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HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN INDIA AND WORLD : A STUDY

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Translation plays an important role in creating the category of 'world literature', a term that has acquired new currency in this era of globalization. Commenting on essays by Susan Stanford Friedman, Rebecca Beasley, Jessica Berman, Eric Bulson and Laura Doyle, I suggest that the global spread of modernism and its local flowerings need to be understood through the vigorous translation activity that accompanied it.

Translation is an ancient literary activity caused to survive the most ancient literatures in India like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Now translation has gained a particular place in Indian Literatures in English, because the rising contact with native Indian languages has proved to be one of the inevitable activities and parts of any language literatures in India.

Translation from both European and non-European languages was an indispensable element in the climate of Indian modernist writing, especially as printed in the poetry magazines of the early twentieth century. The simultaneous local and cosmopolitan character of this modernist literary corpus, far more important and extensive than Indian literature in English, can only be understood through a continuation of the project of modernism's translations.

INTRODUCTION

World Literature cannot be conceptualized apart from translation. In most historical periods as well as in most geographical areas, only a small minority of readers can comprehend more than one or two languages, so that considered from the reader's point of view, world literature consists not so much of original compositions as of translations-that is to say , foreign-language texts translated into the language of the particular community to which the reader belongs, usually the standard dialect, or a dominant language in multilingual situations. Translation thus enables the international reception of literary texts. There's an entire world of literature out there if you just look beyond what was written in your native tongue. Major works in other languages are being translated into English all the time, meaning that there's no time like the present for you to enjoy books from places like Russia, Egypt, Mexico, and other nations around the globe.

At the same time, translation is fundamentally a localizing practice. Every step in the translation process, starting with the selection of a source ext, including the development of a discursive strategy to translate it, and continuing with its circulation in a different language and culture, its mediated by values, beliefs, and representations I the receiving situation. Far from reproducing the source text, a translation rather transforms it by inscribing an interpretation that reflects what is intelligible and interesting to receptors. The transformation occurs even when the translator tries to maintain a fairly strict formal ad semantic correspondence. The complex of meanings, values, and functions that source text comes to support in its original culture insures that any translation will at once fall short of and exceed whatever correspondence a translator hopes to establish by supporting different meanings, values, and functions for its receptors. This ratio of loss and gain allows a translation to be constructed as an object o study that is relatively autonomous from the source text but always tied indissolubly to receiving situation.

As a result, translation deepens current definitions of world literature. If world literature is "characterized by the opposition between the great national spaces, which are also the oldest- and, accordingly, the best endowed- and those literary spaces that have more recently appeared and that are poor by comparison", (Casanova 2004:83), then intercultural relations in which translation figures are, in any historical moment, not just asymmetrical but hierarchical. All but two of the works in *Invitation to World Literature* are translated from a language other than English. The two works in English, *The God of Small Things* and *Things Fall Apart,* have themselves become world literature in part through the many translations that have been made into other world languages.

Let us have a look at the translation tradition of India because translation has a chequered history in India. The earliest translations seem to have happened between Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali and the emerging languages of the regions and between the same languages, and Arabic and Persian. Indian narrative and knowledge-texts like Panchatantra, Ashtangahridaya, Arthshastra, Hitopdesa, Yogsutra, Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhagavad-Gita were translated into Arabic between eighth and ninth centuries; there was an intense exchange between Persian and Indian texts. Sanskrit texts especially Bhagavad-Gita and Upanishads came into contact with other Indian languages during the Bhakti period producing great bhasha texts like Jnaneshwari, a translation of Gita by the Marathi Saint poet Jnaneshwar and several free translations of the epics, especially Ramayana and Mahabharata by the saint-poets of various languages. For example one may look at the Ramayana adaptations of Pampa, Kambar, Malla, Ezhuthacchan, Tulsidas, Premanand, Eknath, Balaramadasa, Madhav Kandali or Krittibas.

In the early centuries of the Christian era, Buddhist texts were translated into Chinese and later into Tibetan. Apart from these northern connection, as attested by Arab sources there was considerable interaction between the Hindus and pre-Islam Arabs, on the west. Not much direct evidence remains but it is acknowledged that Hindu mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy travelled to the west in this phase. Even after the advent of Islam on Alberuni's testimony, the relationship of give and take continued. From the eleventh century onwards with the rise of modern Indian languages, Sanskrit techniqual and cultural texts began to be transferred to those languages—Assamese, Marathi, Kannada, Telugu, Bengali and many other—as a method of preserving those texts through diffusion. At the same time, translations began to be made into Persian, Zain-Ul-Abedin (1420-1470), the enlightened ruler of Kashmir, established translation bureau for bilateral rendering between Sanskrit and Persian. Dara Shikoh's Persian translations of the Upanishads and Mulla Ahmad's rendition of Mahabharata are among the major landmarks along this stream. In the seventeenth-eighteenth century, the great Sikh Guru, Guru Govind Singh set up a bureau and had a large number of Sanskrit texts translated into Panjabi.

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, the encounter with the west resulted in a complex, bidirectional, cultural-intellectual relationship. In the fields of science, engineering, and in new disciplines such as politics and economics, English became the donor language for translations into Indian languages. In the fields of philosophy, religion, linguistics and literary theory, Sanskrit renewed its role as a donor language for translations into English and other European languages. In fact in the nineteenth century, Europe discovered India as much as India discovered Europe and the mutual influence was perhaps equal. By 1820, all the major universities of Europe had chairs in Sanskrit prestige. As the century progressed, Sanskrit Studies increasingly shaped the European mind. All the major European minds of the nineteenth century were either Sanskritists or, on their own admission, had been deeply involved in Indian thought—Humboldt, Fichte, Hegel, Goethe, Schopenhauer, Kant, Nietzsche, Schiller, Shelling, Saussure, Roman Jacobson. The list is impressive. In 1839-40, Otto Bohtlingk brought out an edition of Panini's Astadhyayi with German comment on rules and an index of techniqual terms with glosses. In 1841, N.L. Westergaard brought out an edition of the Dhatupatha—enumeration of Sanskrit verb roots—with Latin gloss and references. In 1858, W.D. Whitney brought out his translation into English of Atharvaveda Pratisakhya. In 1874, Lorenz Franz Kielhorn published a translation into English of Nagojibhatta's Paribhasendusekhara.

Let us turn our attention now to the translation activities in the British period. Though Macaulay's Minute and the Anglicists victory in the debate with the Orientalists marked an end to whatever translations were encouraged from English into regional languages, the translation activity around Sanskrit still continued as we noted earlier due to Sanskrit's role as donor language. Furthermore, despite the multilingual character of the Indian communities, the masses which shared a common heritage were largely illiterate but deeply immersed in their respective oral cultures. They did not have to transverse further beyond the confines of their respective languages; almost all the languages had indigenous versions of classical epics such as Ramayana and Mahabharata. So even if the British support was lacking for translation between Indian languages, a situation that has not become much better in contemporary times despite much talk and felt need for such translations, the awareness created by the filter language, English, and the fall out of the freedom movement which brought Indians from all regions and corners of the county together, did generate considerable translation activity. The nationalist writings of V.S. Khandekar in Marathi and Bankim Chandra Chatarjee in Bengali became available to readers in their own native languages. Besides, the campaign to popularize science led to European textbooks being translated into Sanskrit, Hindi, Marathi, Bengali and other local languages. Translation during this period became part of larger process of resistance to alien domination and a determining factor in the expression of cultural identity and the reassertion of the native self. The colonial period saw a spurt in translations between European languages and Indian languages, especially Sanskrit. While there were exchanges between German, French, Italian, Spanish and Indian languages. English was considered privileged by its hegemonic status as it was used by the colonizers. The British phase of translation into English culminated in William Jone's translation of Kalidasa's Abhijananashakuntalam. Shakuntalam as a text has now become a marker of India's cultural prestige and one of the primary texts in Indian consciousness. This explains how it came to be translated into more than ten Indian languages in the 19th century. The (colonial) British attempts in translation were determined by the orientalist ideology and need for the new rulers to grasp, define, categorize and control India. They created their own version of India while the Indian translators of texts into English sought to extend, correct, revise and sometime challenge the British understanding though the whole battle was fought around ancient texts rather than the contemporary ones. Raja Rammohan Roy's translations of Shankara's Vedanta and the Kenand Isavasya Upanishads were the first Indian interventions in English translations of Indian texts by Indian scholars. It was followed by R.C. Dutt's translations of Rig-Veda, the Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata and few classical Sanskrit plays. These translations were meant to challenge the Romantic and Utilitarian notions of Indians as submissive and indolent. Then came a flood of translations by others like Dinabhandhu Mitra, Aurobindo and Rabindra Nath Tagore to name only a few. Translations between Indian languages also began around this time, though in a limited way. The reality however is that English still remains inaccessible to even the literate majority in India, and the real empowerment of these sections is possible only through translations of significant literary as well as knowledge texts in Indian languages. **Gandhiji's** views on translation may be relevant here: I consider English as a language for international trade and commerce and therefore it is necessary that a few people learn it… and I would like to encourage those to be well versed (in English) and expect them to translate the masterpieces of English into the vernaculars." He even felt that the adoption of English as the medium of education might prevent the growth of Indian languages.

The Postcolonial scene brought new dimensions to the language and translation activities. A crucial decision in this regard was to create division of states on the basis of regional languages which kindled regional linguistic pride and acted as an impediment to any single language successfully supplanting English as the common national link language. Translation remains the most powerful tool for better understanding among cultures. Within Postcolonial contexts, translation can be looked upon as policy, as prioritization, as empowerment, as enrichment and as culture learning. To turn our attention to the Indian situation again in the years after independence, or "new Nationhood" (Sujit Mukharjee), Indian literature in English translation has been published under various circumstances. There have been public as well as private enterprises. The Sahitya Academy and the National Book Trust both fully funded by the government of India are supporters of literary publications under the public enterprise.

During the twentieth century, the development of communication theory, the expansion of the field of structural linguistics and the application of linguistics to the study of translation effected significant changes in the principles and theory of translation. Good literature written in any part of the world in any language now made available to the rest of the world through translation. Tagore translated his Gitanjali originally written in Bengali into English which won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. This is the Indian translation literature history.

Thus the history of the world and the history of the translation being closely entwined, there is no doubt that most of the world's past comes to us through translation. All throughout history, translation has enabled the dominant social groups to understand and control the dominated social classes; it has also allowed these lower classes to have access to otherwise unattainable writings that have contributed to the enrichment of their knowledge, as well as changing people's lives and perspectives regardless of social class or standing. In modern times, the advancement in technology, the need for instant global communication, and the never ending migration of people around the world confirm the everlasting importance and necessity of translation as a tool for economic, political, cultural, religious advancement. Hence:

> "Translators have invented alphabets, helped build languages and written dictionaries. They have contributed to the emergence of national literatures, the dissemination of knowledge, and the spread of religions. Importers of foreign cultural values and key players at some of the great moments of history, translators and interpreters have played a determining role in the development of their societies and have been fundamental to the unfolding of intellectual history itself." [Woodsworth: 65].

After the review of the history, it is time to discuss how Indians respond to the activity of translation. I'm trying to change the academic notion of the word 'translation' and making it more homely. Let us look at ourselves in our everyday speech activity. We are most of the times translating from one language into the other. Many of us use at least three languages, one at home, another on the streets, still another at our office. When we narrate at home what happened in office, we are translating, and vice versa. This isn't just an aberration of urban life. We have many examples of this from ancient times, e.g. Adi Shankara had used two languages: Malayalam in Kaladi and Sanskrit everywhere he went. And he traveled a lot from Kanyakumari to Kashmir through a complex web of languages. Dilip

Chitre, a noted bilingual poet, must have used at least three languages, Marathi at home, Hindi and English everywhere he went. Many Marathi poets and writers did the same, because we live in India in an ambience of languages. The word 'mother-tongue' doesn't mean what it means in Europe. Conrad is an exception writing in an alien tongue. We can count such geniuses in Europe on our fingers. But many of our writers in India, some of them best in our times, spoke a different language at home. Masti and Putina spoke Tamil at home and the great poet known for his magical use of language, Bendre, spoke Marathi at home. This is true of large number of writers in Hindi who speak Rajastani, Bhojpuri, Panjabi, Awadhi, and many other languages related to Hindi. The characters in their fiction may be actually speaking these languages and they are rendered for us in Hindi. More significant than this in our understanding of what constitutes a text is a unique Indian phenomenon often bypassed. Kalidasa's Shakuntalam isn't a text in single language. There are some poets who used three languages to compose poems, e.g. Shishunal Sharief, a Kannada poet, have poems where the first line is in Kannada, the second Telgu and third in Urdu. He came from an area where these languages are spoken, and hence his audience could understand his compositions. They were listing to the silence beyond the spoken word—especially to the silence celebrated in a variety of words. Along with this free play of languages, which existed in an ambience allowing for shifts and the poets of the past in Indian Languages could acquire the territory of Sanskrit for their vernaculars. The use of vernaculars never seemed to threaten free communication with others, isolating each language group in its own territory. Such a process of cultural inclusion and quit synthesis has gone on India for more than a thousand years. First it was the language of Gods making way for the languages of common people, now it is the official domain of English making way, however reluctantly, to the vernaculars in the process of the empowerment of the people. Translation, oral as well as textual, was the principal mode in the past as well as in the present for such negotiations. When languages which do not travel (as they lack imperial power) still undertake spiritual and intellectual journeys into the experiential richness of the other languages (which travel and therefore assume universality), then we don't seem to bother much to be literally true to the languages from which we translate. We have to digest anyhow these languages of power, lest they dominate us. We rarely translated the Sanskrit word-as- mantra, in which the shabda is supposed to be both sound and sense to the believer. But we unhesitatingly adapt and change the narrative texts, even when they are composed in the language of Gods or of the white men who ruled us. In Kamba's Tamil Ramayana, the cursed Ahilya becomes a stone, and not a disembodied voice as in Valmiki's Ramayana. And it was not Dryden alone, who tried to make Shakespearean tragedies into comedies; many Hindi, Marathi and Kannada writers did it too. India has been able to digest several influences through her long history; it was mainly because of these vernaculars, the unquenchable imaginative hunger of the people who speak these languages.

To add here that these languages with a difference: they have a front yard of a self-aware literary tradition, as well as a backyard of unselfconscious oral folk traditions that have never been discontinued during the millennium. The oral traditions that flourish in the backyard have vigour as well as unfailing sense of what is alive on the tongues of men and women without which a literary language can become heavily artificial. Isn't Salman Rushdie translating from Mumbai Hindi which is the mixture of several languages and dialects in many of his creative and rich passages? The best effects of Arundhati Roy lie in her great ability to mimic the Syrian Christian Malayalam. Raja Rao's path-breaking *Kanthapura*, although it is written in English, is a basically Kannada novel in its texture as well as narrative mode—deriving both from the oral traditions of Karnataka. With most of the truly creative Indian novelists in English, who seem to have made contribution to the way the language English is handled it would venture to make this remark: for them to create a unique work in English is to transcreate from an Indian language milieu

CONCLUSION

A Russian Proverb says: ***"Translation is like a woman: if she is faithful, she is not beautiful; if she***

is beautiful, she is not faithful.. The best translation is one that meets your needs and preferences, and that is compelling to you as a reader. If you are reading for literary interest and pleasure, you may be most interested in a translation that has a writing style that you find engaging.

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