

also the Indian womanhood. She combines the finest Indian traditions with the positive aspects of modernity. She is aware of the evil of traditional Hinduism because her grandmother became a Sati. Sahgal is not a militant feminist she feels strongly about female- exploitation and male sarcasm towards the issue of women's identity crisis. She demands social justice for women, and her focus is on her freedom. She places the woman at the heart of the tradition-modernity issue; the woman becomes the site where the battle between the two is fought. It is clear that as far as the status of women is concerned, Sahgal is completely against what she perceives to be tradition. Sahgal works out a kind of synthesis between tradition and modernity. She accepts some aspects of the former and rejects others; likewise, she accepts some aspects of the latter and rejects others. But what she rejects and accepts is not clearly indicated, either by the critics or by Sahgal. The author, however, does tell us quite categorically that she sees tradition as being the main cause for the enslavement of women. Her women rebel against such traditions, which would force them to suffer silently, without redress.

Anita Desai is a well-known Indian feminist writer who represents the pain and conflict of the modern educated women who struggle between tradition and modernity on the one hand and individuality and independence on the other hand. The women characters in their novels choose to fight and protest against the traditional and culturally accepted norms and currents of society. They are the rebellious women who seek self-discovery, self-respect, Self-autonomy and self-govern as they are caught between feudal values and the fast approaching new life. Shashi Deshpande (1938) is one of the post-independence Indian woman fiction writers. She is known for her sincerity and ability in voicing the concerns of the urban educated middle class women. Her novels reflect the extent of Indian cultural issues. She is a dynamic woman writer on Indian English literature. Her works reflect the image of the urban educated middle class women. *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980) Shashi Deshpande's first published novel is a representation of traditional position of women in patriarchal society as silent sufferers of the burden of the past and tradition. She promotes the idea that women must try to come out of their suppressed position to recognize their individuality. Kamala tai the mother of Saru in *The Dark Holds No terrors* is a traditional woman from the Brahmin caste while Saru the protagonist of the novel is well educated medical student representing modernity. Just because Saru is born as a girl the mother always discourages her every time she gets a chance. Once when Saru and her brother Dhruva go out to play in the water, Dhruva drowns and subsequently dies. But the mother blames her saying: Why didn't you die? Why are you alive and he dead? (*The Dark*, 34-35) When it comes to Saru's relationship with her husband, Saru in her speeches to the youthful female audience reveals that a modern Indian woman is a myth and if the girls want to be married happily she says should walk a few steps behind her husband and A wife must always be a few feet behind her husband. If he's an M.A, you should be a B.A. If he's 5'4" tall, you shouldn't be more than 5'3" tall. If he's earning five hundred rupees, you should never earn more than four hundred and

ninety-nine rupees. (The *Dark*, 137) These are a few instances from the novel where Shashi Deshpande brings out the rigid discrimination of man and woman in the patriarchal society. In another novel *That Long Silence*, she tells us the story of man and woman from woman's point of view and of wife and husband from the wife's point of view. She expresses the silence of the women protagonists Jaya as expression of the silence of the modern Indian housewife. Shashi Deshpande's success lies in her representation of real life experience. She truthfully depicts the inner conflict of Jaya and her quest for the self-identity. The novel withstands its integrity from the fact that Jaya is a convent educated – English – speaking lady with a literary taste. It portrays the conflict raging between the narrators split self and the housewife. Jaya represents urban and middle class woman. Her upbringing demands the suppression of the self. Her paint up feelings makes her neurotic she is content to play the role of a caring wife. *That Long Silence* is the masterpiece of feminist writing in Indo- Anglican fiction raises the status of Shashi Deshpande among the writers of the present day. The novel highlights the image of middle class women sandwiched between tradition and modernity. The novel is about gender discrimination and inequality predominant in society. Here the protagonists raised voice against the role models of the age old patriarchal set up. But she concludes that a husband is a sheltering tree and she plays again the role of an orthodox Hindu Wife.

Thus in this traditional Indian society women though educated are confined to domestic boundary. The fight still goes on in spite of modern outlook . In such conditions the women still long for a change, because they never can be treated as an individual in the traditional patriarchal society. As women don't want to be named as arrogant human beings they respect tradition. They keep hands on both levels that of tradition and modernity. Even if women are crumpled between these two they make diligent attempt to find their own space in the society. So women on the whole only try to balance between tradition and modernity without neglecting the past nor accepting the present.

References :

- Ansari, Shaukat, Mohammed. (2012). *Depiction of women's Dilemma's in select poems of Kamala Das: A Review*. Language in India, (vol.) 12, 677-686.
- Chernyshova, Anna, (2014). *Chronicling Indian women's tryst with tradition and modernity*. Russia and India Report.
- Deshpande, Shashi. (1990). *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. India, Penguin Books.
- Deshpande, Shashi. (1989). *That Long Silence*. India, Penguin Books.
- Paranjape, Makarand, (1994). *The crisis of contemporary India and Nayantara Sahgal's fiction*. World Literature Today, (vol.) 68.No.2.
- Prof. Jha, Ganganand. (29-Mar-2011). *Tradition and Modernity*. Retrieved from <http://boloji.com/>
- Renganathan, Mala, (2009). Indian Woman at the Cross Roads: A Study of Shashi Deshpande's heroines. *Journal of Literature, Culture and Media studies*, (vol.) 1, 71-78.
- Thakor, D.G. (2012). *Woman Empowerment in The Dark Holds No Terror*. Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal, (vol.) 1, 1-6.



Local Chutney for a Global Gourmet?: Language and Representation in Indian Literature in English (Translation)

- Hemang Desai

Abstract: Postcolonial writer as well as translator indulges into complex form of intercultural communication through their texts that boldly undertake transmission of 'meaning' as a cultural artifact into a disparate linguistic and cultural system. Postcolonial theory has tried to theorize the politics of abrogation and appropriation as a way of negotiating the representation of realities of native experience and specificities of culture. Accordingly, linguists and cultural theorists have tried to devise various mechanisms through which English language as a signifying practice can be twisted and molded so that it can be, what Salman Rushdie called, 'chutneyfied' or Indianized. In African context, this endeavour of nativization has had its own success as well as failure. However, in multicultural Indian context, it remains a moot point whether a standardized, homogenous model of English called "Indian English" can be imagined considering the sheer diversity of languages and associated cultures, worldviews and cosmologies and whether it can represent existential realities apolitically. The paper also raises issues of canon and extra-textual factors that impinge upon the transmission of cultural content and underpin the politics of representation.

Keywords: Translation, postcolonial theory, language, representation, chutneyfication norms, readership

Chutney has come to assume metaphorical significance in the narrative of colonial encounter between India and the white man probably because of its capacity to tickle and titillate the western palates. In its culinary avatar, chutney's phenomenal popularity was documented long back in the high noon of British imperialism when a dictionary *Hobson-Jobson* (1886, 1986) described it as "a kind of strong relish...the merits of which are now well known in England" (Yule & Burnell, 1986). Coincidentally, after almost a century of success as an innovative cuisine, chutney struck the western palate once again in 1981 with publication of *Midnight's Children*, now in the form of a postcolonial agenda for linguistic hybridization. Whether Rushdie's chutneyfication of English brought about by peppering the language with Hindi and Urdu words and phrases could realize the postcolonial vision of "...in one way or another, to resist colonialist perspectives" (Boehmer, 2005: 3) is suspect, but what is certain is that the linguistic chutney delighted the literary palates of the west thoroughly and the rest is history now. On both the occasions, it is to be noted, the chutney served to realize the exotic fantasies of the white man without in any way lightening the burden that he allegedly carried on his shoulders. Be that as it may, but the terrible side effect of the chutneyfied pill forced down the writers and translators of the colonized world turned too strong and lasting to wear off. Especially, after the

theoretical realization in seventies of twentieth century that the text both literary translator and a post-colonial writer essentially try to transpose is the cultural text i.e. the systems of language, literature, cosmology and so on, it was vociferously expressed and expected that chutneyfication is one of most effective strategies by which the cultural transfer can be accomplished. Thus believably, “The task of the interlingual translator has much in common with the task of the post-colonial writer; where one has a text, however, the other has the metatext of culture itself. (Tymoczko, 21)

It might validly be contended that the similarity in the tasks of a translator and a postcolonial writer like Rushdie notwithstanding, the extent to which the two have accomplished it through chutneyfication has been limited and vastly uneven. Rushdie may have been a self-enacted “translated man” in the material sense of the term in as much as he flew across from the Third world to the First world, but his ability to translate the cultural landscape, say for example in his booker-winning novel, has been legitimately questioned and criticized. Harish Trivedi (1999) has critiqued the brazen way in which Rushdie has 'translated' Hindi and Urdu expressions out of context in *Midnight's Children* which goes to show how incomplete, shallow and expedient his understanding of the Indian cultural landscape is. Such an inadequacy is also a trademark of another American writer of Indian origin Jhumpa Lahiri who is at times forced into the category of post-colonial writers. The novelist attempted to cover up her insufficient understanding of the Indian realities she depicts in her work by taking criminal recourse to the concept of translation. She said, “I am the first person to admit that my knowledge of India is limited, the way in which all translation are.” (Lahiri, 118) In the same self-congratulatory narrative, she goes on to translate her fundamentally materialist(ic) and earthly exercise into an ontological argument “I translate, therefore I am.” (Lahiri, 120) without knowing that Cartesian philosophy of privileging deduction over perception wouldn't hold the theoretical ground in the postcolonial context dominated by politics of representation and power relations. The paradox in cases of both these immensely successful writers is that they profess translation, especially the semantic variety they connote through their ambiguous and digressive assertions, as an indispensability without actually practising it. Indispensability it may be in this sense, but not for the people who are represented in such cultural translations but for readers for whom such translation are initiated. As is put very explicitly by Prof. Trivedi, “In this version, cultural translation is not so much the need of the migrant, as Bhabha makes it out to be, but rather more a requirement of the society and culture to which the migrant has travelled; it is a hegemonic western demand and necessity.” (2010: 196) If the term translation, even when used metaphorically, is to suffer such (mis)contextualization and abuse, it should best be contained within its conventional conceptual boundaries in which it essays the transfer of textual (cultural) material from one signifying system to another. If Rushdiean or Lahirian translation of a text for its smooth

accommodation and oleaginous representation in the western socio-literary climate is to constitute, by an unthoughtful extension, the understanding of interlingual translation, it is evidently a redline flashing to the praxis of the postcolonial translator. The fact that no translation of a postcolonial minority literature has been as popular as Rushdie's works in booming literary bazar called the west goes perhaps to explain that the practice of postcolonial translation has been comparatively free of crimes of assimilation and misrepresentation.

Even at the risk of mouthing a cliché, let me admit that a neat homology between the source text and translation is chimerical probably because of the differential time and space of their creations. Consequently, a translator has to be selective in the aspects "...of the text to be transposed in translation (e.g. linguistic fidelity, tone, form, cultural content or some combination thereof.)" (Tymoczko, 1999: 23) Such a selective approach surely involves opinions, biases and judgments, at times subjective but mostly ideological, that the translator or any outside agency in authority over him/her cherishes. It is precisely in this space of selectivity that the translator's subjectivity and postcolonial ideology strive for mediation, self-assertion and resistance against hegemonic and homogenizing discourses. Gideon Toury has marked this space as governed by what he calls translational norms which he classifies into initial, preliminary and operational types. (Baker, 1998: 164) Out of these preliminary norms influence the choice of a text or a writer or a genre and so on in accordance with the needs of a patron or taste and expectation of readers, or standards of literariness extant in the target literary system. Thus a writer representing a minority culture in the post-colony writing about lives, worldview, custom etc. of a people who speak a dialectal variant of a post-colonial minority language is least likely to be selected for translation unless the context requires such a representation under a commissioned project. The prospects of selection would further be reduced if the poetics of such a text doesn't fit into the matrix of a specific understanding of what is literary and what is not. If the overall structure i.e. generic, social and taxonomic etc. and what is called the rhetoricity i.e. metaphoric, metonymics and linguistics of the text are not sufficiently recognizable or visualizably exotic, understandably there will be decline in the levels of interest that such a work can generate in readers and consequently publishers. For example, western canon of literature privilege written over oral literary tradition, confide in irony and understatement as most powerful and aesthetic figures of speech, brand didacticism or instructional texts as unimaginative, uphold projection of 'universal' values over the particular or national allegory etc. Within such a literary frame, a tribal, dalit or any other minority writer wouldn't easily fit because literary complexion and cultural substratum of his/her work would be remarkably different from even a mainstream Indian writer writing in one of the scheduled languages, let alone English. Here it would be apposite to mention Andre Lefevere's radical formulation, which he calls 'refraction' (1988), to posit that all literary activities which are

directly or indirectly involved in generating or imparting meanings like criticism, translation, anthologization, literary historiography etc. rewrite a text to validate, valorize or redefine the value structures of a canon.

The second sphere of mediation within the space of selectivity aligns with Toury's operational norms which unfold in terms of the strategies used by a translator to transfer aspects of source text that fall outside the compatibility zone of the semantic circles drawn by two languages, often designated "information lead" in theoretical terms. This load consists of "...elements of material culture (such as foods, tools, garments), social structures (including customs and laws), features of the natural world (weather conditions, plants, animals)" and the whole range of intertextuality picking up allusions to myths, archetypes, belief systems enshrined in a cultural superstructure. The web of intertextuality becomes dangerously intricate and intertwined in a multi-lingual, multicultural country with a colonial history. However, on the brighter side, the scope of translator's mediation and agency increases significantly in this domain as compared to the realm of preliminary norms. Depending upon the selection of strategic norms, in Gideon Toury's (1980) words, a translator ends up making either an "adequate translation", i.e. one that transmigrates the cultural substratum of original text as much as possible, or an "acceptable translation" i.e. one that either readily compromises / erases the metonymic specificities of the original in the interest of readability and comprehension or radically supplants them with the metonymies of target culture and literary system to ensure that the translation becomes popular and widely accepted in target readership and literary canon. Yet another dimension of acceptable translation, which is seen to have unfolded in the (con)texts of postcolonial English writers, is where the elements in the source text are misrepresented either because of the inadequate knowledge of the cultural field of the source text, as in case of Rushdie, or still worse, the need to satisfy the orientalist fantasies of the target readership. This is seen to have happened quite famously in Tagore's auto-translation of *Gitanjali* (Sengupta, 1990) on the one hand and a number of instances in postcolonial English fiction, for example in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* (1991) where a paratextual device of internal paraphrase describes a *granthi* as "a plump smiling, bowlegged Sikh priest..." (CI, 1991: 30)

While the politics of representation complicates the process of translation at one level, at another a train of paratextual devices like introductions, glossaries, footnotes, maps, appendices and commentaries, in spite of being a sturdy vehicle to contextualize the cultural metatext, make the lexical and generic texture of the translation alien and unwieldy. Here again, the canonical concept of literary texts superimpose the norm of fluency and readability on translation and judge it as outsider in the native literary system and aesthetic climate. Thus the question to ponder over is to what extent a postcolonial translator can resist the cultural hegemony and literary dominance of west in a context which is heavily governed by patronage and readership. Can the translator perform an ingenious balancing act whereby the information load of the source text is

amply transmigrated without offending the squeamish literary sensibilities of the reader who doesn't share metonymic and cultural references of the original? Concomitantly and more importantly, can the postcolonial translator determine which elements in the cultural metatexts should travel completely and which other partially? All these are pertinent questions to ask especially when the neo-liberalism and globalization provides the First world instruments of domination and technology of colonization. While there are no easy answers to them, to think that these are rhetorical questions is to lose faith in the very principles that animate the postcolonial movement. If Rushdie and Lahiri of the world can't hold the beacon, stalwarts like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o have led the vanguard of agitation for the speech of the subaltern and compelled the reader to hear him/her on his/her own terms. After churning out several successful novels in English verbalizing radical postcolonial agenda, Thiong'o took a conscious decision to switch to his mother tongue Gikuyu for creative expression. The creative compulsions and concerns for the empowerment of his native language that undergirded his decision are movingly articulated by him in his book *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986). Even as a postcolonial author using colonial tongue for creative articulation, Thiong'o intentionally took recourse to a resistant strain of writing in which he left cultural metatext completely unglossed allowing it to evolve on its own through context or collocation. Such a radical strategy, which in terms of theory of translation is identified as foreignization (Venuti, 1995), definitely raises the access bar for non-native reader as it demonstrates the otherness of language and the cultural difference of the source text.

On the home turf, the postcolonial strategy of 'abrogation' and 'appropriation' as a means to seize "the language of the centre and replacing it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonial place." (Ashcroft et. al 1989: 38) has been used quite effectively, before the chutneyfication model introduced by Rushdie, by a vanguard of Indian English writers led by Raja Rao in his novel *Kanthapura* (1938). The novel's deft use of linguistic strategies like collocational deviation, semantic shift, loan words, calque, syntactic disruptions and literal translation etc. to convey Indian realities and cultural milieu has been discussed comprehensively (Kachru, 1989; Mukherjee, 1971) and upheld ceremoniously as a model for several generations of Indian English writers many of whom like Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai have enhanced the paraphernalia by introducing code-mixing and code-switching in their novels. However, even after putting together such a solid repertoire of techniques and chutneyfying devices to 'indianize' the English language, the question that would still invariably stare us in the face is "Can a standard homogeneous category of Indian English be conceived?" And here, even with a distinct sense of regret and defeat, it has to be admitted that this is a rhetorical question. This is because "The act of writing in English is not 'merely' one of translation of an Indian text into English language, but a quest for a space which is created by translation and assimilation and