural translatability through cognition, than linguistic untranslatability owing to perceptual difference?

Several months after the debate on *Kanyasulkam*'s translation was peremptorily closed by *Andhra Jyothi*, its 'Vividha' section carried an article by Afsar on the growth of translated work from Telugu into English in the last decade or so. Afsar offered a useful sketch of the developments, mentioned the names of some of the well-known practitioners, their views/visions, and the prospect for Project-Translation as a cultural responsibility of Telugu literati. Afsar's admiration of the Katha-Prize-Winning duo, Uma and Sridhar shone through the article, and it was edifying to note that a difficult task well-performed was earning deserved recognition without the usual objections about the crucial significance of what was lost in transmission, and the consequent damage to Telugu literature.

What happened next was truly damaging to Telugu literature, translation, and critical review. 'Vividha' carried a vituperative essay by Prasad in response to Afsar's perhaps overstated enthusiasm. Prasad ridiculed the vision of the translators Afsar had lauded; he introduced and condemned publishing houses' sales-driven nomenclatural practices, holding the translators obliquely responsible for 'unethical' practices; in defence of which allegations he produced correspondence between Ranganayakamma, a stalwart Telugu writer and the publishers.

The stalwart's ire was refracted towards the translators who, one may surmise, had little to do with the publisher's sales strategies. In the process the discussion turned disturbingly camp, and Telugu literary review/ criticism slipped, grievously, a notch or two if not more. Critical review had lost ground to personalities and, preferences, not different from Pennepalli's caustic and cultish remarks. And the loser was Telugu literature and its translation, not any individual writer or translator whose labour of love is beyond issue.

Velcheru Narayana Rao had translated 100 *padams* of the 15th century Telugu poet Taallapaaka Anamaachaarya, a bhakta of Lord Venkateswara as *God on the Hill* (2005). I went eagerly to a padam I like as much for the bhaava as for the beautiful rendition of M. S. Subbulakshmi: '*enta maatramunan/ evvaru talacina/ anta maatrame/ neevuu*', translated as *'You're just about as much as any one imagines you to be*.' Is translation solely a semantic act, or a cultural act that must make some attempt, at least a gesture towards the sounds, cadences, rhythms and other imaginative materials of the language translated? For instance, the first and second lines of the padam scan into a structure of 8 *maatraas* (measures), resolving into 7 beats in M. S. Subbulakshmi's rendition (which I take as standard for this padam). This attribute can be usefully introduced into the English translation by using English vowel-lengths in place of English *stress*, or even combining the two. Then the first line could read 'Soo much a(e)s any/ one 'ma(e)gined yu:h, Su:ch to him / will bee yu:h.' This is not to detract from Velcheru's semantic translational method which yielded 'You're just about as much as anyone imagines you to be,' but to add a cultural element to the translational project, a touch of salt to the semantic, almost paraphrastic, blandness.

In the course of attempting such "value-additions", I blundered with the semantics of one line. In my musical reverie, I had misheard 'pindanthee nippadi' in the next line, a simile, 'anta raantaramu ||enchee chooda || pindantE nippadi | ennaatLoo ||' and did not take time out to check the padam in print. The horrendous misquoting , and misreading

still makes me cringe; but the struggle with the expression 'pindanthee nippadi' (or 'nippaTi') continues.

'Nippadi' (or 'nippaTi') is said to be a well-used term in certain regions of South India as the equivalent of 'rotii' or 'rotte' (an unleavened bread). Not being aware to what extent 'raagi' or 'jonna' ('makkai') is used in South India as food, the region being chiefly a rice-growing one, I could not help puzzling over the kind of 'rotte' the padam referred to. What sort of 'rotte' could the rice-dependent folk prepare? The 'attu' made/burnt directly on 'nippu' (Fire), should then be a flattened bit of batter/dough prepared on fire, rather like a tandoori roti, or a phulka that is burnt directly on fire; nippu + attu —> nippattu. Rice-flour is either coarse, grainy or soft powder -- neither can be made into batter of required consistency for turning out flattened pieces of dough that can be burnt directly on fire, unless the flour is first steamed sufficiently to soften and give it an adhesive quality. The labour involved, I think, is too time-consuming for working class people rendering daily use nearly impossible. Was, then, 'nippattu' a festival/ occasional preparation?

I am uneasy with this expression for yet another reason: in the common saying 'pindi koddii rotte' is the semantic thrust quantitative or qualitative? That is, an ambiguity needs to be resolved if Velcheru's translation is to be sustained. The expression can mean 'as much as' and 'as good as'—as much as the quantity of dough available, or as good as the quality of the dough. Velcheru's line 'You're just about as much as anyone imagines you to be' goes for quantity. There is another kind of preparation called 'attu' (as in 'pesarattu', 'bobbattu') which is a large pan cake which, too, adds to the ambiguity of 'nippu+attu—nippattu'. Again, batter that is allowed to sour/ferment a little is steamed to make 'rotte/attu' (as in 'minapa rotte', 'dibba rotte' and 'minapattu').Which practice does the padam refer to? Fifteenth century social economy and culture-based criticism and review becomes necessary here, I suppose.

Now time for an overview. While there is so much to study carefully, what good purpose has the reviewer in 'Vividha,' including

the present writer served? 'Bheebhatsam, Bhayaanakam,' roared Pennepalli in anger about the 2002 translation of *Kanyasulkam*, and later asserted that his anger was 'sadaagraham,' righteous indignation. Is righteous indignation good criticism ('Sadaagrham Vimarsayaena'), asked yours truly. Afsar eulogized the contribution of our colleagues, while Prasad brought in the acerbic -tone of Ranganayakamma to score pugilistic points. The translator, meanwhile, and the importance of translation work takes a back seat, yielding place to personal ideologies and agendas which can only vitiate the critical climate and paralyse the multilingual aspirations of literary work. Between the theory of Probal Dasgupta and the critical outlook of the 'Vividha' page, translation-practice is well on its way to suffering a stroke. On the other hand, if forced and commissioned translations and unconditionally eulogistic reviews of writers' work alone are taken into account, the outlook is bleak indeed.

I propose that *close adaptation* is a good alternative to translational paralysis through theoretical and agendaic moves. Close adaptation *uses* translation as one of its tools without having to struggle for linguistic and cultural equipments. It facilitates the forging of a suitable idiom and enables retelling through several kinds of transcendence. In Act II Scene 1 of *Kanyasulkam*, Gurazada gets Girisam and Venkatesam to 'converse' in English for the benefit of Venkatesam's doting, illiterate mother Venkamma. The farce enacted there is a betrayal of the first order on a trusting mother. But Gurazada immortalizes Milton's already deathless utterance by a clever act of cultural substitution amounting to a sledgehammer stroke in the course of that conversation: 'Of Man's first disobedience and the fruit of that mango tree, sing Venkatesa, my very good boy' (Apparao 1997: 43**;** emphasis added). The satirical punch of mango substituting for 'forbidden' from *Paradise Lost,* Bk. I in the farcical allusion is only one dramatic aspect of postcolonial subversion—had the colonial rulers held him answerable to questions of religious and literary blasphemy, Gurazada could comfortably have got out of a spot of bother by pleading 'ignorance' of the great literary tradition, or perhaps even an innocent slip.

For me, Gurazada's 'fruit of that mango tree' is a cultural move that could show the way forward for a viable, creative adaptation. Such adaptation might, in turn, engender a culturally more purposeful critical review than the eulogy of the 'original' text which passes for translation-review today. 'Fruit of that mango tree' comes much closer to the Telugu culture, indeed most Indian cultures, than 'fruit of that *forbidden* tree' which negates the desirability of any fruit-bearing tree. This cultural desirability transcends linguistic untranslatability and moves towards cultural adaptation. Vijayasree and Vijaykumar , for instance, manage 'broomance', for 'cheepurukatta' (broom) 'sarasam' (romantic playfulness*).* Where plausible equivalents—standard, idiomatic, dialectal, colloquial, culturally accessible, technical, etc. constitute the domain of the inaccessible, adaptation enables the bilingual project while 'translation' can only impede it (this is best illustrated by the painstaking efforts of state-sponsored language academies, and the ludicrous results of their efforts). The mango-tree is, for me, as much a symbol of cultural adaptation and subaltern rejection/revolt, as an invitation to the reviewer-critic to delve into the complex process unfettered by rigid, deterministic presumptions. The immense flexibility offered to the reviewer-critic is productive of mature study rather than childish tilting-at-windmills which is in practice now. In turn, such review will encourage more multi-lingual literary effort. The fruit of the mango is irresistibly sweet and is an assurance against the 'forbidden' and exclusionist as in Pennepalli's principles.

References

Apparao, Gurajada (1997) *Kanyasulkam,* Vijayawada: EMESCO.

Rao, Velcheru Narayana (2005) *God on the Hill,* New Delhi: OUP.

Vijayasree, C. et.al (eds) (2007) *Nation in Imagination*, Hyderabad: Orient Longman.

Translating and Reviewing Tribal Folktales: Understanding Socio-Cultural Proximity

Anand Mahanand

Abstract

The activity of translation is not confined only to transferring from one language to another but it also involves socio-cultural aspects. If these aspects play an important role in the process of translation, then it becomes a prerequisite for the translator to have not only knowledge of both the languages but also some understanding of socio-cultural reality of both the traditions—of the source and the target. This may apply to the reviewers as well, as they not only study both but come out with judgments on the translation which includes all these aspects. In order to explain this position, I would like to share my own experience as a translator of a collection of Tribal Folktales from Oriya to English. I would like to argue that in this case, the translator's proximity to the socio-cultural milieu helped a great deal in translating the collection.

The activity of translation not only involves transference of meaning from one language to the other but it also includes the socio-cultural aspects of the two languages. For this reason, it is imperative for the translator to be familiar with these aspects. This familiarity facilitates better translation. In this paper I have made an attempt to illustrate this point by sharing my experience in translating tribal folktales into English. I would like to argue that the linguistic and socio- cultural proximity helped me a great deal in translating the selection. I would like to add, that some awareness of the socio-cultural factors and the process of translation would facilitate better the review

Translation Today Vol. 5 No. 1 & 2 2008 © CIIL 2008

of a translation. The collection I refer to is a set of fifty five tales compiled and edited by Sri Ashok Kumar Mishra and Girish Chandra Dash. It was published in Oriya by the National Book Trust of India as *Aranyara Swara: Dakshina Odissara Adivasi Lokakatha* in 1998. I translated it into English for the non-Oriya reader and called it *Voices of the Forest: Tribal Folktales from Southern Orissa.*

The folktales are from different tribal languages in Orissa: Paraja, Gadaba, Banda and Didai. The tribal communities live in the Southern parts of Orissa which stretch from the district of Gajapati to Malkangiri. Each tribe is different in terms of their cultural and social structure, and these folktales reflect some of these aspects. But folktales do travel and change with time. For this reason, their ownership is not confined to a particular tribe. There have been influences, assimilations and variations. But as these tales reveal certain social and cultural practices, they are very specific to certain tribes. Because of this reason some of the folktales are identified with a particular community. It is worth discussing some specific cultural practices here.

The communities these tales talk about largely depend on agriculture, food gathering and on daily wages. Usually a tribal village is surrounded by forests, fields and streams. The fields are situated near the forests. The forests are cleared and cultivated. Here one needs to understand the context of the forest in a different way. People go to the fields early morning and come back in the evening or at noon. If they don't come home for lunch, their food is carried to them by a member of the family. These small scale farmers grow rice, mandia, maize, pulses, groundnuts, and vegetables such as cucumber, bitter-gourd and ridge-gourd.

As a young boy growing up in the neighbouring district of this region, I myself have participated in many of these activities and have acquired first hand experience of this culture.

The tribals have their gods and goddesses. They worship trees, animals, and the priest is from their own community. They sacrifice birds and animals in honour of their deities. They also offer vermilion, rice, fruits and flowers.

These communities don't have the dowry system. Instead, the groom has to pay bride price. If he is not able to do so, he has to work for the bride's parents. As these tales reflect, women take part in all spheres of life. As we can see in these tales they move out of their domestic confines and work in the fields and forests. There are numerous social customs, rituals and systems that exist among the tribal communities and it is important for the translator to be aware of them.

In addition to these, awareness of language is a significant factor. Certain terms are very specific to these tribes and the neighbouring region and are different from the mainstream Oriya words. So only a person from this or the neighbouring region can have access to them. We may cite a few of them:

Words used among

tribes of Southern Orissa	**Sambalpuri**	**Oriya equivalent**
Meaning		
Dhangri	Jubati	young girl
Kulhiha	Siala	Jackal
Pandaka	Kapota	Pigeon
Banj	Bandhya	Childless
Gidha	Shaguna	Vulture
Pujidemi	Hanidebi	Kill you
Khara	Thekua	Rabbit
Badhni	Jhadu	Broomstick

It can be observed that the words used in the Koraput (Southern Orissa) and Sambalpur region are closer in terms of sound and meaning, whereas the mainstream Oriya words are very different.

From the words, we shall move to certain concepts and cultural practices which throw up greater challenge to the translator as they are specific to this region. Some of them are listed below:

1. Udulia = flee = marriage without social sanction

2. Dangor = forest that is used as field as well.
3. Marshad = special kind of friendship
4. Mohul = a kind of flower available only in this region.
5. Shag = curry (In other regions it means only leafy vegetable)

The above terms are culture specific and prevalent in Southern and its neighbouring regions but are almost alien to other parts of Orissa. If the translators come from this region they will have an added advantage.

This is not to say that only people from the regions of the tales should translate them, but as I was translating this collection, I felt that it was relatively easy for me as I was familiar with many terms and customs. I had an advantage of being familiar with the culture. This prompted me to share some of my experiences.

Received knowledge in the area of Translation Studies believes that a translated text should be evaluated on the basis of the status it holds in the target language and the impact it makes on the target culture. Translated texts succeed if they produce a strong aesthetic response in the minds of its readers and provide them with a sense of culture. The above mentioned view lays more emphasis on the target culture but ignores the source culture and background. I feel that adequate attention should also be paid to the source culture, especially in the case of tribal oral narratives, more so when different levels of transmission take place.

Therefore, the role of the reviewers also becomes very important in reviewing such translations. They have to keep track of several stages of the translation process. In this case, the tales were first in the form of oral narratives. They were translated into the written form. At this stage, it is important to note the changes taking place. For instance, when a tale is told in the oral form, it is associated with performance, and this aspect cannot be captured in the written form. The gestures of the storyteller, the active participation of the audience in telling them and many such things get omitted in the written form.

At the second stage, they were translated from tribal languages into Oriya. Here, though the translators are aware of the languages, the assisting staff such as the typist, composer and other people may contribute to the appropriation of certain terms. The translators have retained the nuances of the tribal languages. They have provided footnotes and anecdotes. (These provided a great deal of background knowledge to me) The third stage is my translation from Oriya into English. Reviewers need to study all these stages. They should also be aware of some of the issues involved. That will, I feel, facilitate a better view of the translation.

Reference

Mishra, Ashok Kumar and Girish Chandra Dash (1998) *Aranyara Swara* (*Voices of the Forest),* Delhi: NBT.

Book Review

How Does it Feel? Point of View in Translation: The Case of Virginia Woolf into French

Charlotte Bosseaux
Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007, pp. 247.

In this book, Charlotte Bosseaux explores the idea of point of view in fiction and how it is affected through translation. The book adopts a comparative perspective, similar to Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) and draws conclusions from various translations of English texts (here two novels by Virginia Woolf) into French. The writer bases her argument mainly on narratological and linguistic data, using corpus processing as an assisting tool for more objective quantitative analysis of two novels by the English novelist Virginia Woolf, namely *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*, and their various translations into French. The study, which was originally carried out as a project in fulfilment for the award of the Ph.D. degree, compares these two English novels not only with their French versions but also investigates the extent to which the different French translations were able to transfer the "feel of the text" (an expression which the author borrowed from Paul Simpson) as intended by the original author, using computer-assisted methods to substantiate her argument and to facilitate the search for items. The author offers a model for analyzing point of view by adopting certain techniques from narratology, Halliday's systemic functional grammar, linguistics, and translation studies. This review begins with an outline of the book chapterwise pinpointing the main ideas in each chapter followed by a short critique of the ideas and scope of the book.

The first chapter presents the general theoretical foundations on which the author bases her argument. She begins with discussing the concept of "point of view" in works of fiction and its impact on the orientation of the readers, consciously or unconsciously, towards

the "feel of the text". She also argues that scholars of narratology, stylistics and literary criticism have discussed this point in detail, but little attention was paid to the impact of translation on the point of view of a work of fiction. Translators, she maintains, leave their imprint (or what she calls "discursive presence" (p.23)) on the works they translate due to personal, ideological or cultural reasons, and the extent of modification of the point of view of the original text can vary once transferred from a source language into a target language. Not only that, such modification can vary from one translation to another even of the same text. In order to prove her argument, the author takes the above-mentioned novels and studies their translations into French by different translators. Her analysis is based on computer-assisted corpora studies and hinges on investigating four concepts: deixis, modality, transitivity, and free indirect discourse.

The point of view of a work of fiction is the perspective that the novelist adopts to shape the fictional world from a particular angle whereby the readers are "given access to the world of the fiction through a person's view of the fictionally created work" (p. 15). The author maintains that although narratology and forensic stylistics pay much attention to point of view in fictional works, little has been done in that respect with reference to translation. That is to say, narratology deals with point of view irrespective of whether the work of fiction is in its original language or translated from another language. However, the author stresses that a translator does have presence in the text s/he translates, and this presence is manifested by the selection of certain linguistic elements and structures, consciously or not, and the main issue here is to see why and how such elements were chosen and the extent to which the translator's choices have an impact on the "feel of the text". For this reason, the author attempts to set a model of inspecting the issue of how translators transform or transpose point of view into the target language, and this model derives its basic elements from narratological, stylistic, linguistic and translation studies.

In the second chapter, the author discusses the different categories of point of view, which determine the feel of the text. She

selects deixis, modality and transitivity as 'layers of the multilayered notion of point of view' (p. 53) as well as of 'communication process' (p. 35). She starts with deixis or the spatio-temporal point of view. Deictic elements are used for pointing and referring; they are "ways of selecting objects from any represented environment in order to draw someone's attention to them" (p.28) and can be linguistic or non-linguistic. "Deixis", as seen here, "deals essentially with relations in space and time and is always seen from an individual's perspective" (ibid.), and as far as works of fiction are concerned, "[it] refers to the orientation of text in relation to time, place and personal participants" (p. 31). The indicators are personal pronouns, tense and adverbs of time, adverbs of place and other locatives. As for modality, i.e. the linguistic features reflecting the speaker's attitudes towards a proposition, the author follows mainly Halliday's definition, and looks at modality as an interpersonal approach to point of view. She also follows Paul Simpson's classification of modality or modal systems: deontic modality (attitudes expressed by use of modal auxiliary verbs), boulomaic modality (expressions related to the speaker's wishes or desires, e.g. 'I hope/regret', etc.), epistemic modality (expressions showing the speaker's confidence or lack of confidence in the truth of a proposition, e.g. 'He might be wrong', 'evidently', etc), and perception modality (expressions showing that the degree of speaker's 'commitment to the truth of the proposition is based on human perception and, more particularly, visual perceptions'(p. 38), e.g. 'It is clear that he is wrong'). The third layer is transitivity, which, according to the author, 'refers to the way meaning is represented in a clause [and] the function to transmit information between the members of societies' (p. 44). It 'shows how the speakers encode their mental picture of reality in language and how they account for their experience of the world that surrounds them'(p. 45) through verb phrases and noun phrases in clauses, which express semantic processes and participants (being the essential parts of clauses) and also circumstantial references (as complementary parts of clauses). These processes are divided into five categories: material processes (expressed by verbs of doing), mental processes (verbs of thinking and perceiving), perception processes (seeing and hearing), affection

processes (liking, hating), and processes of cognition (thinking, understanding). An additional point to this is the discussion of transitivity vis-a-vis ergativity as techniques of expressing voice. The last point discussed in chapter two is free indirect discourse and its position with reference to translation. So far as Woolf's fiction is concerned, free indirect discourse in this context can be taken to mean 'a choice medium for revealing a fictional mind suspended in an instant present, between a remembered past and an anticipated future' (p. 119). The author generally elaborates different types of discourse: direct speech, indirect speech and free indirect speech; the last one is the most important in the argument as it suits the narrative techniques (interior monologue and stream of consciousness) used by Woolf in her two novels in hand. The author reflects an awareness of the complexity of these techniques and the potential problems involved particularly while trying to translate a text and aiming to preserve point of view and the feel of the text.

Having discussed the idea of focalisation in the second chapter, the author moves on to explain the methodology of applying the above-mentioned techniques to the novels and their translations in the third chapter. Here, *The Waves* and its translations (two translations by Marguerite Yourcenar 1937, and Cecile Wajsbrot 1993) and *To the Lighthouse* (three translations by Maurice Lanoire 1929, Magali Merle 1993, and Franoise Pellan 1996) are investigated using corpus-based techniques and computer software. Deixis, modality and transitivity are investigated in *The Waves*, while free indirect discourse is studied in *To the Lighthouse*. The employed techniques of corpus investigation are: 1) type/token ratio: a token is a sequence of 'characters delimited by space'(p. 72) and is also known as a 'running word'; 2) mean/ average sentence length; and 3) lexical density/variety. The programmes used for this investigation are Wordsmith Tools and Multiconcord. These programmes facilitated the author's task of finding specifically chosen words and phrases in the corpus of the novels and their translations, which the researcher had already set by managing first to get the texts converted into Word documents. These procedures make the model proposed by the author easier and more

precise; yet, she acknowledges the necessity of the human hand in selecting the relevant examples since the computer stands helpless in, for example, distinguishing polysemy.

The fourth chapter starts with a brief glance at Virginia Woolf, her techniques, her works, and the novels (as well as their translations) discussed in the book. She then sets out to investigate deixis, modality and transitivity in *The Waves* and free indirect discourse in *To the Lighthouse*. The premises of the discussion are that the feel of the text can be investigated by looking at the linguistic choices of the original author and of the translators and the strategies followed by the translators to convey what is there in the original. And this can be determined by the data collected and based on the corpus driven approach.

Chapters five and six present case studies of *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves* respectively. In the former, she collects data as to how the translators of this novel translated certain expressions: e.g. exclamations (yes, oh and of course), interrogations (but why, but how), the temporal adverb (now) in combination of the past tense and conditional, and adverbs denoting inward debate and (un)certainty (surely, certainly, and perhaps). The selection of the examples is based on the idea that Woolf's novel advocates personality and subjectivity, and the findings of the case study proved that there are instances of transposition on free indirect discourse which (even if they are few in number) have some impact on the feel of the text in general, and that the tendency to transpose expressions of free indirect discourse is more in Merle's translation than in Pellan's. Lanoire also transposed some expressions from free indirect discourse into indirect discourse and/or direct discourse, and her translation all-in-all 'gives less direct access to the thoughts of the focalising characters'(p. 158) than Merle's and Pellan's. Pellan's translation is estimated to be the closest to the original. On the other hand, in *The Waves*, deixis is studied through the repetitions of the locative and temporal adverbs (here, there, now and then), and the emphatic use of the personal pronoun I 'in order to see whether the translator's linguistic choices affect the narratological

structure of the novel' (p. 118). Modality is investigated through the repetitive use of modal verbs expressing notions of necessity, obligation, possibility and permission, as well as two verba sentiendi, i.e. to feel and to know and also to seem and as if. Finally, transitivity and ergativity are 'examined to see how the characters' experiences are encoded in the clause and if the translators' choices of structures affect characterisation' (ibid.): here, the author has selected certain verbs of material processes (break, cast, catch, drop, fling, move, open, pull, push, shatter, shut, tumble, and turn). The final result of the investigation indicates that 'both translators of TW (i.e. *The Waves*) have left their imprint on the texts in very different ways' (p. 221-222), substantiating Mona Baker's argument that individual translators have their specific touches on the translated text (Bosseaux 2001: 82) and Rachel May's conclusion that 'the translator represents a separate owner-creator with respect to the text' (qtd. in Bosseaux 2001: 222).

The book ends with the conclusion, summarizing the achievements made through the study and proposing ideas for future research in this area. Generally speaking, the book is useful in the sense that it offers a model of analysing fictional works with reference to empirical data based on corpus studies and assisted with computer software. This makes the study and its findings more objective than otherwise. Other studies of the translation of literature focus less on language itself and pay more attention to other considerations, such as the effect of translated works on a specific literature. And even if language is studied, the judgments drawn may boil down to impressionistic conclusions and judgements. It is only through inductive methods that a translation quality can be plausibly measured. This book serves as a practical model using criteria from narratology, linguistics, computer science, and corpus studies, all directed towards the study of fictional works. The author's choice of Virginia Woolf's novels is interesting as well as challenging. Woolf, like the other modernists, made experimentations with her novels. The philosophy in her novels seems to lie more on the structure of presenting the ideas, the punctuation, and the repetition than on other considerations in such a manner as to echo her revolt against the Victorian concepts of

realism and verisimilitude and to assure her affinity with the avant-guard Modernists. This is a double-edged weapon. The conversational nature of her novels (whether in terms of interior monologue or dialogue or telepathy) makes it possible to penetrate the character's mind, but can the workings of human mind be fully grasped even in reading novels in the original language, let alone their translation? Besides, selecting specific lexical and grammatical items cannot be taken for granted as the only index of point of view nor the feel of the text. The book, useful as it is, still has some limitations. It is successful in realizing what it aims at, i.e. comparatively studying point of view and proving through objective criteria that it gets affected through translation; hence the feel of the text. The idea that individual translators have their special touches while translating (due to considerations known to them, e.g. cultural, structural, political, ideological, etc.) is not new, and the criteria taken up as touchstones of comparison are not all about what a text is or how the fictional world is evoked in its totality. Meaning and making sense of the fictional world, Bosseaux concedes (p. 158), is still subject to interpretation, which is a concept that tends more to subjectivity. The last issue that may be raised is the validity of Bosseaux's model with reference to other languages: will it yield the same results as was the case between English and French? English and French have a lot in common, but will the case be the same between English and, say, Oriya, Hindi or Arabic? This still requires more research, because not only the structures are different between these languages, but also are the world-views and intellectual make-ups.

Finally, some mistakes can be noticed here and there in this otherwise well-written book that could have been avoided with a little more careful proofreading. For example:

P.35, 2nd para, line 13 : in order to the study the linguistic…

P.44, 2nd para, line 2 : to examine the feel of the text in the originals texts

P.73, 2nd para, line 6 : trends of linguistics shifts.
P.74, 1st para, line 7 : lower that

P.121, 2nd para, line 16 : and, finally, Finally, exclamations...

P.130, last para, line 11 : can be see in...

P.181 1st para, line 4 : for example,. if ..

P.190 last para, line 3 : this study highlight the fact that.

Panchanan Mohanty & Abdullah Saleh Aziz
Centre for Applied Linguistics & Translation Studies
University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad-500046, India
e-mail: panchanan_mohanty@yahoo.com

Book Beat

Translation in Global News

Esperanca and Susan Bassnett

London and New York: Routledge, 2009

This book derives from research in two interdisciplinary fields: translation studies and globalization studies, and looks at their implication in the international transmission of the news. It considers the way in which news agencies, arguably the most powerful organizations in the field of global news, have developed historically and how they conceive of and employ translation in a global setting. At the same time it also explores the highly complex set of processes that underpins the interlingual transfer of news items, processes that raise important questions about boundaries and indeed definition of translation itself. It also shows how when the news is translated, translation is very much more than mere transfer of material from one language to another. This book looks at global communication through an examination of translation practices, both diachronically, through an account of the globalization of news in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and synchronically, in terms of contemporary journalistic practices. The book is written with a hope that the preliminary findings will encourage more interdisciplinary work and practitioners working in Media Studies, Translation Studies and Sociology to share information and ideas. Through an investigation into the mechanics of news translation, this book seeks to establish a basis on which further research into global communication strategies can evolve.

Doubts and Directions in Translation Studies

Yves Gambier, Miriam Shlesinger and Radigundis Stolze
(eds)
John Benjamins Library, 2007

This book, the recent publication from the European Society for Translation Studies (EST) sub series, from John Benjamins Publishing Co. contains selected contributions from the EST congress held in Lisbon in 2004. More than 200 participants assembled in Lisbon to participate in the congress to take a fresh look at the current orientations in Translation Studies. *Doubts and Directions in Translation Studies* is an outcome of the twenty six texts collected out of the many contributions.

The book is divided thematically into five parts.

All the four papers in part one deal with theoretical aspects.

Part two deals with methodology. It has four texts, all concerned with how to improve the tools of investigation.

Part three has seven texts and focuses on empirical research.

The seven articles in part four are linguistically oriented. They attempt to give an overview of the unfolding relationship between Linguistics and Translation Studies.

Part five, which carries four texts, deals with literary works.

The approaches in the book reemphasize the interdisciplinary nature of Translation Studies and also attempts to take a fresh look at many of the seemingly well established paradigms and familiar notions and hope to open up new directions of research.

Letter to the Editor

Respected sir,

This is with reference to the issue (Volume 2 Number 1, March 2005) of *Translation Today* (http://www.anukriti.net/vol2/article8/page1.asp) where Tapati Gupta's paper on *Shakespeare Re-Configured: Hemchandra Bandyopadhyay's Bangla Transcreations* appears. She wrote "*The Bengali translations of Shakespeare began to appear during the 1890s*", but my research on Shakespeare translations into Bangla (1852-2007) reveals otherwise. Hemchandra Bandyopadhyay (1838-1903) himself writes in the introduction to *Nalini Basanta*, 1868 (his translation-adaptation of Shakespeare's *Tempest*) published (a reprint) by Bangiyo Sahitya Parishad

"ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর প্রায় মাঝামাঝি কালে প্রসিদ্ধ অধ্যাপক ক্যাপ্টেন ডি.এল. রিচার্ডসন সু-আবৃত্তি ও সু-অধ্যাপনার দ্বারা বাংলা দেশের শিক্ষিত ও শিক্ষার্থী সমাজে শেক্সপীয়রকে অভাবনীয় প্রতিষ্ঠা দান করিয়াছিলেন। তাহার ফলে বাঙালীর মাতৃভাষায় শেক্সপীয়রের নাটকের গল্প ও সম্পূর্ণ নাটক পড়িবার আগ্রহ জন্মে। ১৮৪৮)? (সনে গুরুদাস হাজরার 'রোমিও এবং জুলিয়েটের মনোহর উপাখ্যান' প্রকাশের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে শেক্সপীয়রের নাটকের অথবা গল্পের অনুবাদ ও অনুসরণ প্রবলভাবে চলিতে থাকে। মুক্তারাম বিদ্যাবাগীশ) ১৮৫২, (ই. রোয়ের) Roer ১৮৫৩ (প্রভৃতি গল্প প্রচারে এবং হরচন্দ্র ঘোষ নাটক প্রচারে প্রথমেই উৎসাহিত হন, ভাষান্তরিত নাটকের নামকরণে হরচন্দ্র বৈচিত্র্য সম্পাদন করিয়াছিলেন; ১৮৫৩ সনে প্রকাশিত 'মার্চেন্ট অব ভেনিসের' নাম দিয়াছিলেন 'ভানুমতী-চিত্তবিলাস নাটক', ১৮৬৪ সনে প্রকাশিত 'রোমিও এন্ড জুলিয়েট' এর বাংলা রূপের নাম হইয়াছিল 'চারুমুখ-চিত্তহরা নাটক'।...")

("About mid-nineteenth century renowned Professor Captain D.L. Richardson established Shakespeare in the hearts and minds of the educated class and students of Bengal through his outstanding reading and teaching of Shakespeare. As a result the Bengalees developed a great eagerness to read Shakespeare's plays and know their stories in their mother tongue. With the publication of Gurudas Hajra's *Romeo*

Ebon Jylieter Monohar Upakhan, 1848(?) the translations and adaptations/imitations of Shakespeare's plays and plots grew apace. Muktaram Bidyabagish (1852), E. Roer (1853) et al started with presenting the plots and Harachandra Ghosh eagerly translated Shakespeare's plays, giging his trasnaltions attractive titles. He gave his translation of *Merchant of Venice* (pub. 1853) the title of "Bhanumati-Chittabilash Natak" and called the Bangla version of *Romeo and Juliet* (pub. 1864) "Charumukh-Chittahara Natak" …" *translation mine*)

Hence it can be clearly seen from Hemchandra's own introduction to his translation that the great stream of Bangla translations of Shakespeare began to flow strongly from the 1850s and not from 1890s as suggested by Professor Gupta. My research at the National Library, various district libraries and at the *Shakespeare Society of Eastern India* archives has unearthed many of these Bangla translations from the 1850s onwards.

Ranu Pramanik
Research Scholar
Shakespeare Society of Eastern India,
Kolkata

Contributors

Abdullah Saleh Aziz is Research scholar at Centre for Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad.

Anand Mahanand teaches English at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. Apart from *ELT* (Syllabus and Materials Development, Language and Literature Interface, Academic English and Multilingual Education), he is interested in Folk and Tribal Literature in India. He has translated two collection of Tribal Folktales and two collections of Short Stories from Oriya to English. His publications include three books, two sets of instructional materials and twenty research papers.

K.M. Sheriff writes in Malayalam and English and translates among Malayalam, English, Hindi, Gujarati and Tamil. His publications include *Kunhupaathumma's Tryst with Destiny* the first study of Vaikom Muhammed Basheer's fiction in English and *Ekalavyas with Thumbs* the first selection of Gujarati Dalit writing in English translation. Sherrif teaches English at the University of Calicut.

M. Sridhar is Professor in the Department of English at the University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad. He has authored *Literary Theory and F.R. Leavis* (1999) and *Reception of English: Cultural Responses in Telugu Documents* (2008). He has won the Jyeshtha Literary Award, 1993 and the Katha Commendation Prize, 1996 for joint translations from Telugu to English. He has jointly translated (with Alladi Uma) many works that include *Ayoni and Other Stories* (2001), *Mohana! Oh Mohana! and Other Poems* (2005) and *Bhoomi* (2008). His main areas of interest are Literary Criticism, English studies, Indian Literature and Translation. He writes poetry in Telugu and English.

Mahasweta Sengupta is Professor in the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. Her interest in Translation Studies dates back to 1990 with the publication of a paper in the book "Translation, History, Culture" edited by Susan Bassnett and Andre Lefevere.

Meena T. Pillai is Reader in the Institute of English and also Director of Centre for Comparative Literature in the University of Kerala. She was a Fulbright Fellow to Ohio State University, Columbus; Shastri Fellow to Concordia University, Montreal; Commonwealth Fellow to University of Sussex, Brighton. Her areas of research are Women's Studies and Media Studies.

Meenakshi Mukherjee retired as Professor of English in Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She authored books titled *The Twice Born Fiction, Realism and Reality: Novel and Society in India* (1985), *Re-reading Jane Austen* (1994) and *The Perishable Empire* (2000) and edited some collections of essays that include *Midnight's Children: A Book of Readings* (1999), and *Early Novels in India* (2002). She was the founder-editor of a journal, *Vagartha* that published Indian literature in English translation from 1973 to 1979. Meenakshi Mukherjee received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2003 for her book *The Perishable Empire: Essays on Indian Writing in English*. She was the Chairperson of the Association for Commonwealth Literature And Language Studies (ACLALS) from 2001-2004 and the Chairperson of its Indian chapter (IACLALS) from 1993-2005. Her last book, *An Indian for All Seasons: The Many Lives of R. C. Dutt* (2009), was a biography of Romesh Chadra Dutt. She passed away on 16th September 2009.

N Venugopal Rao is Hyderabad-based journalist, a poet, literary critic, translator, public speaker and columnist. Having published a dozen books of his own, he has also translated equal number of books from English into Telugu. Currently he is the editor of *Veekshanam*, a monthly journal of political economy and society.

N. Kamala is Professor of French at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and specializes in Translation Studies. She has published widely on translation in India and abroad. She was awarded the Katha Award for Translation in 1998. Her English translation of Toru Dutt's French novel *The Diary of Mademoiselle d'Arvers* was published by Penguin in 2005. Her latest edited book *Translating Women: Indian Interventions* was published by Zubaan in 2009.

Panchanan Mohanty is Professor of Applied Linguistics at University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad. He has published more than 100 papers in journals like *General Linguistics, Language Policy, Mother Tongue, Indian Linguistics, International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics,* etc. and in different anthologies published from India and abroad. He has also written and edited 20 books in English and Oriya besides translating 4 books into Oriya. Presently he is a Consulting Editor of *The Asian ESP Journal* and a member of the Foundation for Endangered Languages, U.K.

Ramesh Malik is U.G.C. Senior Research Fellow pursuing his PhD in Translation Studies at the Centre for Applied Linguistics & Translation Studies, University of Hyderabad.

Sachidananda Mohanty is Professor and Head, Department of English at the University of Hyderabad. He has published nineteen books in English and in Oriya. His recent titles include *Travel Writing and the Empire* and *Early Women's Writings in Orissa, 1898-1950: A Lost Tradition.*

Shivaram Padikkal is Professor at the Centre for Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies in University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad. His areas of interest are Cultural Studies and Translation Studies.

Sindhu Menon is lecturer in the Department of English in University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad.

Subashree Krishnaswamy is editor, writer and translator. She edited *Indian Review of Books*, a review journal for a number of years. She has edited a number of award-winning titles translated from the various Indian languages. Her books include *Short Fiction from South India* (OUP) with K.Srilata and *The Rapids of a Great River*: *The Penguin Book of Tamil Poetry* with Lakshmi Holmstrom and K Srilata. She has judged the Crossword Award for translation for two years. She won the BBC Short Story Award in 2005.

Subbarayudu is Professor in the Department of English and Additional Controller of examinations of Arts College, Osmania University in Hyderabad. He has been engaged in translations from Telugu and has edited books with Prof. C. Vijayasree and others. Currently he is translating Rani Sivasankara Sarma's novel *Grahaantaravaasi.*

Sudhakar Marathe recently retired from University of Hyderabad as Professor in English and Dean of School of Humanities**.** He has bagged 'Katha' Award for translation in 1992. He has published many books like *Remembering Mother Tongues*, a book of childhood verses in English Translation; *Cocoon, Fall, Kesari Balakrishna Pillai etc.* He has published articles in various journals, written many poems and short stories and has translated many books.

Tutun Mukherjee is Professor and Head, Centre for Comparative Literature, University of Hyderabad. Her specialization is Literary Criticism and Theory. She has research interest in Translation, Women's Writing, Theatre and Film Studies.

Vaishnavi Ramaswamy has PhD in Apllied Linguistics from University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad.

TRANSLATION TODAY

ORDER FORM

Please find enclosed herewith a demand draft for INR / USD / EURO / POUND ……. .....……... as my / our subscription for one year / three years of Translation Today.

Name …...……..…….....……..
Profession …….....…..
Address …….....
..…….....
……..…… Pin ☐☐☐☐☐☐
Phone :
e-mail:
Signature & Date ……

SUBSCRIPTION DETAILS

Individuals

INDIA

One year Subscription : INR 250 (for 2 issues)
Three years Subscription : INR 750 (for 6 issues)

OVERSEAS

One year Subscription : USD $8/EURO 6/£ 5 (for 2 issues)
Three years Subscription : USD $25/EURO 15/£ 14 (for 6 issues)

Institutions

INDIA

One year Subscription : INR 350 (for 2 issues)
Three years Subscription : INR 1000 (for 6 issues)

OVERSEAS

One year Subscription : USD $12/EURO 8/£ 7 (for 2 issues)
Three years Subscription : USD $27/EURO 20/£ 16 (for 6 issues)

Payment has to be made by Demand Draft/IMO/Cheque, which should be in favour of Assistant Director (Admn),CIIL (Translation Today) payable at Mysore and should be posted to the following address:

Asst. Director (Admn),
Translation Today,
Central Institute of Indian Languages
Hunsur Road, Manasagangotri, Mysore – 570 006, INDIA.

Contributors are requested to contact Dr P. P. Giridhar on behalf of the Editorial Board with a brief summary of their submission so as to avoid duplication. Articles submitted for consideration of the Board will have to be in English. *Translation Today* will consider seriously the possibility of publishing material in Indian languages, or a multilingual edition of the journal in future. There's no size limitation on articles except that they may preferably be within 40K to avoid slow downloading for the electronic version. Articles should, however, be preferably and optimally between 2000 and 3000 words in length for the print-based version. Unpublished contributions will be preferred. While submitting pieces already published elsewhere, the author must mention the fact as well as get permission to reproduce the same. Your initial submission should be in typescript or by e-mail, or in a three and half inch floppy disk. For electronic submissions, use Microsoft Word (6.0) (.doc or .txt) format. Graphics could be in JPEG, GIF, Photoshop or BMP format. Electronic submissions should come in two forms: a) one with the author's name, address, institutional affiliation, contact info and any major academic achievements. b) one which has no trace of the author's identity, ready to be despatched to the peer-reviewer. All articles shall be accompanied by a 100-word abstract.

If it is the paper version, two copies of the typescript must be submitted. Only the last page should include the author's name, position, affiliation and contact information (postal address, fax and telephone numbers and e-mail). The other copy could be on both sides of the page. Submissions should be double spaced with generous margins.

A passport sized colour photograph, a 'mug-shot' of the author(s) is needed in electronic form and if it can't be e-mailed, a hard copy may be sent. Endnotes, where essential, shall precede bibliography at the end. Superscripted references within the text to endnotes and bibliography may be hyperlinked in the electronic version.

Contributors would get ten offprints of their contribution.

Style and conventions:

References should follow the system as exemplified in this journal. In the typescript, references should be indicated by giving the author's name and year of publication (with page references where necessary). References should be listed in full at the end of the article, in alphabetical order and without abbreviating journal title. References to more than one publication by an author in the same year should be distinguished alphabetically with small letters. For example: According to Nida (1994a, 1994b). Please don't club notes with references.

Diagrams and figures should be suitable for photographic/scanner reproduction. Drawings should be in black ink or stiff white paper. Lettering should be of draughtsman standard and large enough to remain legible where the figure requires reduction in size. Tables should be typed on separate sheets. Indicate in the text where tables should be placed.

EDITOR **ISSN 0972-8740**
P. P. Giridhar
GUEST EDITOR
M. Sridhar

ARTICLES

BOOK REVIEW

BOOK BEAT

LETTER TO THE EDITOR