Translation in Asia

Theories, Practices, Histories

Edited by Ronit Ricci and Jan van der Putten

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The field of translation studies was largely formed on the basis of modern Western notions of monolingual nations with print-literate societies and monochrome cultures. A significant number of societies in Asia – and their translation traditions – have diverged markedly from this model. With their often multilingual populations, and maintaining a highly oral orientation in the transmission of cultural knowledge, many Asian societies have sustained alternative notions of what 'text', 'original' and 'translation' may mean and have often emphasized 'performance' and 'change' rather than simple 'copying' or 'transference'.

The contributions in *Translation in Asia* present exciting new windows into South and Southeast Asian translation traditions and their vast array of shared, interconnected and overlapping ideas about, and practices of translation, transmitted between these two regions over centuries of contact and exchange. Drawing on translation traditions rarely acknowledged within translation studies debates, including Tagalog, Tamil, Kannada, Malay, Hindi, Javanese, Telugu and Malayalam, the essays in this volume engage with myriad interactions of translation and religion, colonialism, and performance, and provide insight into alternative conceptualizations of translation across periods and locales. The understanding gained from these diverse perspectives will contribute to, complicate and expand the conversations unfolding in an emerging 'international translation studies'.

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Introduction

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Asia is the world's largest continent with a number of its most densely populated areas and most diverse linguistic and cultural traditions. It is also the birthplace of several of the oldest and most sophisticated civilizations in human history. Notwithstanding these facts, and despite recent advances in translation studies scholarship and its expansion to include languages and translation traditions not previously examined, the field of translation studies still needs to broaden its scope further to encompass more of Asia's translation traditions. The histories of translation into, and from, many Asian languages, although long and complex, to a large extent remain obscure or, at best, fragmentary. Especially lacking is theoretical conceptualization and analysis of what, in fact, were the dominant ideas about translation in different Asian societies, and how these ideas were articulated, implemented, resisted and practised. Exploring these elements will enrich current debates not only in the field of translation studies but also in those of religion, literary studies and history, enabling us to better understand movements of cultural transmission which had profound effects but have been largely left on the sidelines of academic scholarship.

Translation scholarship has tended to limit itself to an understanding of cultural transmission between different well-defined communities and nations, or interlingual transfer, dominated as it is by a Western academic tradition that has increasingly privileged monolingualism as one of its norms in the course of the twentieth century. However, many Asian societies are multilingual: in the Republic of Singapore, for example, Mandarin, Malay, Tamil and English are all official languages, while additional languages are used in daily social intercourse. A similar situation is prevalent in many other Asian countries – India, China, Philippines, Pakistan, to name a few – while languages in Asia are often used across national boundaries, as in the examples of Tamil spoken in India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore, and Malay designated as the national language of Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Brunei. Further, the current map of Asian nation states is by and large quite recent: reading it for the purpose of understanding translation trends reveals little of how translation was perceived and practised in earlier times in regions that were (and are) highly diverse linguistically. To understand the history of, and present-day attitudes towards, translation in Asia we must imagine a very different map. We must also consider contexts in which the same individuals used different languages for different purposes (trade, religious studies, daily speech), creating multiple opportunities for translation not just across nations or communities but within particular locales, across generations, genres and scripts.

Although the influence of Europe and its colonial conquests in Asia has been profound,

many societies have preserved some basic characteristics of their culture prior to Western domination. Thus many Asian cultures, for instance, have maintained a primary or secondary oral orientation that has important consequences as to what people in these cultures consider as text, how they produce texts, what they consider as 'original' and 'genuine', and their practices of conserving and transmitting cultural memory. The study of cultural transmission or translation traditions in Asian societies can inform the academic discipline of translation studies and enrich it with new insights precisely because many of the Asian traditions have an oral orientation and most Asian societies are multilingual. Such exploration can uncover some of the earlier traditions now largely obscure, marginalized in part due to an acceptance in modern times of European ideas about precision, originality and authorship that have filtered into the way translation is understood and evaluated.

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With the aim of examining such issues and enriching the field of translation studies with new perspectives, we organized the workshop 'Translation in Asia: Theories, Practices, Histories' in March 2009. Selected essays from that workshop – in revised and expanded form – became the basis for this volume. We wish to express our gratitude to the Asia Research Institute and the Department of Malay Studies, both at the National University of Singapore, for their generous support of the workshop, as well as to all the scholars who participated, presented their work and engaged in stimulating discussions. Despite the workshop's inclusive title, meant to attract the broadest possible array of relevant research topics, it would be either presumptuous or naïve to attempt to encompass the whole of Asia in the workshop, or produce a volume about an imaginary 'Asian translation tradition' as its outcome. Therefore we chose to focus on a variety of South and Southeast Asian languages, all hitherto little studied (or entirely neglected) by translation studies scholars.

As always, this volume draws inspiration from earlier scholarship and builds upon it. In recent years, several scholars have alerted us to the effects of globalization on translation processes (Cronin 2003) and called for an internationalization of translation studies (Tymoczko 2007) while others have engaged specifically with translation traditions in various Asian societies. Looking back to the mid 1990s, two books that explored translation in Southeast Asian contexts in particular, Vicente Rafael's *Contracting Colonialism* (1993, about Tagalog) and A. L. Becker's *Beyond Translation: Essays Towards a Modern Philology* (1995, on Burmese, Malay and Old Javanese) are particularly noteworthy. More recently, important contributions have included Rose's *Beyond the Western Tradition* (2000), Theo Hermans' two edited volumes titled *Translating Others* (2006), the essays in a special issue of *The Translator* dedicated to translation in China (Cheung 2009), and Henri Chambert-Loir's encyclopaedic edited volume on the history of translation in Indonesia and Malaysia (*Sadur* 2009).

In particular, this volume expands on and complements Eva Hung and Judy Wakabayashi's *Asian Translation Traditions* (2005). Many of the challenges discussed in their volume are ones that we faced in our work as well. These include the dearth of

scholars working on the less well known Asian languages who also engage with the field of translation studies, the resulting limited knowledge and embryonic state of the study of particular translation traditions, the need to introduce basic background information into the essays so that they speak to a non-specialist audience, the frequent absence of textual data such as the date, author and source language of translated texts, the mention of which is expected in Western scholarship, and the need for caution in the balancing act of not imposing Western models or standards inappropriately and yet ensuring a certain quality of scholarship that will meet readers' expectations.

Hung and Wakabayashi's book focuses on East and Southeast Asia, with chapters divided between these two regions. The emphasis in our volume is different and centres on South and Southeast Asian translation traditions, most of which do not appear in the earlier volume. Together, Hung and Wakabayashi's volume and our own represent an in-depth and broad survey of a significant number of translation traditions across South, Southeast and East Asia.

Translating Asia: Theories, Practices, Histories is made up of eleven essays that explore translation traditions in Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu, Javanese, Tamil, Malay, Cebuano, Tagalog and Hindi, and the multilingual conditions prevailing in present-day Singapore. It is important to note that among Asian regions Southeast Asian literatures and translation traditions have likely fared the worst in terms of the attention accorded to them in existing scholarship. For example, in Baker and Saldanha's otherwise excellent *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (2009), only a mere five pages are dedicated to translation in Southeast Asia. In other volumes devoted to broad and comparative translation histories the situation is much the same, if Southeast Asia is mentioned at all (Delisle and Woodsworth 1995; Rose 2000; Hermans 2006). Our volume thus seeks to fill a certain void by contributing to a better awareness and appreciation of the diversity and richness of Southeast Asian translation traditions.

South Asian traditions, the other component of our volume, have fared better within existing translation scholarship (Ramanujan 1989, 1991; Gopinathan 2000; Trivedi 2006; Pollock 2006) but their breadth and diversity are still far from understood, with certain languages, like Bengali or Hindi, receiving much more scrutiny than, for example, Malayalam, Telugu or Tamil. The essays in this volume explore some of these less well-known traditions. In addition, the inclusion of essays on both South and Southeast Asian translation traditions within a single volume allows a glimpse into the many shared, interconnected and overlapping ideas about, and practices of translation that were transmitted between these two regions over centuries of contact and exchange.

The essays are not bound by a certain period in the history of a geographical region or stage in the translation tradition of a culture, but rather touch upon multiple issues related to translation and point to many paths for further research. Thomas Hunter's 'Translation in a World of Diglossia' considers the use of the term 'translation' when applied to conditions in the pre-modern Indonesian Archipelago, where translation must be understood as standing alongside a more general tendency to develop and enrich local languages with lexical and stylistic inputs from a transnational idiom (here Sanskrit) with the conscious aim of producing high status dialects, what Pollock (2006) has termed 'cosmopolitan vernaculars'. Hunter pays special attention to the emerging

field of 'contact linguistics' as a tool for studying how complex social interactions are negotiated through code-switching, the modelling of elaborated codes and the development of linguistic ideologies.

Writing of a different region, period and language but engaging with related questions on the relationship between cosmopolitan and vernacular, Torsten Tschacher in his 'Commenting Translation: Concepts and Practices of Translation in Islamic Tamil Literature' explores different visions of translation as presented by Tamil Muslim authors. Throughout the history of Islamic literature in Tamil, from the sixteenth century onwards, authors highlighted the Arabic (and, occasionally, Persian) origin of the topics they wrote about, and in the prefaces to their works reflected on the relationship between the Arabic source and the Tamil version they themselves created. Tschacher considers the case of the long narrative poems of the *kāppiyam*-genre that present translation as a process of mediation. In addition, he discusses extant cases of 'commentary' as translation, particularly numerous from the nineteenth century, and concludes by assessing how changes in literary practices in the nineteenth century brought about changes in the way translation was understood among Tamil-speaking Muslims.

In the next chapter, 'Before Translation?,' Peter Friedlander challenges the notion, advanced by Harish Trivedi (2006), that there was a 'non-history' of translation in Hindi prior to the nineteenth century. He considers differing conceptualizations of 'language' and 'work' in both English and Indian speech registers today known as 'Hindi,' and suggests that just as these terms cannot be assumed to possess universal meaning, neither can the term 'translation'. Rather, 'translation' must be considered within particular cultural contexts. Through this analysis, as well as an exploration of Hindi medical treatises from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, some of which explicitly claim Persian ancestry, Friedlander concludes that there is strong evidence for a Hindi translation tradition that goes back further than previously believed.

Continuing this thematic thread Ronit Ricci in her chapter stresses the importance of considering 'translation' within particular historical and cultural contexts, exploring how Javanese authors and scribes understood and practised translation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Although the evidence regarding translation found in Javanese manuscript literature of this period is often scant, she suggests that by reconstructing the vocabulary used to describe the re-writing of texts anew, as well as the motives and justifications offered for this practice, we can expand our knowledge of how translation was understood, how such an understanding changed over time, and how it may have differed from translation paradigms elsewhere.

The ways translation was conceptualized and practised also feature in Haslina Haroon's essay. Haslina observes that translation history is a key component in translation studies which so far has received very little attention where Malay is concerned. The aim of her essay, 'Early Discourse on Translation in Malay', is therefore to examine the discourse on translation in a Malay text from the nineteenth century and contribute to a more nuanced picture of this major Southeast Asian translation tradition. To this end she examines ideas about, and concepts of translation as expressed in the published memoirs of Abdullah Munsyi, who collaborated with European and American missionaries in their efforts to translate the Bible, thereby introducing new concepts of translation into the Malay literary tradition.

Vijayakumar M. Boratti considers another colonial era translation context, one that touches upon the interactions between translation and religious tendencies. In 'Rethinking Orientalism: Administrators, Missionaries and the Liṅgāyaths' he traces the concepts and attitudes surrounding the translations of two European scholars who worked on translations from Indian languages such as Telugu and Kannada into English. With these translations also came knowledge of the religious diversity of the subcontinent. Liṅgāyathism was only one of these religions which were 'translated' to the West, with the circumstances surrounding its 'translation' indicating that Orientalist translations were not always aimed at cultural domination. Rather, Vijayakumar shows how translations were produced in collaboration with indigenous scholars and how these translations evoked conflicting feelings among the translators towards the Liṅgāyaths.

Jose Mario C. Francisco's 'Translating Vice into Filipino: Religious, Colonial and Nationalist Discourses on Sloth' also highlights the relationships between translation, colonialism, and religion by exploring how the capital sin of sloth was translated into Tagalog from the sixteenth century onwards, and what discourses it prompted from Spanish and American colonialists as well as Filipino nationalists. This study of the translation of 'sloth' in Philippine society reveals how translations shape and are shaped by the dynamics of social change and, in this case, how different interests – religious, colonial and nationalist – constructed how vice (and therefore also virtue) were understood.

In 'Translations in Romanized Malay and the Revival of Chineseness among the *Peranakan* in Java (1870s-1911)', Didi Kwartanada explores the charged relationship between script, translation, tradition and modernity through the example of the Chinese community in Java, Indonesia. He argues that in the late nineteenth century Java witnessed the birth of the 'enlightened Chinese', a group who wished to be both modern subjects and 'authentic' Chinese simultaneously. One of their most urgent tasks was to translate sources related to Chineseness: religious tracts, biographies of the sages, and the Manchu legal codes, among others. Such translations, important in the shaping of a new Chinese identity, were produced in Malay using Roman script, giving rise to what Kwartanada claims was one of the great ironies of Indonesian history: that the 'invention' of Chinese tradition was served not by the Chinese language and scripts but by Romanized Malay.

The next chapter continues the thread of how 'translation' and language choice are connected to identity and cultural practices. In ''Riddling-Riddling of the Ghost Crab': Translating Literature in Cebuano', Erlinda Alburo introduces terms for translation used in the Cebuano language of the Philippines in addition to discussing the position of this language vis-à-vis the dominant Tagalog/Filipino. She highlights the connection between translation and other art forms by showing how the concept of literary translation performed by Cebuano writers is expressive of native aesthetics that are visible in Filipino art. These include a lack of boundaries, a love of ornament, spontaneity as originality, and a preference for indirection. Three Cebuano terms – *bagay*, *lagdà* and *tagik* – that are used in describing artistic productions are shown to reflect a coherent system that cuts across the arts, and that have implications for both creative writing and translation. Through several examples Alburo discusses how native terms for translation suggest processes of introducing canonical texts from the outside into a given culture, of appropriating texts

and extracting from them what is 'usable' or relevant, of transferring or recycling texts from one language to another; and of explaining an enigma or mystery.

Paul Rae's chapter takes us to the theme of translation and performance, examining the two as overlapping and intertwined realms, especially in a multilingual society like Singapore. In his contribution, 'In Tongues: Translation, Embodiment, Performance', Rae notes that if we understand 'translation' in its expansive, rather than narrowly linguistic, sense, then all performance entails a process of translation, and all translation has a performative dimension. However, he goes on to show how the interest of Euro-American 'intercultural' theatre makers in the performance forms of the Asian region has led to a downplaying of linguistic complexity on stage in favour of a mode of gestural transfer. The second part of his essay discusses the production, performance and reception of a Singaporean play he directed, *National Language Class*, that took the form of a bilingual – Malay and Mandarin – language lesson with the audience. As the performance developed, the actors used the simple words and phrases taught to explore the shifting relationships between language, ethnicity and national identity. The chapter examines both where translation takes place and what it means in a multilingual, improvisational, oral, collective, and pedagogical environment.

Finally, S. Sanjeev's 'On Castes, Malayalams and Translations' invites us to consider the connections between translation and identity politics in a south Indian context. In his chapter Sanjeev introduces Kerala as a region with a multi-layered past of strong colonial, nationalist and communist movements, a region that also possesses one of the most vibrant print cultures in the Indian sub-continent. Language and translation, Sanjeev argues, have played a crucial role in imagining, shaping and sustaining a homogeneous category, 'Malayali'. Within this broader cultural and historical context he examines instances of translation in Chandumenon's *Indulekha* and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, especially as they relate to caste. At the end of the chapter Sanjeev shows the reader how, as a translator, he strives 'to get around the confines of his identity' in translating a book like *Why I Am Not a Hindu* written by the Dalitbahujan author Kancha Illaiah.

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Despite the essays' diversity there are several themes that emerge within the collection and offer an interesting comparative perspective on the social and cultural roles of translation within particular Asian histories. The first theme concerns the interactions between translation and religion, with various religious traditions interacting with different translation traditions to produce multiple outcomes and forms of cultural expression. Touching upon this theme are the essays on Islamic literature in Tamil, Catholicism and its vocabulary in the Philippines, and the work of missionaries in the Malay Peninsula and South India. The latter three essays relate also to another theme of the volume, translation in colonial contexts, which is also echoed in an essay on the emergence of a new consciousness among the Chinese *peranakan* of Java under Dutch colonial rule. The theme of translation and performance is represented in the essay on a bilingual theatre performance in Singapore. Finally, several contributions, including those of Tschacher,

Friedlander, Ricci, Haslina and Alburo, explore how 'translation' has been conceptualized and practised across a variety of Asian contexts by examining local terms employed to describe the act of writing texts anew in another language. The themes of translation and religion, translation and colonialism, translation and performance and the diverse meanings of 'translation' raised in these essays represent important realms of analysis that are central to historical studies within and beyond Asia, opening up many new paths of inquiry and broadening our understanding of the influence of particular translation traditions on social and cultural change.

What ultimately binds these chapters together are the questions of how, in different cultures and diverging time frames, people in Asian contexts have thought about and engaged with issues of transference of cultural material, representations and their ideological aspects, and the transculturation of textual sources. Beyond the goal of raising these questions, in collecting these contributions we have also been motivated by a sentiment similar to that expressed by Salama-Carr (2006:129) who, working on medieval Arab translators in Baghdad, sought to ensure that the voices of these translators be heard and not forgotten. It is our conviction that bringing forth the perspectives of these little-studied translation traditions, to be included in our field's debates, will contribute to, complicate, and expand the conversations of an emerging 'international translation studies'.

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Translation in a World of Diglossia

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Abstract: *This chapter is an attempt to understand 'translation' in the context of a cultural formation that was diglossic for the greater part of two millenia. The cultural formation in question is the 'Sanskrit ecumene' or 'Sanskrit cosmopolis' (Pollock 1996), a world of transcultural contacts that stretched from northwest India to mainland and insular Southeast Asia from c. 200-1500 CE. During this period the spread of Indian religious, political and linguistic ideas and techniques often led to a state of multiple language use in which a high status language (most often Sanskrit or Pali), largely in pedagogical and liturgical contexts, was maintained in contrast to everyday, vernacular languages. Two modes of translation that developed in Java and Bali under such conditions of diglossia are discussed. The first, termed a 'commentarial mode' of translation, was originally based on Indian modes of commentary, but adapted for use in translation of canonical works of the Mahāyāna and 'Hindu' traditions of India into the Old Javanese language. The second mode of translation, termed the 'poetic mode', was consciously developed as literary stylists in ancient Java and Bali strove to develop the Old Javanese language into a sophisticated literary dialect comparable to the Sanskrit used for the 'court epics' (*kāvya*) of India. These two modes of translation have had lasting effects, still visible in contemporary modes of discourse.*

Introduction

Beginning in the middle of the first millennium of the Common Era, a textual record began to be produced in mainland and insular Southeast Asia that attests to the important role played in processes of state formation by priests and mendicants of South Asian religious orders. These visitors from South Asia initially arrived through travel along the flourishing trade routes of ancient Southeast Asia, and soon afterwards began to be assimilated into local populations that henceforth were the major source of acolytes in Buddhist and Hindu religious training. A merging of the ideas of cosmic and social order in the ideologies of these religious institutions meant that they played a very active role in the development of a type of political and bureaucratic organization described by Lieberman (2003) under the term 'charter states'. To oversimplify a complex issue these charter states represent several types of socio-political formation, each with its own distinctive local characteristics, whose organization was mediated by way of inscriptions that on the one hand deal with what Pollock (1996) has termed the 'poetics of polity' and on the other with the documentation of matters of land tenure, taxation, tax relief and social status that were of central importance to the economic basis of the political centre. The arrangements documented in the inscriptions of the charter states typically highlight the role of the political elite in providing economic support for religious institutions, which in turn were often vitally linked to the management of irrigation systems, the support

of handicraft productivity and the modes of cultural production that were made most visible in rituals and performances sponsored by the court centre.

Judging from the number of Southeast Asian languages of the period of the charter states (c. 600-1500 CE) that were enriched through lexical borrowings from Sanskrit or Pali, the early travellers who brought Indic ideas to Southeast Asia must have had a propensity for bilingualism and a religious training that supported the development of bilingual skills. The spread of the technique of writing that runs parallel to the development of specialized linguistic registers in Southeast Asia then suggests that training in the skill of writing must also lie in the background of these international travellers. The technology of writing at once provided the pedagogical basis for the spread of religious doctrine and its expression in conceptions of state and society that were typically formulated in terms of ordered social and cosmological hierarchies. These in turn were linked through the figural and rhetorical resources of emergent literary or inscriptional languages and the repertoire of performing and visual arts that gave a concrete visual form to the poetics of polity (Lieberman 2003).

It is by no means an easy task to accurately reconstruct the history of language contact, bilingualism and code-switching that led in time to the development of the 'high status dialects' that are known to us today through the inscriptional records of the charter states. We know that a considerable time frame must have been involved, and that linguistic processes involving multiple language use led in several important cases to the emergence of 'learnèd diglossia' as a prominent fact of sociolinguistic life in the charter states. And we know that another form of language contact associated with trading entrepots in Southeast Asia led to the development of 'trade languages' and a sociolinguistic situation that can be defined in Bakhtinian terms as 'heteroglossic'.[1] Bearing these two types of multiple language use in mind we can begin to propose refinements to what an earlier generation studied in terms of 'legitimation theory'; we can do so through the study of evidence for sociolinguistic processes that supported the development of local political formations whose strength was often derived through verbal and textual linkages to a larger world of transcultural power and charisma.

This brings us to the question of translation: we know from the evidence of the inscriptional and literary records of the charter states that there was a constant influx of ideas from South Asia, one that runs parallel to the spread of material and artistic techniques throughout South and Southeast Asia. And there is ample evidence to show that much of what was 'imported' in textual terms was assimilated through techniques that fall broadly under the term 'translation'. But what does the term 'translation' mean in the context of diglossia, when multiple language use is the order of the day, and local languages are being moulded to achieve a status in some sense comparable to that of the distant model of Sanskrit?

Based on an examination of the textual basis of Old Javanese studies I will claim in this paper that two distinct forms of textual organization developed within the pedagogical and courtly domains of premodern Java that can be understood in terms of the

[1] See Maier (1993) and Hunter (2002) for studies that examine the effects of colonial linguistic policy on a prior state of mixed language use, resulting in what Maier terms a movement from 'heteroglossia' to 'polyglossia'.

broader field of translation studies. This is not to claim that these were the only forms of text-building that developed within the 'charter states' of the archipelago, for indeed we can easily point to the inscriptional record for evidence of another form of textual organization. However, as I will seek to demonstrate in this chapter, there are two modes of text-building that stand out in terms of translation studies, each developed within a particular sociocultural context and serving particular purposes that were in time generalized to the extent that they left a lasting imprint on the understanding of text-building over a long historical period.

Commentarial and poetic modes of translation in the ancient archipelago

The literature on diglossia is vast, especially as it has been developed to deal with multiple language use in modern societies. Studies that apply the lessons of sociolinguistic models to the study of history are less common, but for South and Southeast Asia are well represented in the works of Pollock (1996, 1998 inter alia). Pollock has made very productive use of sociolinguistic terms as tools of historical analysis in his studies of the effects of a 'culture of diglossia' in terms of what he has called a 'Sanskrit cosmopolis' or 'Sanskrit ecumene' that had profound effects throughout South and Southeast Asia for more than a millennium, beginning c. 200 CE.[2] In order to lay the basis for the discussion to follow I will repeat here Houben's very useful definition of the term 'diglossia' (1996:159). He draws his working definition from the work of Ferguson (1959:336), who describes diglossia as:

> ... a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the languages ... there is a very divergent, highly codified superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature ... which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation.

Pollock (1996:208) has introduced a refinement to the term diglossia that is particularly relevant for the inscriptional and literary records of South and Southeast Asia. He uses the term 'hyperglossia' in order to account for the multiple layering of linguistic forms that is a prominent feature of the 'sociolinguistic landscape' throughout the area he has termed the 'Sanskrit cosmopolis' or 'Sanskrit ecumene'.

Within India 'diglossia' is clearly in evidence in the distinction made from as early as the late first millennium BCE between Sanskrit as a 'perfected' (*saṃs-kṛta*) or 'learnèd' (*śiṣṭa*) language and the 'natural' (*prā-kṛta*) languages. In practice this meant that the keepers of the Vedic, brahmanical tradition understood Sanskrit as the 'upper tier' in a division of sociolinguistic usage between the ritual, liturgical and discursive domains

[2] See Hunter (forthcoming-a, forthcoming-b) for further discussion of Pollock's principles as applied to the study of Old Javanese as a high status language modelled on Sanskrit.

proper to Sanskrit and the vernacular, domestic language of hearth and home. Followers of the *śramaṇa* ('ascetic, world-renouncing') faiths like Buddhism and Jainism, on the other hand, more often chose another Old Indo-Aryan (OIA) language like Old Ardha-Māgadhī as their preferred register for religious teaching and political communications, developing it in time into a literary dialect that rivalled Sanskrit as a high-status register of specialized usage.[3]

In the further history that saw the development of classical Indian culture during the Gupta dynasty (c. 280-550 CE), the development of *kāvya* ('court epics' featuring Sanskrit language, meters and tropes) as the pre-eminent literary form and the related emergence of the world of the Sanskrit drama, the contrast between 'high' and 'low' status varieties of language was replaced by a layering of linguistic forms that maintained Sanskrit as *primus inter pares* among linguistic forms, but gave a place as well to other literary languages that had earlier developed from the Old Indo-Aryan (OIA) or Middle Indo-Aryan (MIA) languages of North India.

In looking at the effects of diglossia on the development of languages like Old Malay, Old Balinese and Old Javanese I have found it useful to use the term em-bhāṣā-ment (hereafter: embhasament). This term is based on the idea that several local vernaculars of Southeast Asia were consciously enriched with lexical, metrical and figural resources from Sanskrit, with the view of achieving a 'perfected language' or *saṃskṛta-bhāṣā*, with a status equal, or nearly equal to that of Sanskrit.[4] The term embhasament is thus meant to capture a process comparable to our modern 'language engineering' which produced high status languages that Pollock (1998) has described under the term 'cosmopolitan vernacular'.[5] Taking the process of embhasament as a linguistic fact of life in pre-modern Southeast Asia that grew out of the conditions of diglossia, I propose here to develop a contrast of commentarial and poetic modes of translation that developed in the archipelago against the background of multiple language use.

Here I think it is useful to call attention to Braginsky's elaboration of a typology of medieval literature that he shows is useful for the study of the ancient literature of the Malay world. In building a picture of the 'lost literature in Old Malay', Braginsky (2004:11-28) speaks of the literature of the Sumatran Malay state of Śrīwijaya (c. 600-1020 CE) as an 'incorporating' or 'joining' literature that was oriented towards a

[3] See Chaterji (1926) for a study that shows that the interactions between *brāhmaṇa* and *śramaṇa* elements of ancient Indian society were at first geographically and linguistically situated. As Deshpande (1993:1-16) has shown, the later support of Buddhism by the Mauryan empire, and their preference for the Ardhamāgadhī form of Prakrit, were not based in geopolitical realities, but can rather be linked to tensions between the priestly (*brāhmaṇa*) and warrior (*kṣatriya*) castes in the Mauryan heartland.

[4] Cf. Peter Gerard Friedlander's contribution in this volume.

[5] Readers of chapters in this volume like the study of translation in pre-modern South India by Torsten Tschacher may note that the term *bhāṣā* has come to be identified in modern time more closely with local, vernacular languages in Indian usage rather than with the idea of a 'perfected language' (*saṃskṛta-bhāṣā*). However, since *bhāṣā* can indeed be understood as referring to a 'perfected language' (*saṃskṛta-bhāṣā*) rather than a 'natural language' (*prākṛta-bhāṣā*) or 'local language' (*deśi-bhāṣā*), the term embhasament can be developed as a tool in critical analysis so long as it is understood that the term is intended to refer to a 'perfected langauge' and thus to a process of bringing a vernacular language closer to the model of a 'perfected language' (*saṃskṛta-bhāṣā*).

'zone-shaping' literature, the Mahāyāna canon of South Asian Buddhism. This rightly suggests a situation of relative dependency, in this case characterized by the linking of court and ecclesiastical centres of Old Malay pedagogy and textual production to South Asian centres like the great Buddhist university of Nālanda in the central Gangetic plain. In this model Sanskrit texts of the Mahāyāna canon that were studied in the pedagogical institutions of Śrīwijaya were at the centre of a series of concentric circles of textual production that moved outward through adjunct texts of the canon to a body of 'folk literature' that was largely oral during the heyday of Śrīwijayan power, but found its way into classical Malay with the emergence of the Hikayat literature.

In this chapter I propose that a commentarial mode of translation was particularly suited to – and indeed grew out of – the conditions of an 'incorporating literature' like that of Śrīwijaya. This commentarial mode is one that grows out of the Indian tradition of commentaries. From at least the mid-first millenium CE it became customary for Indian teachers and commentators to compose extensive commentaries on pre-existing literary, philosophical or theological works that in the simplest form presented glosses on the often-difficult phrasing or lexemes of the original, and in the most complex form represented a discussion of the existing text with the view of producing a new argument based on analysis of the original. An analysis of early pedagogical texts of the Old Javanese tradition, including the *Amaramālā* (a work on lexicography), the *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānan* and the *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan* (two works on Buddhist doctrine passed down in single manuscripts), shows that the 'glossing' type of Indian commentary was taken as a model for these texts, but that the Sanskrit glosses of the Indian tradition were replaced with glosses in Old Javanese. This type of text-building clearly bespeaks a pedagogical method, very likely developed in the oral context of the ancient 'classrooms' of the archipelago, and at the same time an 'incorporating literature that was developed to provide a clear link between the pedagogical practices of the archipelago with distant centers of theological production in South Asia'.[6]

While we do not have any direct evidence for the textual production of Śrīwijaya, several Chinese and Indian travellers have provided glimpses into a vigorous tradition of the study of philosophical, literary and grammatical works in Sanskrit.[7] If we then accept that a strong relationship existed between Śrīwijaya and the Śailendra court centres of Central Java (c. 700-856 CE) and take note of early works in the Old Javanese canon of didactic works like the lexicographical work *Amaramālā* and the Buddhist handbooks *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānan Mantranāya* and *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan*, I believe we can find evidence for a tradition of translation in 'commentarial' form that became the standard practice in pedagogy all throughout the history of pre-modern Java and Bali. I

[6] See Hunter (forthcoming-c) for a study of the application of the methodology of the Indian commentarial tradition to the development of text-building in Old Javanese. I have discussed the important contribution of Goodall and Isaacson (2003) to our understanding of the Indian tradition of commentaries elsewhere in that paper.

[7] One of the most notable of these visitors was the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim I Ching, who reports having studied Sanskrit and works of the Mahāyāna canon in Śrīwijaya for six months during his journey to India of 671-673 CE, and returning there for two more years of study in 687 CE; see further Takakusu (2006).

propose to contrast this commentarial mode of translation with a 'poetic mode' that in some sense may be better understood in terms of 'transcreation' rather than simply as a mode of translation. In describing the 'poetic mode' I intend to develop an argument on the founding of a 'zone-shaping literature' in ancient Java through the conscious moulding of Old Javanese into a literary dialect that drew heavily on Indian models but transformed them into a local idiom that gained enormous prestige throughout the archipelago in the first half of the second millenium CE, and continued to exert an influence on Javanese and Balinese modes of literary production well into the nineteenth century, if not beyond. In my view the commentarial and the poetic forms of translation can be understood as two poles in a continuum of the art of translation in the context of mutiple language use that register two differing sociocultural orientations: on the one hand the urge to maintain links with transnational sources of influence and inspiration through direct replication of the textual influences flowing through those links, on the other the urge to minimize the 'otherness' of transnational influences and to reformulate them into terms that emphasize the distinct characteristics of local formulations of state, society and culture.

The beginnings of the commentarial mode of translation[8]

If the earliest stage of the development of literary cultures in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago was indeed one that can be spoken of in terms of a 'connecting' or 'incorporating' literature that linked textuality in the archipelago to models developed on the Indian subcontinent, then we might reasonbly ask if there are Indian modes of text-building that may have found an early home in the pedagogical institutions of ancient Sumatra and Java.

We do not have to look far to find evidence for this kind of influence, for in fact the entire didactic tradition in Old Javanese language, largely devoted to theological, philosophical and practical aspects of religious life, was composed in a 'commentarial mode' of translation, whose models can be found in several types of South Asian expository composition generally grouped under the Sanskrit technical term *vyākhyā*. Based on a complex of prefixes (*vi* + *ā*) and the verbal root *khyā,* the nominal form *vyākhyā* can be glossed as 'explanation, exposition, gloss, comment, paraphrase' (cf. Monier-Williams 1981:1036). *Vyākhyā* early on became a general term for the tradition of advancing the line of thought in a particular discipline by providing a detailed commentary on a core text, often including a discussion of 'prior positions' (*pūrva-pakṣa*) on a given point of discussion and the synthesis of a new set of propositions representing the commentator's contribution to the argument

[8] Looking to the chapter in this volume by Torsten Tschacher it occurs to me that one might also speak of what I term the 'commentarial tradition' as a technique of 'mediated translation' corresponding to the *urai* of the Tamil Islamic tradition, which were often transformed into poetic works known as *kāppiyam* (from Sanskrit *kāvya*, a courtly epic in metrical form). While the majority of poetic works of the Old Javanese tradition are not directly based on an earlier prose translation, works like the Old Javanese *Kakawin Brahmāṇḍa-purāṇa* are an exception which mirrors the *urai-kāppiyam* relationship. In addition, not a few *kakawin* drew their inspiration from prose works of the Parwa genre that represent 'mediated translations' of the Indian *Mahābhārata.*

at hand, and presumed to represent an advancement on prior contributions to the argument at hand (*siddhānta*).

In looking at early texts in the didactic textual traditions of ancient Java it becomes immediately apparent that the *vyākhyā* system of commentary was adapted in the archipelago to the needs of translation. If we look to the work of Goodall and Isaacson (2003: xliv–xlvii) in their survey of the tradition of commentary on the *Raghuvaṃśa* of Kālidāsa we find that the earliest phase of textual production in the Old Javanese didactic tradition is strongly reminiscent of the third among six types of commentary that they have identified in their work. As they describe this form of commentary "the words of the root text are given in the order that they appear therein, but intermixed with explanations and observations" (Goodall and Isaacson 2003:xlv). The examples I adduce from the early history of the commentarial tradition in Old Javanese show that this pattern is followed in the exposition of theological and philosphical doctrines in works like the *Sang Hyang Kamāhāyanan Mantranāya* (SHKM) and *Sang Hyang Kamahāyanikan* (SHK), but with phrases in Old Javanese replacing the Sankrit glosses, except in a minority of cases where synonymous expressions are drawn from the Indian tradition of commentary itself, and are subsequently glossed in Old Javanese.

One example of this type of commentarial exposition can be found in the *Amaramālā*, an Old Javanese work on lexicography that is of particular importance in that it is dedicated to the Śailendra monarch Jitendra, who may have been ruling in central Java in the mid-eighth century CE.[9] In one of the initial passages from this work describing the virtues of King Jitendra we can observe the *vyākhyā* form of 'translation' from Sanskrit to Old Javanese in a form that retains lexical borrowings from Sanskrit as part of the Old Javanese vocabulary, as well as the conversion to an Austronesian form of morpho-syntactic organization that is typical of Old Javanese. In the following, the Sanskrit phrases of a presumptive original are given in italic font, the Old Javanese phrases in regular font. The translation is single since the Old Javanese phrases simply recapitulate the meaning of the Sanskrit phrase. That the words *yoga, dhyāna* and *samādhi* are retained in the Old Javanese accentuates the fact that these aspects of the process of yoga as known in the *Yoga-sūtra* of Patañjali were considered common knowledge among religious aspirants by the time of composition of the *Amaramālā*. Here we see a process of translation that proceeds alongside the processes of lexical enrichment I have described under the term embhasament:

> apayan *yoga-dhyāna-samādhi-karma-kuśala* sira widagdha ri kagawayan ing yoga-dhyāna-samādhi |
> For *skilled in the performance of yoga, dhyāna-samādhi* he is skilled in the performance of *yoga*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*.[10]

[9] While further research is needed to shed more light on the identity of Jitendra, Krom (1926:145-46) places him in the mid-eighth century CE. If this is the case, the *Amaramālā* may predate the inscription of Sukabumi (Śaka 726, 804 CE) that to date has been considered the first evidence for the existence of the Old Javanese language. We will leave aside here the question of whether it is correct to speak in terms of 'monarchs' in the Central Javanese period (c. 732-928 CE), when political formations may have had a more local character.

[10] All translations are by the author, unless otherwise noted.

In this short example of the commentarial mode of translation we see that the composer of the Old Javanese translation has given a long Sanskrit compound followed directly by its gloss with an Old Javanese clause that slightly expands upon the meaning of the Sanskrit original by phrasing the gloss as an independent clause. This type of 'translation by glossing' is representative of the many thousands of examples of the commentarial technique that can be found in the didactic texts of the Old Javanese tradition.

As the 'commentarial' mode of translation continued to be developed for pedagogical purposes in the archipelago, a new form of textual organization began to emerge that was to have long-lasting effects on all the later prose traditions of pre-modern Java and Bali. In this development South Asian influence is still evident in that each major change of topic is marked by the introduction of a four-line verse in Sanskrit, which is followed by a translation and further exposition in Old Javanese. This type of text-building strategy might be spoken in terms of 'translation dyads', each of which can stand alone as a discrete section of the text, but is linked with other 'dyads' in terms of an over-arching didactic narrative.

An example from the early Buddhist handbook *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānan Mantranāya* shows us that in what appears to be the first phase of the development of a 'dyadic technique' a full verse from Sanskrit is juxtaposed with a mixed Sanskrit-Old Javanese translation and exposition that followed the *vyākhyā* format described above, and indeed incorporates a Sanskrit gloss on the original that may have originally been part of a Sanskrit commentary.[11]

a. Sanskrit text, with translation[12]

svam ātmānaḥ parityajya tapobhir nātipīḍayet /
yathāsukhaḥ sukhaḥ dhāryaḥ sambuddho 'yam anāgataḥ //31 //

Having abandoned (attachment) to your own being; don't oppress yourself through excessive austerities.
Your happiness and what you must bear should be according to your ability; in the future you will become a fully realized Buddha.

[11] Not all commentators agree that the SHKM is an early text. My assumption of an early date is based on the nature of the 'dyadic' technique employed in the text, and the evidence of de Jong (1974) in his summary of the findings of the Japanese scholars Wogihara Unrai (1915) and Sakai Shiro (1950). These two scholars have shown that the Sanskrit portions of the SHKM can be traced to the Chinese version of the *Mahāvariocana-sūtra* and to Chinese and Tibetan versions of the *Adhyardhaśatikā-prajñapāramitā-sūtra.* Two versions of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* were brought to China by Wu-hsing and Śubhakara and translated into Chinese between 724-25 CE by Śubhakara and I-hsing (cf. Jong 1974:633-35). This suggests that the doctrinal basis of the SHKM was likely to have been well known in Java by at least the ninth century, and that the composition of the SHKM could easily have taken place not long afterward.

[12] I have used italic font throughout this work for all citations from Sanskrit sources, as well as for titles of works in Sanskrit or Old Javanese.

b. Mixed Old Javanese and Sanskrit translation and commentary

> *kalinganya/ patiwar ikâwak-ta/ svakāyanirapekṣata˙ kita haywa tṛṣṇa ring awak/ tapobhir nātipīḍayet haywa pinisakitan ring tapa/haywa wineh gumawayakĕn kawĕnang-nya/yathāsukhaḥ sukhaḥ dhāryaḥ* yathāsukha lwiranta t' gawayak[ĕ]n ng bo[d]dhimārgga/ *sambuddho 'yam anāgata˙* haywa gyā hyang buddha kita dlāha
>
> The meaning is: you should abandon your body to its fate. *You should be indifferent to your own body,* Don't be attached to your body. *Don't oppress yourself through excessive austerities.* You should not bring pain to yourself through your austerities. Don't let them gain mastery over you. *Your pleasure and what you must bear should be according to your ability.* You should carry out the way of Buddha in a form that is to your own ability. *In the future you will become a fully-realized Buddha.* Don't try to rush your becoming a Buddha in the future.

In both examples cited above we can see that in the context of the religious institutions of the ancient archipelago 'translation' can be understood as following the format of the Indian tradition of commentaries precisely because in this way it best served the needs of an 'incorporating' literature that linked the pedagogical concerns of local religious institutions to centres of textual productivity and monastic training of the Indian subcontinent. It was natural that this mode of translation would proceed side-by-side with the processes of lexical enrichment that in time led to the emergence of Old Javanese as a full-fledged cosmopolitan vernacular, a literary idiom fully capable of bringing an aesthetic focus to political life and of transforming mundane events into a mythical form that found expression in the rituals, performances and literary genres of the court.

The poetic mode of 'transcreation'

Before returning to a brief review of the further history of the commentarial mode of translation let us turn here to a consideration of the *kakawin*, Old Javanese court epics modelled on the Indian *kāvya* that illustrate at once the efflorescence of Old Javanese as a cosmopolitan vernacular and the emergence of a zone-shaping literature in the archipelago. If we follow the line of reasoning of Aichele (1969), the beginnings of this literature can be traced to the composition of the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* and the metrical Śivagṛha inscription of 856 CE. However, these first visible forms of evidence for composition in *kakawin* form cannot be understood without reference to a long 'prehistory' in the religious institutions of Java and Sumatra, where the study of the quantitative meters and the figures and tropes of the Indian tradition must have proceeded alongside study of canonical works of the Mahāyāna tradition as well as important early 'court epics' (*kāvya*) like the *Raghuvaṃśa* of Kālidāsa and the *Bhaṭṭikāvyam* (BK) of Bhaṭṭi, which we know served as a model for the first sixteen of the twenty-four cantos of the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* (or Old Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa,* OJR).

In its first stages, as exemplified in the OJR, the poetic mode of translation often

enough can be seen as a conventional transformation of the meaning, lexical content and syntactic structures of an original into a 'copy' in the target language. This is evident, for example, in the translation of the figure *ekāvali* in the *Bhaṭṭikāvyam* (verse 2.19) into a counterpart in the OJR (2.19). While differences in syntactic organization and lexical choice between the two versions are significant, the 'purport' *(tatpārya)* of the two versions is similar enough to allow a single translation in English:

na taj-jalam yan na sucāra-paṅkajam
na paṅkajam tad yad alīna-ṣaṭpadam |
na ṣaṭpado 'sau na juguñja yaḥ
kalaḥ na guñjitaḥ tan na jahāra yan manaḥ || BK 2.19 ||

sakweh nikāng talaga tan hana tan patuñjung
tuñjungnya tan hana kirang pada mesi kumbang |
kumbangnya kapwa muni tan hana tan paśabda
śabdanya karṇ[ṇ]asukha tan hana tan manojña || OJR 2.19 ||

There were no ponds without lovely lotus-blossoms,
No lotus-blossoms that did not conceal a bee,
No bees that did not raise a melodious clamour with their buzzing,
No melodious buzzing that did not captivate the mind.

Materials from the Indian tradition continued to be 'translated' into the kakawin idiom for a period of over 700 years from the time of the appearance of the OJR, and continued to be put to use in the Balinese tradition of kakawin well into the nineteenth century. But even in a work like the *Sumanasāntaka*, which can be shown to have been modelled on Cantos V-VIII of the *Raghuvaṃśa* of Kālidāsa, conventional translations are few and far between, and we may rightly speak of a process of 'transcreation' rather than translation. In the case of an author like Mpu Monaguṇa, who composed his *Sumanasāntaka* in thirteenth-century East Java, passages that can be shown to be direct translations from the *Raghuvaṃśa* appear to respond to the need to convey precise information crucial to the development of the narrative. In the far greater number of cases where there appear to be parallels between the *Sumanasāntaka* and *Raghuvaṃśa*, it is clear that Mpu Monaguṇa found inspiration in his model, but translated it into a form that drew the original into the more familiar contexts of his own life and times. This can be demonstrated by setting *Raghuvaṃśa* 6.29 alongside verse 74.3 of the *Sumanasāntaka*, where the theme explored in either case is a comparison of the heroine with the goddess or goddesses who are willing to share the royal palace with the hero:

RV 6. 29
nisargābhinnāspadam ekasaṃstham asmin dvayaṃ śrīś ca sarasvatī ca |
kāntyā girā sūnṛtayā ca yogyā tvam eva kalyāṇī tayos tṛtīyā ||
The goddesses Śrī and Sarasvatī by nature live apart, but with [the king of Angga] they have found a single dwelling place.
Only you, oh auspicious one, through your beauty, your pleasant speech and

dance-like movements, are fitting to form with them a triad.
Sum 74.3

ndan heman tuna rājalakṣmi satĕwĕknya n rājya nirdewatī
hetu śrī naranātha tan sthiti pijĕr lunghā madewāśraya
de ning hyun ira n anghyanga ng nagara mogha n kewĕhan tan hana
nghing rakryan pakarājalakṣmi nira marma de nirângundanga
Now it is a pity that [the king] lacks a 'royal goddess of fortune' (*rājalakṣmī)* with the result that his realm is without a goddess.
That is why the king is unstable and preoccupied with seeking refuge with the gods,
For he seeks to draw near to a goddess so that his realm will immediately be free of difficulty,
You alone, my lady, are worthy to be his *rājalakṣmī*; that is why he will invite you to join him [as his queen].

While the convention holding that the prosperity and well-being of a kingdom depended on the king's attaining a 'royal goddess of good fortune' (*rājalakṣmī*) was certainly well-known in India, it was if anything more highly developed still in the courts of East Java. Here the synonymous term *hyang puri*, 'goddess of the palace', was also well-known, and poignantly portrayed in later works like the *Pārthayajña*, where Arjuna comes across the *hyang puri* of his brother's lost kingdom in the wilderness, longing to return to her rightful place in the capital.

It is at this point that we can begin to speak of 'transcreation'. Here we do indeed have a transfer of ideas and inspirations from a Sanskrit original. But, in contrast to the norms of the commentarial mode of translation, these sources of inspiration are never directly brought into view, but are instead constantly refigured in terms of the lexical, syntactic and figural resources of a local poetic idiom with a long history of development and deep roots in the nurturing soil of local beliefs, rituals and political processes.

The further history of the poetic mode

When we look to the continuation of the poetic mode in literary discourses of the post-Majapahit period in Java and Bali we do not have to look far to find plentiful examples of this richly semiotic mode of poetic expression that has its roots in processes of translation, or perhaps more accurately, of transcreation.

In the Balinese case, from among a great number of possible examples, we can cite here a verse from the *Gaguritan Pan Balang Tamak,* a work of the twentieth century composed in the Javano-Balinese metres called *macapatan* in Java, *gaguritan* or *Sĕkar Alit* in Bali. Here, in a hymn of praise addressed by the protagonist to the supreme deity the idiom of shared verses of longing and affection between paramours that was first developed in the context of the kakawin literature of East Java (c. 1035-1478 CE) finds expression once again in the work of an anonymous Balinese poet who was

clearly well-versed in the poetic idioms of the past:

> gaḍung kawula pangeran / tan sah umangolta rari / yaning (h)ulan pakanira / ingwang taranggaṇā ngalih / galih suka parĕng umijil / yen sira nirada / mandung maněh ta catakā nglayang / baya satata ngulati / punang jawuh /
> śridanta sumiramana /
>
> I am a twining vine of *gaḍung* lilies, never ceasing to embrace you, little sister; if you become the moon I will seek to become the stars, happily emerging together each night; if you become a dark rain cloud, I will take wing as a *catakā*, as if ever seeking (your raindrops); then I will become the falling rain, that will sprinkle its drops lightly on blossoms of the *śridanta*.[13]

An example from the *Wédhatama*, a work of the nineteenth-century Javanese court famous for its combination of subtle poetic effects with a summation of the tenets of courtly philosophy, gives us a Javanese example of the enduring strength of the poetic mode. Here the poet describes the virtues of Panembahan Sénapati, revered to this day as the founder of the Mataram dynasty and as a man of potency in both the political and spiritual realms. In this passage the poet praises Sénapati for following the ancient practice of 'wondering in search of beauty' (*lālana*) to achieve poetic aims that were identified in the poetic mode with the achievement of ascetic or political aims:

> samangsané pasamuwan / mamangun marta martani / sinambi ing saben mangsa/
> kala-kalaning asepi / lālana tèki-tèki / gayuh géyonganing kayun /
> kayungyun eninging tyas / sanityasa pinrihatin /
> puguh panggah cegah dhahar lawan néndra /
>
> Whenever he was in company
> He strove to be gentle and comforting,
> But at the same time whenever
> He retired to solitude,
> He would roam with the sole aim
> Of grasping what his heart yearned for;
> He was captivated by peace of mind
> And constantly took pains to find it –
> Firmly and steadfastly he resisted the desire for food and sleep.[14]

While Goenawan Mohamad (1994) has rightly noted that in many ways the voices of modern Indonesian literature represent a rupture from the poetic traditions of the past, if only because they are composed in a language that is rarely the mother tongue of Indonesian writers, there are traces of the poetic mode of text-building in the work

[13] The Balinese text is cited from the Kantor Dokumentasi edition (1994:78).
[14] The text and translation of *Wédhatama* 1.11 are those of S. O. Robson (1990:26).

of many contemporary writers. Beyond this we might also benefit from further explorations in the ways that the poetic mode has influenced patterns of linguistic politesse and behaviour that are especially marked in the alteration of 'speech levels' in the everyday speech and verbal art of Java and Bali.

The further history of the commentarial mode

While it was first designed to handle the needs of the 'incorporating literature' of a pedagogical system rooted in religious ideologies, in its further history the commentarial mode of translation developed into a mode of text-building whose influence spread so widely that we can speak of it without exaggeration as the single conceivable mode for prose composition for premodern Java and Bali. The first extension of the *vyākhyā* and dyadic forms of composition into another prose genre came with the development of the Parwa literature of ancient Java beginning in the tenth century, an initiative that is especially associated with the patronage of Dharmawangśa Tĕguh (reigned c. 991-1006 CE). While both the *vyākhyā* and dyadic forms of text-building are in evidence in these prose translations of the metrical materials of the Indian *Mahābhārata*, both play a new role in the Parwa. Perhaps their usage in the Old Javanese Parwa literature can best be understood using a Sanskrit term like *pratīka* that refers to single words or short phrases cited from the beginning of a cited verse that provide a clear link to an original text not included in the commentary. We can perhaps extend this meaning to cover the longer phrases, or entire verses, that are used in the Old Javanese Parwa literature to provide clear links to the eighteen books of the *Mahābhārata*.

Many good examples can be found of the use of verse-length *pratīka* in the Old Javanese 'transcreation' of the *Prasthānika-parwa*, the seventeenth book of the *Mahābhārata*, when the five Pāṇḍawa brothers and their common wife Draupadī (Dropadī in the Javano-Balinese tradition) arrive in the Himalaya mountains, close to the gateway to heaven. One-by-one Dropadī and four of the Pāṇḍawa brothers die suddenly and fall to the ground, leaving only Yudhiṣṭhira, 'Lord of Righteousness' (*Dharmarāja*) to enter heaven in his own body. In this case the Sanskrit verses used in the translation have two purposes. First they help to move forward the narrative; second, and more importantly, they provide a higher religious sanction and authority for the explanations that Yudhiṣṭhira gives to his surviving brothers as each one of their small company passes away due to some flaw in their behaviour or character:

> Datĕng ta sira [sang Pāṇḍawa kabeh] ring wukir Himawān, kapwa sirâgawe *yoga,* umandĕlakĕn Bhaṭāra ri hati nira. Amanggih ta sira Wālukāṇawa. Irikā ta sira *bhraṣṭa-yoga*. Sang Dropadī rumuhun tibā ring lĕmah. Mojar ta sang Wṛkodara:
>
> [All of the Pāṇḍawa] arrived at the Himalaya mountains. There they all performed yoga and meditation, putting their trust in the deity in their hearts. Then they came upon the Sea of Sand and their concentration was broken. Dropadī was the first to fall to the ground. Bhīma, he of the wolf-hungry belly, asked:

> "Kakâji mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, tinghalana ta sang Dropadī de rahadyan sanghulun pějah magulingan ring bhūtala, tar wĕnang tumūtakĕn rahadyan sanghulun. Tulungën ta rasika de sang nātha."
> "Older brother, your majesty king Yudhiṣṭhira, behold – Dropadī has died and is lying on the ground, unable to follow you further. Please do something to help her".
>
> "Antĕn i nghulun sang Bhīma, haywa ta kinalarākĕn kapati sarika."
> "Bhīma, my dear younger brother, don't grieve too much over her death."
>
> *pakṣapāto mahān asyā viśeṣena Dhanañjaye* |
> *tasyaitat phalam adyaiṣā bhunkte puruṣasattama* ||
> She heavily favoured one side [in her marriage], treating Arjuna with special attention,
> For that reason today she enjoys the fruit of her past action, oh best of men.
>
> "Lima sānak ta kinabhaktin sang Dropadī, ndan lĕwih pakṣpātanya ri sang Arjuna. Phala ning ulah mangkana ya ta pinanggihnya."
> "Dropadī served five brothers in her marriage, but she made Arjuna her special favourite. Now she has met with the fruit of that action."[15]

This passage might easily be compared to the 'translation-dyads' of the didactic tradition, but here with the crucial difference that the structure-giving properties of the dyad have been enlisted to support the aesthetic shaping of narrative.

As we know from a wide variety of prose texts that include works of Brahmanical cosmology like the Old Javanese *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, early works of Śaivite theology and speculation like the *Wṛhaspatitattwa* and the later Javano-Balinese 'metaphysical literature' (*tutur*), the practices of text-building that grew out of the commentarial mode continued to rely on the *vyākhyā* and dyadic forms of composition. At the same time there is quite often a wide divergence between the Sanskrit phrases or verses that punctuate the text and the Old Javanese 'translations' of these materials. This tendency is already strong in the *Wṛhaspatitattwa,* which may date from as early as the tenth century CE, and is very much in evidence in works like the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* and works like the *Tantri Kāmandaka* that incorporate gnomic verses from the Sanskrit tradition of 'well-turned sayings' *(subhāṣita)* as a major element for structuring a prose narrative. We are thus dealing with a form of text-building that still depends on the commentarial mode of translation, but has considerably expanded the role of the Old Javanese exegesis on the Sanskrit verses used to structure and give authority to the text.

Conclusion: translation in a world of diglossia

We return now to the question of how the commentarial and poetic modes of translation of Indian materials into Old Javanese relate to the question of diglossia. For the commentarial

[15] *Prasthānikaparvan* 2.6. I have given the Sanskrit text as emended by Zoetmulder (1995:158, n.2) rather than as (imperfectly preserved) in Javano-Balinese palm-leaf manuscripts. The Old Javanese text for this passage is cited from Zoetmulder (1995:158, lines 23-30).

tradition the case seems straightforward: this mode of translation appears to represent Sanskrit-Old Javanese diglossia, with Sanskrit the high status variety in a dual layering of languages. But this conclusion fails to take into account the important fact that both Sanskrit and Old Javanese in its emerging literary form must be understood as specialized, elaborated codes that stood in contrast to the everyday speech of the time. We should then speak in terms of Pollock's hyperglossia, a layering of linguistic forms that positions both Sanskrit and its reflection in a developing 'cosmopolitan vernacular' as the specialized codes whose mastery was essential to gaining a place in the inner circles of religious and courtly discourses. The principle of a differentiated social hierarchy is thus both reflected in the layering of language types in textual discourses, and constitutive of difference in that it gives a concrete, textual form to negotiations that are otherwise carried out largely in the ephemeral interactions of sociolinguistic exchange.

Given the importance of the commentarial mode of translation in the Javano-Balinese textual traditions we might wonder if it has had long-term effects that can be studied elsewhere. A number of possible areas for further research come immediately to mind. The first is the question of the structuring of performance narratives in terms of what might be termed 'theatrical diglossia'.[16] This is a technique that is represented today in the Balinese shadow theatre (*wayang*). There the speech of high status characters (the gods and heroes of the Indian epics) is rendered in the form of Old Javanese known in Bali as *kawi dalang*, 'the poetic speech of the shadow play masters', which is then interpreted for the audience in ordinary Balinese by the *pendasar* ('clowns') who accompany the heroes and their arch-foes throughout every step of the action. While several registers of Balinese language are used in the dialogues of the *pendasar*, the essential character of the discourse is one of diglossia, with the speech of the high status characters representing an elaborated code that is accessible only to those who have gained mastery through a specialized education, either in the language of the shadow theatre itself, or in the interpretive communities that take part in *mabasan*, the reading and interpretation of works of the kakawin literature by members of informally organized 'reading clubs' termed *pesantian*.

The poetic mode of translation, which like the commentarial mode can be said to have given rise to a specialized mode of text-building, was originally developed during the period when the kakawin literature (and its language) reached the stage of being a 'zone-shaping' literature for much of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago. The high status of this poetic mode of composition is reflected not only in its preservation as the upper tier in a three-part layering of traditional literary forms of Bali, but in the indelible imprint it left on the court life of Java, which continued to understand the ability to shape the complex language of literary Javanese into finished poetic works as directly reflecting an inner-directed spiritual praxis considered to be the real basis of success in the political life of the court.

In a number of deeply scholarly studies devoted to the later history of Java, Ricklefs (1998, 2007) has called attention to the importance of literary praxis in the development of the mode of Islamic belief and practice that he has described under the term 'mystic

[16] See Hunter (forthcoming-a) for further discussion of the term 'theatrical diglossia'.

synthesis'. The literary products of courtly practitioners of this synthetic form of Islam were not understood as 'entertainments' but as crucial aspects of the practice of statecraft. One particularly telling example comes out in three works composed in Kartasura during the period 1729-1730 CE by the queen mother, Ratu Pakubuwana, in an effort to mould her grandson Pakubuwana II into an ideal Sufi monarch.[17] While her efforts ultimately met with failure they provide us with a significant example of the degree to which literary works that carried forward the poetic mode of text-building were understood as fully capable of serving as 'metaphysical interventions' in the affairs of state.

The poetic mode had emerged in premodern Java as a literary form that was central to the interests of the state, and developed largely by trained experts in the monistic doctrines of Buddhist and Śaivite religious institutions. In its further development on Java the poetic mode continued to be understood as a semiotic system fully capable of mediating between phenomenal and metaphysical realms of existence.

Perhaps the commentarial mode did not remain as strong in Java as it did in Bali. Yet its continued existence is clear in cases like the translation of Quranic quotes into Javanese, where the original and a translation – often expanded into a commentary – are separated by the word *tĕgĕsipun*, 'it's meaning (is)', and may thus rightfully be referred to as translations in the commentarial mode. The commentarial tradition also has a continuing vitality in the pedagogy of modern *santri* scholars when they read from their Arabic language 'yellow books' (*kitab kuning*) and provide for their students a phrase-by-phrase translation of Islamic doctrine into Indonesian or Javanese. One might hold that the *tĕgĕsipun* and 'yellow book' traditions differ from Balinese theatrical diglossia and practices of *mabasan* translation in that the *santri* pedagogy maintains a more rigid separation of local and transnational idioms and has not led to something like a process of embhasament, or a continuing enrichment of local idioms with lexical items originally drawn from a transcultural source. Yet these forms of the commentarial mode not infrequently contribute to the enrichment of local Javanese idioms with Arabic vocabulary and phrases. In this sense they are of a piece with processes of embhasament and thus give testimony once more to the enduring nature of the two modes of translation that have shaped Javanese and Balinese modes of text-building and verbal art for over a millennium.[18]

At the same time the poetic mode, with its richly polysemic texture and its grounding in a Cratylian view of the inseparability of the sound and sense of language, has always been an idiom that facilitated the localization of transnational materials. This mode is as inseparable from the literary styles of courtly Java as it is from the development of the traditional literary modes of Bali, to the extent that I believe we can say without exaggeration that the poetic mode has had continuing effects on the

[17] See Ricklefs (1998) for an illuminating study of these documents and their role in mediating the 'seen and unseen' worlds that were basic to Javanese court interpretations of political and metaphysical realms of existence.

[18] I am indebted to Ronit Ricci for alerting me to the *tĕgĕsipun* mode of Quranic translation and commentary in Java (personal communication, August 2009) and to Nathan Franklin for his comments on the 'yellow book' mode of teaching in East Javanese *pesantren* schools (personal communication, January 2009).

formation of local cultural identities, in the Javanese case even after conversion to Islam from the 'old religion' (*agama buda*) had brought profound changes to the character of religious belief and practice.

In conclusion I think we have shown in this brief study that the commentarial and poetic modes of text-building that were originally developed in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago as techniques of translation have had long-lasting effects that can be studied for a historical period of over a millennium in duration. The study of these modes of translation in terms of a recurrent oscillation between the desire to draw power and energy from transnational sources of inspiration and to domesticate 'outside' influences in terms of local cultural, political and textual discourses means that we can fruitfully apply the study of these modes of translation to the understanding of contemporary discourses, whether these are formulated in terms of the nation, a larger world of transcultural exchanges, or a more local understanding of the question of identity.

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Commenting Translation

Concepts and Practices of Translation in Islamic Tamil Literature

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Abstract: *This chapter discusses the way in which the notion of 'translation' was conceptualized and put into practice in Islamic Tamil literature since the late sixteenth century. Until the beginning of the modern era, it can be shown that 'translation' was understood and performed as a kind of commentary. Poets generally referred to the translations made for them by religious scholars as 'commentaries', and this usage is also born out by the single 'commentary-translation' surviving from the eighteenth-century as well as nineteenth-century theological texts. On the basis of such commentaries, poets then proceeded to compose ornate Tamil poetry. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the notion of 'literal translation' displaced these earlier models of rendering Arabic texts in the Tamil medium, thereby obscuring the 'translatedness' of pre-modern Islamic Tamil prose and poetry.*

Introduction

Religion has provided an important impetus for the translation of texts in Asia. The claim to universality of many religious traditions made texts an important vehicle for spreading knowledge, and often engendered an interest in texts written in different places and languages. Islamic traditions were no exception to this trend, and translations of important Arabic texts into various vernacular languages were common wherever Muslim communities existed. Yet the actual practice of these translations, as well as the way Muslims understood and evaluated them, changed with place and time. Given the importance that translation had for making ideas, notions and precepts available to diverse populations, an understanding of the processes involved in translating texts in Muslim cultures has significant implications for our understanding of historical, religious, and literary developments in these cultures.

South Asian Muslim cultures have participated in diverse ways in these processes of transmitting and rendering texts and concepts into their own idioms. When looking at these processes, a distinct pattern seems to emerge: up to the eighteenth century, South Asian Islamic literatures seem to offer very little evidence of 'translations' in the narrow sense, as renderings of particular texts or passages thereof in the medium of another language. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, and gathering impetus in the early nineteenth century with the introduction of print, direct translations of Arabic texts, especially of the Quran, suddenly seem to transform the landscape of Muslim religiosity in South Asia. In an important article about Islamic Bengali literature, Tony Stewart has suggested that many pre-modern texts should be understood as instances of 'translation' in a broader sense, namely as translations of foreign ideas and concepts into a Bengali idiom. 'Translation' thus should be understood as a fairly open concept

of expressing the concepts of one language through another, without expecting to find 'literal' correspondences between particular 'texts'. That Stewart's ideas are extendable to other parts of South Asia apart from Bengal has been indicated by other scholars as well (cf. Stewart 2001; Eaton 2003:3-5). These ideas offer a new way of looking at pre-modern South Asian Islamic literatures, yet many questions remain to be answered. While Stewart attempts to demonstrate the existence of a practice of translation, we still know very little of how South Asian Muslims themselves understood and conceptualized this process, nor why they came to challenge it in the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

This chapter seeks to address some of these questions by investigating one particular case, that of Islamic literature in the Tamil language of South India and Sri Lanka. Rather than following Stewart's line of enquiry, I will investigate primarily those cases where authors claimed to base themselves on a text in another language, usually Arabic, or where a direct relationship between Tamil and Arabic words or phrases can be established. By focusing on these instances, it is possible to gain an understanding of how translation was understood and communicated among Tamil-speaking Muslims since the late sixteenth century, thereby providing a first attempt at a *long-durée* account of changing concepts of translation in Islamic Tamil literature. As I hope to show, Tamil-speaking Muslims had clear ideas about the process of translating from one language into another, and utilized different strategies for different purposes. A close study of this literature is thus of great value for understanding the nexus between religion and translation not only in South India, but also in the wider context of Asian societies.

Mediated 'Translations': The Case of the *kāppiyam*-Poems

One of the striking features of Tamil textual culture prior to the sixteenth century was, in the words of Stuart Blackburn, "that there were virtually no translations, in the sense of a word-for-word rendering from one language to another" (Blackburn 2003:28), and even after the sixteenth century, according to Blackburn, translation into Tamil was predominantly the work of Christian missionaries. At first glance, this characterization seems to hold true for the early period of the production of Islamic literature in Tamil which stretched from 1572, when the earliest surviving poem was composed, to 1842, when for the first time an Islamic Tamil work was printed (cf. Mahmood Mohamed Uwise 1990; Uvais and Ajmalkāṉ 1986-97). While some texts echo the titles of one or the other Middle Eastern work, on a closer look Islamic Tamil literature seems to be characterized by the thorough 'Tamilization' of its subject material in terms of the handling of vocabulary, prosody and imagery. Again in Blackburn's words, these were "transformations and adaptations" rather than translations (Blackburn 2003:9). Indeed, it is the 'adaptation' of Islamic Tamil literature to the local context that has attracted the greatest attention among scholars. While scholars have noted that there is another side to this process of 'adaptation', namely the 'Islamic' cast of characters and repertoire of stories, the focus has usually been on the utilization of a specific 'local' idiom through which these 'Islamic' elements were recast in a local conceptual world (cf. Narayanan 2000; Shulman 2002). The result has often been a levelling of the tensions and aspirations

voiced by Islamic Tamil texts in favour of a homogenized integration of this set of texts into an undifferentiated master-narrative of Tamil literature (see Tschacher 2010).

Perceiving of Islamic Tamil literature as a set of 'adaptations' of Islamic lore thus has had a profound influence on how this literature has been studied and understood. Ronit Ricci has rightly pointed out that "[w]hether a text has been considered a "translation" or "adaptation"… has had consequences for the way it has been studied, described and presented" (Ricci 2006:139-40). Rather than thinking of Islamic Tamil literature as 'adaptations', she considers various types or strategies of 'translating' employed in this literature. Based on the use of genres, Ricci distinguishes between fitting Islamic stories to existing models of literature, combining a non-Tamil form with a Tamil form, and using new generic forms introduced by Muslim authors (*ibid.*:160-64). Ricci's reinterpretation of the process which led to the production of Islamic Tamil literature helps to bring a range of new questions to the material: how did authors proceed in their task of turning a Middle Eastern model into Tamil? What values and images were attached to that process? What choices were made in the process? We are still very far from an answer to any of these questions, but with Ricci's reinterpretation of the textual record as 'translation', at least the importance of addressing these questions may become clearer.

Ricci's typology is helpful in so far as it allows us to refocus our attention away from the one-sided preoccupation with the 'local' elements of Islamic Tamil poetry towards the processes by which a Middle Eastern model was rendered into Tamil. But in order to understand how the process of translation was conceptualized in this literary tradition, we have to take account of another set of evidence, namely the not infrequent statements by the poets of Islamic Tamil poetry which explicitly identify a specific work as a translation of an Arabic or, rarely, Persian text. In each of these cases, we are presented with an image of 'translation' as a collaboration between a poet and a Muslim scholar, and while "by no means universal, this practice…is evident in the works considered of the highest quality within the tradition" (Ricci 2006:166). One can indeed emphasize this point further: looking at the evidence, it appears as if the explicit claim to have based one's poem on a Middle Eastern model was a generic marker of the long narrative poems known as *kāppiyam*, a term often misleadingly translated as 'epic'. What is striking is that virtually all Islamic poems classified as *kāppiyam* mention the 'translation-process' and the necessary 'consultant' in a separate section of the first chapter, together with information about the patron of the work, the poet and the date of composition. Conversely, articulations of the 'translation-process' were apparently not a requirement in poems not classified as *kāppiyam*, though they do occur in some non-*kāppiyam*-poems.[1] It is significant that there appears to be a close connection between a specific genre and the idea of 'translation' within Islamic Tamil literary culture – it seems that not all genres qualified equally to serve as vehicles of 'translation' from the point of view of the tradition itself.

How is this process imagined in *kāppiyam*-poems? Let us consider the example of one of the earliest Islamic poems in Tamil, Ālippulavar's *Mikuṟācu mālai* of 1590,

[1] Cf. for example *Apūṣakamāmālai* 11 (Ceytakkātip Pulavar 1888); *Nūṟu nāmā* 14 (Ceyyitu Akumatu 1991); *Caiyitattu paṭaippōr* 24-25 (Kuññumūcu Ālim Pulavar 1991).

which describes the famous 'ascent' (*mi'rāj*) of the Prophet to Heaven. In order to gain knowledge of this event, Ālippulavar approached the then judge (*kāli*, Arabic *qāḍī*) of the town of Kayalpattinam or Qāhir, as it is also known, to teach him the content of an Arabic book about the *mi'rāj*:

> Makhdūm Qāḍī 'Alā' al-Dīn,
> Having the power of a Pīr [a Sufi master],
> Sage of the descendents of the Prophet,
> Who was bestowed on Shaykh Muḥammad
> Who lives in Qāhir,
> Where the lotus blossoms and the revelling winged bee roams,
> Explained with affection by creating an elaborate *urai* in the form of a Tamil book,
> Reciting over and over in Arabic the letters [*kaṟupu*, Arabic *ḥarf*] of the book called *Mi'rāj*,
> In which clear knowledge is fixed, unknown to anyone.[2]

Compare this account with one written more than two centuries later, in 1816, by Patuṟuttīṉ Pulavar, who also approached a scholar from Kayalpattinam (here called Vakutai) to obtain a translation of a hagiography of the famous Sufi 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī:

> He who lives in the beautiful town of Vakutai,
> Where lotuses in tanks spread fragrance,
> He who learned the fourteen sciences through a lineage of teachers,
> Resembling the noisy sea,
> 'Abd al-Qādir 'Ālim,
> [who knows] the precious scripture,
> Spoke to convey an *urai* on the book *Khulāṣat al-mafākhir*,
> Which came down [to him or to the poet],
> Rejoicing and pondering over [it].[3]

The extent to which these accounts of the 'translation-process' are conventionalized is obvious, and one could give numerous similar examples. Evidently, audiences had clear expectations about how the composition of a *kāppiyam*-poem should ideally proceed, and poets satisfied these expectations by producing ever new varieties of the same account. It would be hazardous to conjecture about the 'factual' process of translation on the basis of these stanzas. What they present us with is rather an idealized model for the poetic transformation of an Arabic text into a Tamil *kāppiyam*-poem which was culturally shared and agreed upon by poets and audiences alike. The central role in this process is played by the 'consultant', usually identified by his titles (*ālim*, *kāli*, *levvai*) as a religious scholar, who makes the contents of the Arabic (or rarely Persian) root-

[2] *Mikuṟācu mālai* 17 (Ālippulavar 1983); all translations in this paper are mine. Makhdūm 'Alā' al-Dīn was in all likelihood the son of Qāḍī al-Sayyid Muḥammad b. al-Sayyid 'Alā' al-Dīn, whose epitaph can still be found in Kayalpattinam; cf. Mehrdad Shokoohy (2003:284-86).

[3] *Mukiyittīṉ purāṇam* 1.19 (Patuṟuttīṉ Pulavar 1983).

text(s) available to the poet by discoursing about it in Tamil. The ideal 'translation' in the imagery of the *kāppiyam*-poem is thus a mediated one: the poet is able to complete his task of producing a Tamil poem from an Arabic root-text only through the mediation of a Muslim scholar, a process which appealed to the ideal of oral, teacher-to-student transmission of knowledge in pre-modern Muslim societies, an ideal that Patuṟuttīṉ Pulavar explicitly referred to in the above-quoted stanza of his *Mukiyittīṉ purāṇam* (cf. Robinson 1996; Ricci 2006:338-41). This process of mediated translation also appears to have close parallels in the imagery of the Hindu *talapurāṇam*, the versified legend of a particular sacred place or temple, which often depends on Sanskrit originals (cf. Ebeling 2005:31; Shulman 1980:34-39).

Yet there is more to the depiction of the 'translation-process' in Islamic *kāppiyam*-poems than a simple notion of mediation. The central term in the conceptualization of 'translation' in these poems is the Tamil word *urai*. An *urai*, according to the Tamil Lexicon, can be an 'utterance' or an 'expression', but most importantly an 'explanation', 'interpretation', 'commentary', 'exposition', or 'gloss' (see Vaiyapuri Pillai 1982). While one might simply understand this term to signify that the Muslim scholar explained the Arabic text orally, there are good reasons to suppose that a more sophisticated understanding of the 'translation-process' underlies these descriptions. It is noteworthy that the term *urai*, either as noun or as a verbal root, appears in virtually every Islamic poem that describes the 'translation-process'. Verbs like *viḷakku*-, 'to explain', may supplement the description, but they do not replace the term *urai*. This is particularly significant when contrasted with Hindu texts, such as Veṉṟimālaikkavirāyar's mid-seventeenth century *Tiruccentūrttalapurāṇam*. The prologue (*patikam*) of that work simply states that the mediating scholar, one Kiruṭṇa Cāstri, simply 'spoke' (*kūṟa*) the *talapurāṇam* of Tiruchendur, which was presumably in Sanskrit. It is not at all clear whether it was this Kiruṭṇa Cāstri or the poet Veṉṟimālaikkavirāyar himself who 'translated' the text from Sanskrit into Tamil, since Veṉṟimālaikkavirāyar is described in the same stanza as the "ornament of Brahmins…who swam themselves the whole ocean of northern books", i.e. he is described as knowing Sanskrit himself.[4]

The term *urai* to describe the act of providing a translation from Arabic that could serve as the basis of an Islamic Tamil *kāppiyam*-poem therefore seems to have been used intentionally, with a particular meaning attached to it. In this context, the meaning of *urai* as 'commentary' assumes particular importance.[5] In conjunction with a 'root-text' (*mūlam*, lit. 'root'), an *urai* is an explanatory gloss, ranging from a terse comment to an elaborate exposition and interpretation of the root-text. As such, an *urai* is always dependent on the *mūlam*, and constantly reflects back on it. Though the most famous *urais* are written commentaries on important scientific, poetical or religious texts, an *urai* does not necessarily have to be written down, but may also be an oral discourse about a specific text or story. While the two examples quoted above make the *urai* dependent on a written Arabic text, as indeed most Islamic *kāppiyam*-poems are, some poems seem to

[4] *Tiruccentūrttalapurāṇam*, *patikam* 16 (cf. Aruṇācalakkavirāyar 1911).

[5] In all likelihood, in this meaning *urai* is used as a calque of Sanskrit *bhāṣya*, which is similarly derived from a root meaning 'to speak, announce'; cf. Wilden (2009:48). For a general survey of Tamil commentaries, cf. Lehmann (2009).

suggest that such an *urai* could be given about a specific set of events (*varalāṟu*) which were not necessarily set down in just one particular text.[6]

But matters could not rest with the production of a simple 'commentary' on an Arabic text. After having been taught and explained the contents of his Arabic root-text by way of an *urai*, the poet still had the task of turning this unadorned 'commentary' into an aesthetically acceptable and appealing poem in 'refined Tamil' (*centamiḻ*). Yet this poem had to remain true to its source, as it was for example expressed in the poem *Tirumaṇakkāṭci*, written probably in 1710/11: "Even though I am humble, I put [my] mind to compose in refined Tamil without being doubtful as it was told [to me] by the scholar Cēkaptuleppai…".[7] What we are presented with is an image of translation as a process which allows the complete reassembling of the meaning of one language through the means of another. Whereas the idea of 'literal' translation limits itself to words and grammatical and syntactic relations between words, the conception underlying the Islamic *kāppiyam*-poems is based on the Tamil concept of the 'fivefold grammar' (*aintilakkaṇam*), which includes 'phonology' (*eḻuttu*), 'morphology' (*col*), 'semantics' (*poruḷ*), 'prosody' (*yāppu*), and 'rhetoric' (*aṇi*).[8] That is, not only words and phrases, but prosody and literary embellishments were in need of translation as well. That Arabic was conceived of as a linguistic system which was made up, not of the same, but of equivalent concepts which could be rendered into Tamil, is shown by a verse from Ālippulavar's *Mikuṟācu mālai*, where he seems to equate the Tamil terms 'grammar' (*ilakkaṇam*) and 'morphology' (*col*) with their Arabic equivalents *naḥw* and *ṣarf*.[9] 'Translation' in the *kāppiyam*-poems clearly went beyond a mere reproduction of the words and sentences of the Arabic root-text.

Muslim Scholarship and 'Translation' as Commentary

Does that mean that no traces are left of the production of Tamil 'commentaries' of Arabic texts in the period before 1842? Intriguingly, the most interesting evidence for that process has survived with regard to exactly that text which Muslims generally hold to be untranslatable, namely the Quran itself. In the poem *Ñāṉappukaḻcci* by the Sufi poet Pīr Muhammatu, we find what is probably the earliest rendering of a sura of the Quran into Tamil, and possibly into any South Asian language, for Pīr Muhammatu is generally believed to have lived in the early seventeenth century (see Uvais and Ajmalkāṉ 1997, Vol. 4, 62-63). *Ñāṉappukaḻcci* contains a small commentary with translation of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*, the first chapter of the Quran. In fourteen couplets (stanzas 664-77), the Arabic text is fitted into the Tamil *kali veṇpā* metre and then commented on through vocatives which address and praise God, as can be seen in this example:

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[6] Cf. *Irājanāyakam* 1.25 (Vaṇṇakkaḷañciyap Pulavar n.d.).

[7] *Tirumaṇakkāṭci* 1.23 (Cēkāti Nayiṉārp Pulavar 1990). Cf. also *Caiyitattu paṭaippōr* 25; *Irājanāyakam* 1.25; *Tirumaṇakkāṭci* 1.29.

[8] The actual semantic range of each of these terms is wider than indicated here; cf. the respective entries in Zvelebil (1995).

[9] *Mikuṟācu mālai* 14.

O Lord, handing over the 'wage',
Which is desired by the devotees,
Saying: *mālik yawm al-dīn* [King of Judgment Day],
who has the highest command forever.[10]

God's role as the sole authority on Judgment Day as presented in the fourth verse of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* is here rendered into Tamil both by referring to His supreme authority and by alluding to His role as Judge on Judgment Day, when He hands out the desired 'wage' (*kūli*), namely admission into paradise, to the devotees (*aṭiyār*, a term also connected to servitude). In a like manner, the other verses of the *Fātiḥa* are rendered into Tamil epithets of God which elucidate and comment upon the Arabic original.

Pīr Muhammatu's rendering of the *Fātiḥa* is not the only early incorporation of Quranic material into a Tamil text. Several eighteenth century works similarly incorporate the *Fātiḥa*, though the extent to which these works actually attempt to reproduce the literal meaning of the Arabic verses requires further study.[11] But that the Tamil *'ulamā'* were not opposed to explaining the meanings of Quranic verses – that is, to give an *urai* for specific verses – can be seen from one of the few surviving prose texts of the early eighteenth century, Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad Labbay's *'Iẓām al-fawā'id fī niẓām al-'aqā'id*, which is our main surviving example of a pre-colonial Muslim *urai*. This text does not only survive in printed editions from the nineteenth century but also in a fuller version in a manuscript completed in August 1778, apparently in Batavia (Jakarta), and now kept in Leiden.[12] The author seems to have lived in the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century, and indeed it is possible to take the title *'Iẓām al-fawā'id* as a chronogram, corresponding most likely to 1143 AH, i.e. 1730/31 CE (cf. Shu'ayb 1993:489). The treatise actually consists of an Arabic root-text and, following each Arabic sentence, a translation into Tamil, which allows for some very interesting observations (printed editions often omit the Arabic parts). Thus, in the Arabic part of the preface, the author states that he compiled this treatise from the works of important scholars and then provided it with a "translation into the Ariwī [Tamil] tongue" (*tarjama bi-lisān al-ariwī*) for the benefit of those who do not know Arabic, while in the Tamil section he states that he made this compilation "so that an *urai* was made in the Arawī [sic] language" (*arawī pācai koṇṭu urai ceyyapaṭṭatākavum*), thereby explicitly equating the Arabic *tarjama* with the Tamil *urai*.[13] *'Iẓām al-fawā'id* thus confirms that the use of the term *urai* in Islamic Tamil *kāppiyam*-poems is informed by a distinct understanding of the process of rendering Arabic through the medium of Tamil, a sort of 'translation theory'.

As the complete Arabic text is rendered into Tamil, in a few cases, quotes from the Quran are also translated. The procedure in this is generally the same throughout the text:

[10] *Ñāṉappukaḻcci* 667-68 (Pīr Muhammatu 1995); cf. also Cīṉivācaṉ (2007:23-26).
[11] Cf. especially *Vēta purāṇam* 3.1-10 and 20.1-13 (Periya Nūku Leppai 1999).
[12] Cf. Ronkel (1922:33-34); in that article, Ronkel mistakenly gives the year as 1767. In another article, I mistakenly surmised that the manuscript might be from Sumatra; cf. Tschacher (2009:56).
[13] Leiden University Manuscript OR-7368, fol. 6r; since there is no standard for transliterating Tamil in Arabic script, I have slightly adjusted the text to standard Tamil orthography, but refrained from doubling consonants which are not indicated as doubled in the text.

the original Arabic quote is introduced with the sentence 'God the exalted spoke' (*qāla Allahu ta'ālā*), followed by the verse, and then the Tamil translation, which is similarly introduced with the statement *Allāhu ta'ālā qur'ānilē tiruvaḷamāṉāṉ* [=*tiruvuḷamāṉāṉ*], which may be rendered as 'God the Exalted made the divine will manifest in the Quran'. This is then followed by a Tamil commentary which may expand the text for the sake of explanation. The first part of verse 19, *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān* (the third *sura*), may serve as an example: 'Truly, the religion with God is Islam'.[14] This is rendered into Tamil: 'Truly, the worship that has been made acceptable [*qabūl*] with God the Exalted is Islam'.[15] Maḥmūd's treatise contains many more examples of translations of verses of the Quran, sayings of the Prophet, excerpts of scholarly literature, and of course the author's own statements, testifying to a well established tradition of 'commenting' Arabic texts in Tamil. It becomes clear that the Tamil *'ulamā'* were both competent and willing to render Quranic verses into Tamil, incidentally disproving J. B. Prashant More's completely speculative comments, based solely on the biased claims of a twentieth-century 'reformer', that the Tamil *'ulamā'* lacked knowledge of Arabic (More 2004:56, 108-109).

Unfortunately, the Leiden Manuscript is currently our sole specimen of Islamic discursive prose in Tamil predating the adoption of print by Tamil Muslims in the nineteenth century. The adoption of print, first in Tamil script and later on also in Arabic script, contributed to developments which would ultimately transform the whole gamut of textual practices among Tamil Muslims, even though these changes were hardly visible for the first fifty years after printing had been adopted. The adage that "print did not produce new books, only more old books" (Blackburn 2003:1), is fully testified by the evidence for the printing of Tamil books with Islamic content. The first Tamil book printed by a Muslim was the most celebrated of all Islamic *kāppiyam*-poems, the *Cīṟāppurāṇam*, of which at least six editions seem to have been published between 1842 and 1866 (cf. Uvais and Ajmalkāṉ 1991:245-47; More 2004:202). Among the earliest books printed were other *kāppiyam*-poems as well as some other poetry, mostly written before 1850. Only in the mid-1870s does printing seem to have taken on greater dynamism among Tamil-speaking Muslims. From this time onwards, more and more original compositions came to be published, often poetry in one of the so-called *pirapantam*-genres rather than *kāppiyam*-poems.[16] While many of the poems composed in the late nineteenth century were devotional in character and did not claim to be based on any direct Arabic model, another development took place which is of much greater interest to us. For print also furthered the production of prose 'commentaries' of Arabic texts, especially when lithographic printing made the reproduction of the diacritics of the Arabic script as used for Tamil possible. A substantial number of such treatises was produced between 1870 and 1920.[17] Why lithographic printing of Tamil books in Arabic script began comparatively late – the Urdu-speaking residents of Madras had begun to use lithography already in the 1840s – is in need of further investigation. Yet the in my eyes most likely explanation is

[14] *inna al-dīn 'inda Allāh al-islām*.

[15] *uṇmaiyāka Allāhu ta'ālāviṭattil qabūl ceyyapaṭṭa vaṇakkamāvatu islām eṉṟu*; Leiden University Manuscript OR-7368, fol. 6v-7r.

[16] Cf. the entry on *pirapantam* in Zvelebil (1995).

[17] Cf. the – incomplete – list in More (2004:265-82).

a simple economic one: the religious scholars who would ultimately adopt lithographic printing and the owners of printing presses may not have seen a market for such Tamil books in Arabic script that the existing production of manuscripts could not satisfy. After all, presses would probably not have printed a book if there would not have been a reasonable chance of recovering the costs for the scribe, paper, ink, the printing and binding process, the registration, and the marketing and shipping of the end product (made even more difficult by the curious fact that many early Tamil books in Arabic script were printed in Bombay!). In contrast, Islamic *kāppiyam*- and *pirapantam*-poems, for which by and large the Tamil-script seems to have been used already in the pre-print era, could make use of the established and widespread typographic presses, and would furthermore have been marketable to non-Muslims as well – it comes as no surprise that one of the most often printed Muslim poets in the nineteenth century was Kuṇaṅkuṭi Mastāṉ Cākipu, who was highly popular with Hindus as well.[18]

While the technology of producing Tamil texts in Arabic script through lithography may have been new, the contents of these texts were not. Rather, in style, language and rhetoric they follow the same conventions as did *'Iẓām al-fawā'id* back in the early eighteenth century, which include stock phrases, such as the one quoted above that introduces translations from the Quran. Take the following statement from the preface of a translation of *ḥadīth*, published by Nūḥ b. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Qāhirī in 1295 AH (1878 CE):

> Knowing that … scholars have produced for their brothers *tarjumas* in Persian, Hindi, and other languages of countless books of *ḥadīth*, law, etc. which are in Arabic, and [also] knowing that those among my Muslim brothers living in the Tamil country who do not know Arabic have a great craving to learn *ḥadīth*, law and dogma, I, though being unworthy, desired to create a book made as an *urai* in Arabic-Tamil in the science of *ḥadīth*…(Nūḥ b. Abd al-Qādir 1295AH: 3)

The similarities with Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad Labbay's introduction to *'Iẓām al-fawā'id* written about 150 years earlier are obvious. Most interesting for us are two elements of this conventionalized statement. One is the claim that the text was written for those Tamil-speaking Muslims who did not know Arabic. The same statement is encountered in *'Iẓām al-fawā'id* as well as in other books of the late nineteenth century (cf. Sayyid Muḥammad b. Aḥmad 1318: 3). Rather than presenting us with an image of a Muslim community in decline, these authors identified an audience which was desirous to hear and read about their religion, which then caused the authors to go through the Arabic books at their disposal and to produce an *urai* for their benefit. This is the second important element for our purposes. For not only did the nineteenth-century authors continue to identify their translations as *urais*, they also persisted in using this term as a translation of the Arabic *tarjama* or *tarjuma*. Like Maḥmūd before him and other authors after him, Nūḥ b. ʿAbd al-Qādir provided his readers with both an Arabic and a Tamil introduction, the latter apparently being the translation of the former. And in the Arabic version, the "book made as an *urai* in Arabic-Tamil" of the Tamil version is rendered as

[18] More (2004:245-47) lists twelve editions of his works between 1847 and 1899; regarding the use of the Tamil and the Arabic script for different kinds of Tamil texts, cf. Tschacher (2009:54-55).

kitāb mutarjam bi al-lisān al-arwī, a "book 'translated' into the Arwī tongue" (Nūḥ b. Abd al-Qādir 1295 AH:3). It becomes clear that in the understanding of these authors, a Tamil *urai* or 'commentary' was equivalent to an Arabic *tarjama* or 'translation'. Thus, when Nūḥ b. 'Abd al-Qādir, in the Arabic preface to his Tamil *tafsīr* ('commentary') of the Quran, speaks of pondering "to 'translate' the Quran" (*an utarjumu al-qur'ān*), he probably simply meant to write a Tamil 'commentary' of it – unfortunately, this work only has an Arabic preface, so that we can only speculate that in Tamil he would have written about providing the Quran with a Tamil *urai* (Nūḥ b. Abd al-Qādir 1329AH: part 1, 2). Yet the interchangeability of Tamil *urai* and Arabic *tarjama* is amply illustrated in a number of other publications.[19]

The central importance of identifying the act of translation with the task of commenting on a text lies in the fact that the term *urai* serves as an index which always refers back to its root-text, and is ideally accompanied by it. The reader of an *urai* would always be aware of the fact that the text he (or maybe rarely also she) would be reading was not the original, but rather an explanation of an original that the reader had no access to if he was not conversant in Arabic. The content of the works produced in that period – translations and excerpts from scripture, dogma, law, ritual – show that the authors, quite in contrast to what has sometimes been claimed, were indeed concerned to provide Muslims with the basics of their religion. But at the same time, the texts, by their very framing as *urai*, always reminded the reader that the Tamil text was not the original. The texts were sufficient for those who merely wanted information on how to pray or how to perform the Hajj, but they also indicated that any direct engagement with these rules and prescriptions could only be accomplished through the Arabic root-text. And it was exactly the changing literary practices in the Tamil-speaking world after the introduction of print that would soon challenge the way Arabic texts were being translated.

From *urai* to *moḻippeyarppu*

The first indication of these changes within the *urai*-texts themselves became visible in the early twentieth century. Suddenly, authors did not dub their translation as *urai* anymore, but rather came to use another word, *moḻippeyarppu*.[20] This term is nowadays understood to be the Tamil term for 'translation', even though its original meaning may have come much closer to what is commonly referred to as 'adaptation'. Be that as it may, by the early twentieth century, the term had come to signify the kind of literal translation that had apparently first been introduced by Christian missionaries in the preceding centuries (Blackburn 2003:62-65; Ricci 2006:160-61). Furthermore, authors seem to have become more aware of questions of style (*naṭai*). Thus, one of them claimed that his translation was translated into "a facile style of Tamil", while another

[19] Cf. for example Nūḥ b. 'Abd al-Qādir (1299 AH:3-4); Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Ṣāḥib al-Qādirī (1309 AH: preface, 12 and 14); Shaykh 'Uthmān b. al-Sayyid Muḥammad (1297 AH:3-4).

[20] Cf. for example Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥmān (1331 AH:5); Sayyid Muḥammad 'Ālim Pulavar (1333 AH:title page); Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir (1321 AH:6).

translation even announced on its title page that it "had been translated in a refined Tamil style". Significantly, the author of the latter translation not only styled himself a 'scholar' (*'ālim*) in Arabic, but also a 'poet' (*pulavar*) in Tamil.[21] What these changes signalled was the growing awareness by Muslim authors of developments taking place in the wider sphere of Tamil literary activity. Increasingly, prose came to be the medium of the literary and journalistic pursuits of the Tamil-speaking elites and middle class, as well as of the political aspirations of various strands of Tamil nationalism (see Ebeling 2005; Venkatachalapathy 2002). Certain sections of Muslim society did participate in these developments. Soon, they came to criticize the old prose-style of the traditional *urai*-'translations', often dubbed 'Arabic-Tamil', with its obvious, sometimes awkward traces of the original Arabic and its 'vulgar' colloquialisms, in favour of the new elevated prose of the non-Muslim Tamil-speaking elites. This criticism of style was often coupled with reformist as well as Tamil-nationalist critiques of the traditional class of Muslim religious scholars. Through this process, Muslims were drawn into a wider world of reformist polemics, nationalist discourses, and literary transformations. The quotes above testify to the sensitivity of authors to these debates as debates about proper style.

There is no space here to attempt any comprehensive account of these developments, which still require much further research.[22] We shall limit ourselves here to noting some of the consequences of these debates for the development of translation among Tamil-speaking Muslims, something which is best done by considering some of the controversies surrounding the translation of the Quran in this period. In the nineteenth century, at least three complete Tamil commentaries of the Quran had been printed in Arabic script (cf. Cīṉivācaṉ 2007:26-27; Khan 2001:204-205; Kokan 1982:136). These went beyond literal translation to include explanatory passages, though many verses were actually translated literally. Yet in the 1920s, the publisher of the controversial journal *Tārul Islām*, P. Daud Shah (Pā. Tāvuṭṣā), who was in the forefront of attacking the style and doctrinal contents of older Islamic Tamil literature, began to publish a Tamil translation of the Quran. This was based on the English translation by Muḥammad 'Alī, since Daud Shah, in contrast to the scholars he attacked, was not overly proficient in Arabic. This contributed to the perception that he was, like Muḥammad 'Alī, a member of the controversial Aḥmadiyya-movement.[23] Daud Shah had close links to Tamil nationalist groups as well as to institutions which furthered literary activity in Tamil. The reactions occasioned by his venture show clearly how the context for the production of translations of Islamic texts from Arabic into Tamil was shifting.

This became most visible with regard to the intended audience of the translation. While earlier translations had been intended only for the use of Muslims, now the translation of the Quran assumed an importance in the relations to non-Muslims as well. This became obvious, for example, when Daud Shah toured British Malaya in 1925 to collect subscriptions for his translation. The Kuala Lumpur-based newspaper *Tamiḻ*

[21] Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir (1321 AH:6); Sayyid Muḥammad 'Ālim Pulavar (1333 AH:title-page).

[22] The most useful and least biased account in English is Fakhri (2008:68-71); for a first attempt at critiquing the biases of scholarly approaches to the topic, cf. Tschacher (2010).

[23] Unfortunately, literature on Daud Shah in English is usually heavily biased either against or in favour of him; cf. Khan (2001:208-209); Kokan (1982:137); More (2004:107-109).

Nēcaṉ, whose editors were close to the Indian National Congress, praised Daud Shah for supposedly being the first to translate the Quran into the 'mother tongue' (*tāy pāṣai*) of Tamils (quoted in Anonymous 1925:233). As non-Muslims, the newspaper's editors would hardly have been aware of the existence of commentaries published in Arabic script. In Singapore, Daud Shah's visit occasioned a heated exchange of handbills, which testify that Muslims were aware of the changed audiences of their literature as well as wider trends in the relationship between Hindus and Muslims in India. One supporter of Daud Shah criticized his opponents for failing to refute Christian missionaries and the Hindu-revivalist Arya Samaj movement, and for not attempting to spread Islam. A pamphlet published against Daud Shah, in contrast, claimed that "the fact of the existence of (our) tafsir (commentaries) in Arabicised Tamil serves to obviate the possibility of the Tamils with Tamil script slighting our religion" (Mallal 1928:15, 22). Both sides expressed their discomfort with non-Muslim treatment of Islamic texts. But while one side advocated direct engagement, the other considered their own idiom, which was impenetrable to non-Muslims, to be defence enough.

Ultimately, even Daud Shah's opponents had to adjust to the changed circumstances, and to come out with their own translations in the new style. Indeed, while Daud Shah's project faltered in 1930, to be revived only in 1962, his opponents began to publish their own translations. The most popular of these was *Tarjumatul kurĀṉ pi altapil payāṉ*, completed by Ā. Kā. Aptul Hamītu Pākavi in 1943 and printed many times since then. In 1949, this translation was published prefaced with an evaluation made in November 1943, prepared by scholars of the Madrasat Bāqiyyāt al-Ṣāliḥāt in Vellore where the translator himself had studied (see Tschacher 2006:204-207). This evaluation shows the extent to which the changed conditions of preparing and publishing translations from Arabic had become accepted in traditionalist circles. According to it, the translator, in preparing the translation, "compared each word of the translation with each word of the Sacred Quran in the original language" as well as with Arabic commentaries and translations into other languages including English and French (Pākavi [n.d.]:preface, 6). This process of literal translation had been checked by other scholars and slightly amended according to their suggestions. Yet the most surprising part of this evaluation was expressed in its total assessment of the translation:

> This translation was prepared in a sweet Tamil style, clear, without difficult words that are not in use. It was prepared in a marvellous novel style in the Tamil language, so that anyone who will hear it recited may come to the conclusion: 'This is not a translation; it is a book newly written in the Tamil language'. Being without lengthy and extensive notes and comments, also those of other religions may learn through it the thoughts of the Sacred Quran with ease (Pākavi [n.d.]: preface, 7).

The claim that this translation was not recognizable as one but appeared to be a work originally written in Tamil might appear almost heretical to many Muslims believing in the inimitability of the Quran. But the statement is immediately put into context: for the audience identified for this translation of the Quran was not only Muslim, but 'also

those of other religions'. It seems that the authors of this evaluation were attempting to predispose non-Muslim readers positively to the translation by downplaying its 'translatedness'. With Pākavi's translation, a concept of literal translation which at the same time disguises its own 'translatedness' seems finally to have taken hold among Tamil Muslims. Earlier attempts at 'translation' are now either not perceived anymore as 'translations', but as 'adaptations' or 'transcreations' as in the case of *kāppiyam*-poems, or are evaluated as being written in a tortuous 'translatorese', as the prose-*urais*. Indeed, in a curious twist of history, the latter are nowadays themselves perceived as being in need of translation.

Conclusions

Some authors have claimed that "the practice and perhaps the very concept of 'translation' as it is understood in the West" has been completely absent from South Asia prior to 1800 (Trivedi 2006:116). This claim, quite apart from the problematic homogenizing implicit in the polemical device of 'the West', can hardly be maintained even if the texts discussed here, such as *'Iẓām al-fawā'id*, are ignored. Concerning Sanskrit, Sheldon Pollock has pointed out a number of texts which explicitly acknowledge their non-Sanskrit roots, such as astronomical treatises rendered from Greek and a fifteenth-century Sanskrit version of Jāmī's Persian *Yūsuf wa Zulaykha* from Kashmir, "partially translated, sometimes word-for-word, and partially adapted" (Pollock 1996:117). But Pollock also claims that "there exists no Sanskrit or other Indian discourse on translation" (*ibid.*:114). The evidence in this paper seems to disprove Pollock's claim. What the evidence reviewed in this paper suggests is that, on the contrary, Muslim Tamil authors seem to have had a rather clear idea of what rendering an Arabic text through the medium of Tamil entailed, or at least ideally entailed. The uniformity of terminology and imagery with regard to 'translation' in Islamic Tamil texts spanning three centuries from the late sixteenth to the late-nineteenth century testifies to the extent that this idea was shared among poets and religious scholars alike, while the extant examples of word-for-word translations of Arabic phrases prove that Tamil Muslims were fully capable of 'translating' Arabic.

Yet even more interesting than the mere existence of this discourse is the light it sheds on how what appear to be divergent practices of rendering a foreign-language text in Tamil were linked. The practice of 'translating' by creating a 'commentary' or *urai* which often reproduced the root-text word-by-word is presented in the texts discussed not as an alternative, but as an essential precondition to the production of those texts which have often been dubbed as 'adaptations' or 'transcreations'. Indeed, that so few *urai*-'translations' seem to have survived from the pre-nineteenth century may be witness to the fact that the *urai* was in many cases perceived not as an aim in itself but as a stage in a process which led to the creation of a full-scale literary work in Tamil. While an *urai* may have been seen to be sufficient for some purposes, such as simple religious instruction, an *urai* was nevertheless not a 'literary' work. In the binary Tamil categorization of 'grammar and poetics' or *ilakkaṇam*, literally 'that which defines', and

'literature' or *ilakkiyam*, literally 'that which is defined', an *urai* belongs to the former. While necessary to the poet intent on rendering a literary Arabic text into a literary Tamil text, the *urai* could nevertheless only be a step in that direction. The final outcome of this project had to be a text which fully complied to the strictures of Tamil *ilakkaṇam*, something an *urai* in itself could never accomplish. The discourse about rendering Arabic texts into Tamil in Islamic Tamil literature is so interesting especially since it reveals the underlying divergence of aims in different types of renderings, as well as their connectedness.

What does this example mean for debates on 'translation' in the textual cultures of Asia, or at least in those Asian textual cultures which were deeply influenced by the Sanskrit cosmopolis, which is clearly the case with regard to many of the textual practices of Islamic Tamil textual culture? It might be argued that the specificity of the 'translation discourse' in this tradition is simply a curious aberration, caused by the disjuncture between Tamil literary culture and the Arabic texts Muslim authors drew upon. Indeed, the clear articulation of the notion of 'translation' as 'commentary' seems to set Islamic Tamil literature apart from its non-Islamic counterpart, forming one of those textual practices which distinguish Islamic from non-Islamic texts in Tamil, practices often overlooked due to the common scholarly practice of comparing Islamic Tamil texts not with each other, but only with Hindu texts. One might even argue that the notion of 'translation' as 'commentary' was derived from the idea that the Quran could not be translated into any language, while one might legitimately produce a commentary on the Quran in another language or translate one of the existing Arabic ones (Leemhuis 2006:155). But this seems to be only part of the story. Comparing the case of Islamic Tamil texts with the Javanese case described by Thomas Hunter in this volume, one cannot help but see parallels in the way the two languages dealt with the problem of 'translation'. Even the obvious differences between the authors of *Islamic kāppiyam*-poems and Hindu *purāṇas* within the Tamil tradition might at least be partly due to the fact that the widespread knowledge of Sanskrit among Tamil Hindu poets of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries in comparison with the knowledge of Arabic among Muslim poets made any appeal to the type of intermediary texts as produced by Muslim scholars unnecessary – Ven̲r̲imālaikkavirāyar seems to have needed Kiruṭṇa Cāstri only as a source of the Sanskrit text, not as an interpreter of it. There is thus the intriguing possibility that the encounter of Arabic with Tamil literary culture may simply have encouraged a clearer formulation of ideas about 'translation' which may actually have been far more widespread in the Sanskritized world of South and Southeast Asia as is generally understood.[24]

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Before Translation?

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Abstract: *This chapter addresses the question of the existence of a tradition of translation into Hindi prior to the adoption of the term anuvād to mean translation (circa 1870). To this end it examines definitions of the concept 'language' and their relation to the Indic terms* bhāṣā, saṃskṛta *and* prakṛta *and explores how the term 'Hindi language' may be understood. The chapter then discusses the history of Hindi medical literature since the late sixteenth century, providing an example of early forms of translation. Finally, developments from the late eighteenth century onwards which led to the adoption of the term* anuvād *to mean translation in Hindi are analyzed. The chapter concludes that the question of the existence of a tradition of translation into Hindi before 1800 needs to be re-examined, especially in light of medical works, previously available only in Sanskrit or Persian, that were rendered comprehensible to new Hindi* Bhāṣā *speaking publics from the sixteenth century onwards.*

Introduction

The question I wish to explore in this chapter is whether there existed a translation tradition in Hindi prior to the adoption of the term *anuvād* to mean 'translation' around 1870. In an attempt to answer this question in the following pages I discuss pre-1870 Hindi texts that were based on writings in other languages.

Hindi is today one of India's national languages, spoken by over half of India's population of over one billion. Linguistically, Hindi is a member of the Indo-European family of languages: it shares a number of basic characteristics with modern European languages due to a common origin in a proto-language that was once spoken in central Asia, giving rise to Greek and Latin in the West and to Sanskrit in South Asia. Modern Hindi traces its roots to dialects spoken in India as early as the twelfth century CE. However, contemporary modern standard Hindi was still in the process of formation at the start of the twentieth century. At the time a process of language standardization associated with modernity in India gave rise to what was hoped by many would be the Indian National Language. But what was meant by this concept? Before going any further in addressing issues of translation history in India, it is important to consider the question of what the word 'language' itself signifies.

In Europe since the eighteenth century the word 'language' has been understood in two distinct ways. In his seminal English dictionary of 1755 Samuel Johnson gave two definitions of language. The first definition was 'Human speech', to which he added, quoting from William Holder's *Elements of Speech* (1669) "We may define language, if we consider it more materially, to be letters, forming and producing words and sentences; and if we consider it according the design thereof, then language is apt signs for communication of thought". However, Johnson's second definition of language was

"The tongue of one nation as distinct from others". The first definition was linguistic, defining language as a particular system for communication, whilst the second definition was typological, defining language in relation to the cultural productions of a particular people or nation.

In India these European ideas, and their interaction with the Indic notion of *bhāṣā*, discussed below, have had an enormous impact on the understanding of the relationships between Indian languages. In particular, it has been the idea of language as a distinct characteristic of a nation which has played a critical role in modern India. Modern scholarship on the history of language in South Asia categorizes three periods in their development. Old Indo-Aryan languages (hereafter OIA) such as Sanskrit; Middle Indo-Aryan languages (MIA) such as Pali; and New Indo-Aryan (NIA) languages, including modern Indian languages such as Hindi and Punjabi.

During the NIA period, and particularly in the nineteenth century, the way in which individual modern Indian languages came to characterize themselves was based on a mixture of linguistic and typological considerations. This has led scholars of South Asian languages, such as Masica, to point out that the definition of what constituted a particular language in modern India contains considerable ambiguities (Masica 1991:447).

It is against this background of ambiguity about what constituted a language that the development of modern Indian languages such as Hindi took place. Indian scholars such as Ram Chandra Shukla (1882-1942), who wrote the most authoritative history of Hindi literature in the early twentieth century, saw Hindi not as a particular grammatical or lexical system but rather as an expression of a national culture. The process of deciding what constituted 'Hindi' was undertaken by scholars classifying a range of speech forms as dialects of Hindi. However, these speech forms, such as Braj Bhāṣā and Avadhī, were, and are, only marginally mutually intelligible, as each is marked by its own grammar, morphology and vocabulary. Nevertheless, they were defined as varieties of Hindi, and Hindi itself was said to have yet another grammar, morphology and vocabulary, which was to be based on an earlier form of speech called Khaṛī Bolī, formerly spoken in and around the area of Delhi. As a result, although modern Hindi does have a standard grammar, it also incorporates texts written in a range of language forms that do not conform to standard Hindi grammar. This is analogous, perhaps, to the ways in which the term English can be used to refer to language forms as diverse as Old English, Middle English, and Modern English. However, whereas in English these different grammatical and lexical patterns are no longer used or widely understood by the general public, in Hindi the 'dialects' still form part of the fabric of the modern language.

The above-mentioned state of affairs has an important impact on any discussion of translation in pre-modern South Asia. In particular, it opens up the question of what may be meant by 'translation' when the term 'language' does not relate to particular grammatical and lexical systems. I suggest that thinking about translation in relation to language and grammar is, in fact, not as helpful as typically assumed. What may well be more useful is considering the process that took place when individuals or communities, familiar with texts in particular forms of speech, wished to convey those texts anew to target audiences unable to access the original speech forms. This perspective calls for a careful examination of the Indic term *bhāṣā*, which literally means 'speech' but can also nowadays be translated as 'language'.

In addition to carefully studying understandings of the terms language and *bhāṣā* it is also appropriate to review translation studies scholarship that specifically relates to India (Tymoczko 2007:68-71). Since the second half of the twentieth century there has been considerable discussion of the term 'translation' in modern Indian literature written in English. As part of this debate the term transcreation was coined by P. Lal (1972), a well-known author, poet and translator based in Calcutta, to refer to a version of a work which was faithful to the spirit of a text, but was not a literal word for word translation of that text. Concerning the antiquity of translation traditions in India, Gopinathan of Calicut University has been a proponent of the view that India possesses an ancient tradition of translation, but that translation has taken the form of the transcreation of works (Gopinathan 2000). There has also been a strong focus on the study of the translation of works from Indian languages into English, with fewer studies conducted on the development of translations between, and into, Indian languages. An instance of this is that a recent major study of translation in South Asia, Rita Kothari's *Translating India* (2003), is actually a study of the history of translation into English. In another study of translation into English in India, Salvador (2004:190) argued that India had a rich tradition of translation theory and practice between its languages.

More recently, Harish Trivedi (2006:103), a well known contemporary scholar on South Asian literature, argued that there was a 'non-history' of translation in South Asia in the pre-colonial period. Trivedi's view was that there was no evidence of any non-Indian text being translated into Hindi, or any other Indian language before 1800 CE (*ibid*.:103). He also examined the question of whether versions of the Sanskrit Rāmāyaṇa story in languages other than Sanskrit could be considered 'translations' or not, and concluded that discussion of whether a work such as Tulsīdās's Hindi *Rāmcaritmānas* was a translation of the Sanskrit Rāmāyaṇa would not contribute to establishing whether or not there existed a tradition of translation into Hindi (*ibid.*:108).

In this chapter I attempt to examine whether Trivedi's proposal, that there was a 'non-history' of translation in South Asia before 1800, offers a productive viewpoint to scholars of translation. To this end I revisit the question of developments in Hindi 'before translation'.

Bhāṣā, Speech or Language?

To begin, we must take a careful look at the terms requiring consideration, and in particular the word *bhāṣā* and its relationship to the idea of speech or language. Madhav Deshpande (2004) approached this topic by examining the relationship between the term *bhāṣā* and the concept of language as sacred speech in India.

In the fifth century BCE Pāṇini defined *bhāṣā* in his grammar as the form of speech used in learned grammatical discourse, in distinction from Vedic forms of speech, which were in poetic metre and were called *chandaḥ*, 'verse'. In Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*, composed between 150 BCE and the mid-second century CE, the term *bhāṣā* also refers to forms of speech. Possibly the earliest reference to forms of speech that includes the term 'Sanskrit' appears in Valmiki's Rāmāyaṇa, composed in the final centuries BCE. In one verse, Hanuman wonders whether to address Sita in Sanskrit speech, as a twice

born (Brahmin) should, or whether to address her in a human form of speech (Pollock 2006:45-80). Sanskrit was regarded in India as divine speech (*dev vani*). This belief was noted by the Chinese Buddhist Pilgrim Hsuan Tsang (602-664), who wrote that in middle India Sanskrit was spoken in a way reminiscent of the language of the gods (*devas*) (Staal 1972:5). It is notable that in these early usages of the term *bhāṣā* as 'Sanskrit' it implies speech that accords with certain norms and is distinguished from natural speech or Prakrit. Of the distinction between Sanskrit and Prakrit the Indian scholar D. C. Sircar (1970:1) wrote:

> Prakrit or the Prākṛita-bhāṣā indicates the common or ordinary speech, or the language of the common people. The word prākṛita, literally, "non-artificial," points to the difference between this language and the literary or ceremonial language that was thought to be artificial. … Sanskrit (=saṃskṛita, the refined speech) is the reformed, literary and elegant form of the same language at an early stage of its development.

Over time in India the term *bhāṣā* gradually came to signify any current form of speech other than Sanskrit. This can be seen in the writings of the Jain scholar Hemacandra (d. 1172), who wrote of the possibility of composing an epic poem, a *mahākāvya*, in *grāmyabhāṣā* or 'village speech' (Pollock 2006:99).

The histories of Hindi language and literature which were first composed in India in the mid-nineteenth century typically traced Hindi's origins back to the early twelfth century. Pre-1800 works which are now defined as Hindi ones were often described in the works or manuscripts themselves as being written in *bhāṣā*. In this case then the idea of Hindi overlaps with the earlier category of *bhāṣā*. However, as the term *bhāṣā* now refers to all vernaculars in the pre-colonial period, it can also refer to languages that differ greatly from Hindi, such as Malayalam (Freeman 2003:442).

The famous fifteenth-century poet sant Kabīr is nowadays regarded as having spoken his verses in Hindi. However, there are no known instances in pre-1700 works attributed to him in which he described himself as speaking in Hindi. There is, nonetheless, a well known traditional verse attributed to him in which he describes Sanskrit as well water, i.e. fixed, and his own speech as *bhāṣā*, like flowing water:

> *sanskṛt hai kūp jal, bhāṣā bahatā nīr*
> Sanskrit is well water, bhāṣā is flowing water

The seventeenth century author Anantadas wrote a work which is now regarded as Hindi depicting the lives of several saints, including Kabīr. However, he also never referred to his works as being in Hindi; rather he described what he had done as having spoken the stories in Prakrit (*prakrit bhāṣyo*).

These usages indicate the existence of a long standing tradition in India prior to around 1800 of employing terms such as *sanskṛta*, *prakṛta* and *bhāṣā*, but this does not mean we can 'read' into them, retroactively, differences in conceptualizing language that are equivalent to those we find acceptable today. Rather, they appear to have been used quite consistently to mean registers of speech.

Furthermore, the term Hindi does not appear in texts composed, or copied in manuscripts, from prior to around 1800. In a survey of approximately eight hundred Hindi manuscripts dating from before and around 1850 in the Wellcome Institute of Medicine Library in London which I conducted during 1991-1996, there were virtually no references to 'Hindi'. Instead, most of the works noted that they were written in *bhāṣā*, if they indicated the form of speech used in them at all. Where the language was further specified the main terms used were Braj Bhāṣā and Avadhī. Currently, all these language forms are regarded as belonging to what is termed Hindi. This is because Hindi authors traditionally used different forms of speech, originating in different areas, for different textual genres. A work of devotion to the god Krishna was written in Braj Bhāṣā, the grammar of the speech of the Braj area around Mathura in North India. But a work of devotion to the god Ram was written in Avadhī, the form of speech typical of the Ayodhya region. The determining factor was the genre, rather than the period when a work was composed or its site of composition.

Indian audiences listening to sacred teachings typically expected, and still expect, to take part in a discourse of which a part is presented in the form found in older texts, often in Sanskrit or older forms of Hindi. This older section is combined with a commentary articulated in the audience's contemporary speech.

In a mirror of this, and although some Hindi manuscripts contain works written entirely in *bhāṣā*, many manuscripts take the form of interleaved lines or verses, with an original or *mūl* in Sanskrit, and a second version, often called a *bhāṣā* or a *ṭīkā*, offering a Hindi commentary. Indeed the format of a text and a commentary is often found even when both texts are in forms of Hindi, as when an older *mūl* ('root') Hindi text such as the Avadhī text of the *Rāmcaritmānas* appears along with a more modern *bhāṣā* commentary. The tradition of commentaries on earlier works is typical of Indian literary culture prior to 1850 and endures even to the present.

Despite the existence of fairly standardized grammars for Avadhī and Braj Bhāṣā, it is immediately apparent when reading Hindi works from before 1850 that these often do not consistently follow any single grammatical system. Rather, for metrical or thematic purposes authors constantly switch between grammar systems. Indeed, the speech of the Sant poets, such as Kabīr, which is often called *sādhukārī bhāṣā*, has as one of its characteristic features a lack of grammatical consistency. It is sometimes described as having been a kind of *lingua franca* into which the grammars of numerous forms of Hindi were absorbed, with hardly any verses maintaining conformity with any particular pattern of grammatical usage.

The Concept of a Work

Another factor that requires consideration in relation to pre-1850 Indian texts is the notion of what, in fact, constituted a work and a textual tradition. There were undoubtedly some texts created that represented particular authors' works, such as Banārasī Dās's autobiography, the *Ardhakathānaka*, which is the first example of a Hindi autobiography and dates from 1641 (Lath 2005). However, in the public sphere in India most works

existed as continually shifting textual traditions rather than new textual forms duplicating earlier ones.

The great epic traditions, the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa, were ones in which new versions were constantly being created. This process was independent of the speech forms being used in daily life. New Sanskrit versions with novel additions and alterations to the narrative appeared often. The same occurred for versions in regional Indian speech forms that began taking shape from the eleventh century onwards. Although no doubt owing a debt to Valmiki's version of the story, these were not, as Lutgendorf rightly noted, "simple translations of Valmiki's story, but rather reinterpretations of it" (Lutgendorf 1991:4).

In the case of Tulsīdās, studies of his retelling of the Rāmāyaṇa, the *Rāmcaritmānas*, show that it drew on elements from numerous prior works belonging to the Rāmāyaṇa tradition while also presenting new and original material distinctive of Tulsīdās's own interpretation of the story. Lutgendorf noted that "The *Rāmcaritmānas* is an original retelling, in a literary dialect of Hindi, of the ancient tale of Prince Ram of Ayodhya" (*ibid*.:3), and referred to the earlier scholar Whaling, who in 1980 summarized the state of knowledge about the sources of Tulsīdās's *Rāmcaritmānas* by writing that "the sources were Vāl[mīki Rāmāyaṇa] (in the general sense), the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the *Śiva Purāṇa* the medieval dramas on Rama (especially the *Mahānāṭaka* and the *Prasanna Rāghava*), and the medieval *Bhuṣuṇḍi Rāmāyaṇa*" (Whaling 1980:224).

Another genre which was fairly common in works now identified as Hindi from before 1850 was the retelling of stories found in Sanskrit sources. These included tales from Hindu texts called the Upanishads, a type of philosophical religious texts. There are some such works attributed to Charaṇdās (1703-1782). However, these take the form of summaries of the contents of Upanishads rather than word for word retellings of what appeared in any particular text. A typical process of a story's transmission is evident in a reference by George Grierson (1910:368) to Charaṇdās's *Nāsiketopākhyāna* (first print edition, Bombay 1882) as being based on the Nāsiketa story from *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, itself based on the *Kaṭha Upanishad*.

I have suggested that in order to consider the question of whether or not there existed a pre-1800 translation tradition in India it is pivotal to first confront the issues of defining 'language' and 'work'. I have discussed a range of terms used in India, including Sanskrit, Prakrit and *bhāṣā*, but the relationships between these terms and the English term 'language' is not a simple or clear-cut one. Were there, then, genres within Hindi literature in which works were created in ways that were understood as forms of translation?

Medical Literature

An important genre in Hindi literature was Hindi (Braj Bhāṣā) retellings of Sanskrit medical treatises. There were a great many such medical works composed from the sixteenth century onwards. The majority of these were either retellings of individual Sanskrit works or digests of one or more Sanskrit works in a single Hindi work. However, it should be noted that Sanskrit medical works themselves were also often compendia

of earlier texts periodically revised and altered over time, so that authors composing in Hindi were simply continuing a tradition that was already established in Sanskrit. The titles of such works often took the form of the title of the earlier work followed by a term such as *bhāṣā* or *ṭīkā* ('commentary'), as discussed above, or *sār* or *rasa* ('essence'), as in the 'juice' extracted when a fruit is pulped. Yet other texts described themselves as *saṅgraha* ('anthologies') or *śāstra* ('treatises'). The common factor appears to have been that such texts consisted of retellings by individual authors of prior texts in new forms of speech.

The question of *why* manuscripts in a form of *bhāṣā* presently termed Hindi began to appear in the sixteenth century requires consideration. I would argue it was because this form of Hindi *bhāṣā* was becoming the *lingua franca* of the newly evolving urban and trade communities of Mughal India. It is also apparent that most early examples of this literature are composed in verse and comprise textual forms of existing oral literary traditions. This tendency indicates that early Hindi *bhāṣā* medical literature is a textual adaptation of oral traditions being written down for an emerging segment of society that patronized written Hindi works. This section of society included both Hindus and Jains. From the manuscripts preserved it is evident that among the most important communities patronizing the copying of Hindi literature was the Jain mercantile community. This community patronized a wide range of written textual traditions including Sanskrit, Jain Prakrits and various forms of NIA languages. I suggest that their patronage of Hindi medical texts indicates their interest in creating written forms of medical texts that they could use for reference. Older Sanskrit medical works were by comparison inaccessible to them as the majority of Jains did not understand Sanskrit well enough to use such works of everyday reference. Members of the community also continued to patronize the copying of Sanskrit and Prakrit religious texts, however such religious works did not need to be readily understandable due to their greater liturgical significance.

From the introductory verses to some of these medical compositions it is evident that in most cases they were written by medical practitioners, *vaidya*, who recast earlier medical texts in more contemporary language forms in order to make them more accessible.

Probably the earliest Hindi medical work was the *Vaidya-manotsava* by Nainasukha, a Jain author who composed a work in what he described as a *bhāṣā* in 1592 during the reign of the Emperor Akbar, in Sirhind (Patiala district, Punjab). The text included citations from a wide range of famous Sanskrit medical texts such as the *Caraka-saṃhitā*, *Suśruta* and *Śāraṅgadhara saṃhitā*. A notable feature of its introduction is that Nainasukha refers to having seen the works of earlier physicians and to the issue of 'making comprehensible the incomprehensible':

> All the works of the Vaidyas are well spoken, they make manifest the means, medicines, illnesses and causes. My intellect is small and the intellects of those poets is incomparable. Yet I shall try to make comprehensible the incomprehensible, forgive me if I offend. This work is called 'The physician's celebration', it is an exposition on those works I have seen by Nainasukha son of Kesavarāja, a dweller in a family of the Śrāvaka community. (Friedlander 1996:33)

Other important early works included the *Rāma-vinoda* by Rāmacanda, composed in 1663 in the town of Sakki in Rajasthan, and the *Kavi-vinoda* by Manaji, completed

in 1688 in Lahore. Both works are general medical treatises, with sections dealing with the ingredients for, and production of, remedies, and sections addressing diagnosis and treatment.

Another important early work, *Kṣemakutūhala*, discussed the relationship between diet, health and cookery. The Braj Bhāṣā version was prepared by Sukhadeu (active ca. 1670 CE) who according to the text composed his *bhāṣā* version of the *Kṣemakutūhala* following an audience with Sikh Gurū Teg Bahādur. The Sanskrit original was by Kṣemaśarman (c. 1549 CE), who attended the court of king Vikramasena. The first 14 stanzas of this work contain an interesting introduction which explains the circumstances of its composition. In it the author noted: 'there are many books on medicine in Sanskrit but who can read them without grammars?' However, Gurū Tegha Bahādura (Gurū from 1664 to 1675) summoned to his court those Pandits who knew the six philosophies and ordered that a Braj Bhāṣā version of the *Kṣemakutūhala*, titled *Chemasarasa*, be written and copies sent in all the four directions. The work itself seems to concentrate mostly on the relationship between diet and health (Wellcome Punjabi MS 54).

From all I have thus far discussed it is evident that there existed a widespread tradition from the sixteenth century onwards of authors composing Hindi texts based on earlier Sanskrit textual sources, with medical treatises forming an important element of this tradition. It is striking that in both the earliest known such work, the *Vaidya-manotsava* by Nainasukha of 1592, and in the *Kṣemakutūhala* (c. 1670), explicit references were made to retelling the texts anew, with a goal of rendering them comprehensible to publics for whom the older texts were inaccessible.

Hindi Retellings of Pre-1850 Persian Works

While I was working at the library of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine I studied a large number of Hindi manuscripts created between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Amongst the manuscripts I found some which were quite distinct from the works described so far in this chapter as they clearly indicated a Persian origin.

A particularly notable example was *Kavi Taraṅg*, a work composed in 1703 by Sītārām. This is a Hindi (Braj Bhāṣā) version of a Persian medical work. Sītārām was a poet and a physician from Ropar, in Ambala district in the Punjab. In the introductory stanzas he describes how a Persian physician visited India and met with the Hindu pundits comparing works and looking at volumes of the Sanskrit *Caraka Saṃhitā* and other medical texts. He also spoke of how his heart filled with joy when he saw the work composed by the Persian doctor and how he has translated it from difficult Persian into 'easily accessible verses' (*subodh chanda*). There is also a copy of a Persian version of the same work in the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine (WMS.Pers.376b), which includes a reference to Abū Yūsuf as the name for the Persian physician involved. One of the striking facts about the process by which *Kavi Taraṅg* was composed was that it involved a collaboration between Sītārām and Abū Yūsuf in which Sītārām was composing his *bhāṣā* on the basis of the Persian physician's explication of the text (Friedlander 1996:59).

A second interesting work was the *Vaidyaka Candrodaya*, a work in Braj Bhāṣā by

Sukhā Siṅgha, a poet who attended the court of Gurū Gobinda Singh (Gurū from 1675 to 1708 CE). This work is a general medical treatise based on Persian sources, and in particular a text titled the *Yūsabī phārasī*. It is possible that this is a reference to Ibn abī Uṣaibi, the Muslim-Syrian physician and historian of medicine from Damascus (1203/4-1270 CE). It is divided into 36 sections and composed in metres such as the *dohā* and *caupāī* verse forms. The subject matter includes diagnosis by examination of the pulse and urine; the nature of the humours and their characteristics; the treatment of fevers and illnesses; methods for the preparation of remedies and the indications for their use and their efficacy (Wellcome Punjabi MS 35).

There was also another medical work, which was unfortunately missing its first folio and its title in the final colophon. However, it was probably a Braj Bhāṣā prose version of a Persian medical work, as the text was divided into chapters and within them into sections marked as *bāb* and *faṣl*, Arabic terms that were commonly used in Persian texts as well. According to the colophon of the manuscript it had been completed in 1805 in Lahore by a person called Fakīr Nurihusaini (Wellcome Punjabi MS 26). Yet another manuscript contained a work titled *Dastūr al-ilāj*. This was apparently a version of a Persian medical treatise on the Yunānnī system of medicine titled *Dastūr al-ilāj* by Sultan-Alī, composed in 1526-27 CE (Wellcome Punjabi MS 36).

I also found one text which explicitly described itself as being a *tarjuma*, a word which means 'translation' or 'commentary' in Urdu. This was a work in Braj Bhāṣā on how to purify metals for medical and alchemical purposes. This particular copy was made in Kangra in 1856, an area only annexed by the British in 1849, and was explicitly described in its final verses as being a *tarjuma* of a Persian work titled *Phavāid al Javāhir* (Friedlander 1996:79). This must have been a popular work as I also found another copy in the Wellcome library collection in an undated nineteenth-century Braj Bhāṣā version written in Gurumukhi, i.e. Punjabi script (Wellcome Punjabi MS 24).

I would argue that taken together this sample of works provides evidence for a tradition of retelling medical texts in contemporary forms of speech, a tradition active from at least as early as the late sixteenth century in what was to become the Hindi speaking region. Furthermore, it included not only retellings of works known from earlier Sanskrit traditions, but also retellings of works in Persian.

It is also critical to note the motivations for the productions of these treatises. In the one case there is a reference to how the new compositions make comprehensible matters which are incomprehensible in the earlier works (cf. Nainasukha's *Vaidya-manotsava* of 1592); in a second case there is a reference to making a Sanskrit text, difficult to understand without a grammar, comprehensible (Sukhadeu's *Kṣemakutūhala*, c. 1670); whilst in the third case there is a reference to how a text composed in 'difficult' Persian has now been cast in 'easily accessible' verses (Sītārām's *Kavi Taraṅg* of 1703). These are, it may be argued then, indications that from the sixteenth century onwards processes were unfolding in which *bhāṣā* texts were being created for new publics who found materials in Sanskrit or Persian difficult to understand. There may be debates about how, precisely, such works relate to definitions of translation as understood by modern Western scholarship. However, these texts show that before the British began the process of translating texts into Hindi in the late eighteenth century there were already local Hindi traditions

of composition motivated by a desire to translate ideas expressed in difficult forms of speech into comprehensible and accessible forms.

Translation into Hindi 1796-1873

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the influence of the British was increasing and the impact of their thoughts and practices on the development of Hindi needs to be considered. A key point to be made was that in English documents related to Hindi the word 'translation' is used, leaving no doubt about the matter under discussion. Several of the first texts to be translated from English into Hindi at the behest of the British included items such as the English 'articles of war' or military code of conduct, translated by 1796 (Gilchrist 1826:220-53). Another example of early translation was a version of the story of Nāsiketa called *Chandrāvatī* by Sadala Miśra which was published in Calcutta in 1803 and which Grierson (1910:368) regarded as one of the first translations into modern Hindi of a Sanskrit work.

The British also commissioned works at the Fort William College in Calcutta which they intended to be translations of works from what they saw as one language, Braj Bhāṣā, into another language, Hindi. In particular two works are notable: Lalu Lal's *Sukhsāgar*, a prose Hindi version of an anthology of stories composed in Braj Bhāṣā, and the *Baital Paccchisi*, a prose Hindi version of another Braj Bhāṣā work.

The British understood the primary meaning of *bhāṣā* as 'language', so that creating a new *bhāṣā* version meant making a translation into a new language. However, Lallu Lal's perspective appears to have been that the primary meaning of *bhāṣā* was 'speech', so the new version was the same text spoken in the current vernacular. Indeed, Lallu Lal in the introduction to one of his works wrote that what he had done was to make a *tarjuma* (translation or commentary) of works into the *rekhtā* form of speech of *Braj Bhāṣā* (*braj bhaśā mẽ rekhte kī bolī mẽ kiyā*; quoted in Pandey 2002: 42). It is notable that he does not say he has translated them into Hindi, but rather that he has 'made' (*kiyā,* past perfective of the verb *karnā*) them into one type of Braj Bhāṣā from another form of Braj Bhāṣā.

I would suggest that the next significant juncture in this development took place around 1870 during the life of Bharatendu Harishchandra (1850-1885). At this time, a movement for reform in Hindi was developing and Bharatendu played a very significant role in it. In particular he was a prominent advocate of the idea that Hindi should drop the use of Braj Bhāṣā and adopt a grammar based solely on that of Khaṛī bolī, the form of speech once current in Delhi. This movement was successful and modern standard Hindi grammar is now based on Khaṛī bolī (Dalmia 1997).

Inherent in Bharatendu's project was the need not only to create new texts using modern standard Hindi grammar, but also to transform older texts into modern standard Hindi forms. Thus, part of his activities involved a process of translation for which he used the term *anuvād*. The word *anuvād* means 'as it is spoken' and since this period has become the standard Hindi equivalent to the English 'translation'.

There are many instances of the use of the term *anuvād* in the *Harishchandra Magazine* published by Bharatendu. For instance, in the edition for 15 October 1873 there is a text

described as being 'translated from the Bengali' (*baṅg bhāṣā se anuvād kiyā*; Harishchandra 2002:23). At times Bharatendu also qualified the term *anuvād*. When describing his drama titled *Vidya Sundar*, a loose translation of a Bengali play, he referred to it as a *chāyā anuvād* (Kumar 2005:36). The term *chāyā* means literally a 'shadow' or 'image'. Hence, the *chāyā* is a retelling which conveys the essence of a text, but not its details, just as a shadow only conveys the general outline of an object but not its details.

I have been unable to determine with certainty whether Bharatendu was indeed the first Hindi author to use the terms *anuvād* and *chāyā anuvād*, but it is clear that from around his life time *anuvād* came to be the standard Hindi term for 'translation', while earlier terminology related to rendering texts into Hindi from other forms of speech began to lose currency.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the issue of Hindi texts that comprise retellings of works from other languages prior to the time when the term *anuvād* came to mean translation in Hindi. I have suggested that it is important to realize that the meanings of many of the terms which are now used in Hindi for the concept of language, and the names of languages, have shifted over time. In particular, the term *bhāṣā*, now understood to mean language, was typically used to refer to forms of speech rather than a particular language. I showed that there were several ways in which new *bhāṣā* texts were created, one of which was by composing original *bhāṣā* works which were retellings of textual traditions, such as the *Rāmcaritmānas* of Tulsīdās. However, through an investigation of Hindi medical literature, I suggested that Hindi also had a second and distinct tradition of retelling texts in which the authors' motivations were to create contemporary *bhāṣā* forms of earlier Sanskrit works which were no longer readily understandable.

Furthermore, a comparison of how works were created, like Tulsīdās's *Rāmcaritmānas* and medical works like the *Kavi Taraṅg*, shows that there were at least two quite distinct modes of creation of Hindi texts. One process involved individual authors composing original works based on earlier textual traditions. A second process involved collaboration between a Hindi speaker and a speaker of another language, such as Persian, in order to create a Hindi retelling of a particular Persian text. A key factor in the motivations for the production of new medical texts in what has come to be regarded as Hindi Bhāṣā was the need to provide treatises that would be comprehensible to new Hindi Bhāṣā speaking publics which began to emerge in the sixteenth century.

Thus despite doubts being raised about the existence of a Hindi translation tradition before 1800, it is clear that by acknowledging local definitions, understandings and motivations for retelling texts in Hindi, rather than imposing an outside definition of 'translation' upon them, we can confidently claim that Sanskrit and Persian texts were being written anew in Hindi prior to the nineteenth century.

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On the Untranslatability of 'Translation'
Considerations from Java, Indonesia

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Abstract: *As is now widely accepted, no single, universal meaning of the idea and practice we usually term 'translation' exists: ideas about, and practices of, rewriting texts have varied greatly across time and place. Aiming to bring this multiplicity of 'translation' practices and theories to light and to contextualize them culturally and historically, this chapter explores what 'translation' meant in the literary culture of Java, Indonesia, during the eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries. Although Javanese literature contains many works originating from elsewhere, these texts typically do not elaborate on the translation act and often leave out information such as the translator's identity and motives, the source language, and the date and place of translation. The chapter asks why this may have been the case and highlights how, despite this dearth of information, it is possible to begin reconstructing the meanings of translation in Javanese society through a close reading of local translation terminology.*

Introduction

Translation, the practice it connotes and the word itself, has no single, universal meaning. Rather, the retelling of a narrative in a new language has been conceptualized, understood and practised differently over time and in various places. Despite the way 'translation' is often casually used in scholarly and popular debates to include theories and practices that cannot be reduced to uniform significance, many of the world's translation traditions (and especially those of the 'non-West') have yet to be subjected to analysis and interpretation. Such traditions often do not conform to the expectations of what modern, literate, Western individuals have come to envision as the core dimensions of 'translation'. Imposing commonplace definitions of 'translation' on texts in diverse literary cultures, or conversely denying that any such definition could be offered at all, often means that nuances of practice remain undetected, with particular cultures assumed to have carried out little or no 'translation'. A closer look may lead to a realization that similar – but also distinct – developments that can qualify as 'translation' were indeed taking place, as Cummings (2005) has convincingly shown for the example of Makassarese. Expanding the range of languages and translation cultures studied will allow us a better understanding of what this pivotal human endeavour has meant across time and space.

Scholars in the field of translation studies working on diverse languages have begun attending to this challenge in recent years (Cheung 2009; Gopinathan 2000; Hung 2006; Salama-Carr 2006; Tymoczko 2007). With this chapter I wish to contribute to the growing field of comparative translation history by focusing on a still little studied translation

tradition, that of Java, Indonesia. This I propose to do by examining what we may call the 'culture of translation' in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Java, including the choice of texts to be retold, information included and omitted by translators and scribes, their accounts of their motivations, and the vocabulary used to connote practices of recounting a text anew, or 'translation'.[1]

Several scholars have noted the importance of attending to the culturally specific terminology of translation. Pistor-Hatam (1996), in a discussion of translations from Persian to Ottoman Turkish beginning in the fourteenth century, notes that Arabic *tarjama*[2] meant to interpret, to treat by way of explanation, rather than to translate from one language to another as it does in its modern usage. Hagen (2003:98-99), writing of a similar period and place – Persian-Ottoman translations in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries – states that "the problem of translation into Anatolian Turkish starts with terminology, since translating the Arabic-Turkish term *tercume* as 'translation' does not fully render the concept". In local usage *tercume* covered a much wider scope, of transferring a text or parts of it into another language (see this volume's cover). Some works were translations combined with commentaries on a scholarly text; others integrated translations of several distinct works and, by today's standard, might be considered independent works inspired by their prior sources (*ibid.*:99). Jedamski (2005:213) lists a range of terms that seem to have been used almost synonymously for translation in Malay, including *terkarang* ('written', 'composed'), *terkutip* ('quoted', 'copied') and *dituturkan* ('arranged'), indicating that no single term was sufficient to depict the multiple and creative activities of telling a story anew.[3] As I will show, similar issues of the inappropriateness of the modern Anglophone use of 'translation' to capture ideas about transmitting a text from one language to another arise in the context of Javanese literature.

Javanese translation traditions

Java has a long literary tradition that goes back at least to the ninth century, when the *Ramayana Kakawin* is believed to have been composed. This work is part translation (in the modern European sense) of a south Indian Ramayana, part poetic creation in which the author went his or her own way in retelling the story. Many other Indian stories, poems, and treatises on various topics were translated and adapted from Sanskrit into Javanese in the following centuries. In the sixteenth century, with the ongoing Islamization of Javanese society, translation activities shifted from the Indian-Sanskrit sources to ones deriving from Persian and Arabic. It is to texts of the latter category and period that I devote my attention here.

Numerous Islamic texts that are believed to have been translated in the region beginning in this period do not indicate an explicit source text or language, leaving much room

[1] For reasons of convenience and readability I have chosen not to consistently insert 'translation' within quotation marks throughout this article. However, the cross-cultural meanings and terminologies for rewriting a text in another language will become clear through their discussion below.

[2] This Arabic word is also the basis for the Indonesian/Malay words relating to translation: *menerjemahkan* ('to translate'), *penerjemah* ('translator'), *terjemahan* ('translation').

[3] Many of the issues discussed throughout this article pertain also to Malay translation traditions.

for speculation about the translation process and about the perceived significance of the translation act. Bibliographical notes such as 'Muslim romance from the Middle East' or 'adaptation of a Muslim tale originally composed in Arabic' abound in manuscript catalogues.[4] This is testimony not only to the difficulty modern scholars face in their attempt to classify and define these 'translations' but, more importantly, to the approach taken by contemporary translators and scribes, who did not place a high priority on including an explicit 'translation statement' in their works.

Neither did translators stress their personal achievement in texts of this period. Texts – translated or otherwise – more often than not remained anonymous. A pervasive cultural code prescribed humility and self-deprecation. Authors and translators consistently apologized for their lack of style, dearth of knowledge of the languages involved (including their own), and for many assumed errors throughout the texts. Such an apology appears already in the oldest Javanese work preserved, the above-mentioned ninth-century *Ramayana Kakawin*, and in the mid to late eighteenth-century *Kitab Patahulrahman.* The author, acknowledging he is "turning an Arabic work into Javanese verse", says of himself: "But though playing the poet I have no command of the language / I cannot find the right words" (Drewes 1977:52-53).[5] In the anonymous and undated *Serat Mikrod Nabi Muhammad* (Anonymous MS. MSB I23, 1), depicting the Prophet's ascension to the heavens, we read: "The author humbly asks / from the friends who listen / great forgiveness / many letters look alike / fundamentally ugly untamed / the sentences unexceptional / hence [he asks] to be pardoned".[6]

Why translate? Why tell a particular story? The Javanese texts I am discussing do not always offer an explicit answer, and it is not unusual for them to gloss over the question in silence. Their study suggests that retelling a narrative from another language in Javanese was often not viewed as a distinct form of writing that required, or simply invited, reflection and acknowledgment on the part of the translator. It is also likely, at least where nineteenth-century works are concerned, that the foreign source was by then located in the distant past and therefore unknown or deemed irrelevant. In some cases, however, a motive for writing does explicitly appear. Most commonly the translation of a text is believed to bestow blessings, religious merit and good fortune on the person fulfilling the task as well as those who read the text or listen to its recitation. For example, the opening lines of the Javanese *Tuḥfa* (early seventeenth century?) read: "Attention: my prayers and greetings / to all who wish to recite [this work] / or who may hear it later / May love be bestowed upon them / and mercy by Divine Providence / [and] may they be granted peace / by the Great One / being brought close to Him / and to His chosen prophet / who has the name Muhammad" (Johns 1965:29). This is an instance, one among many, in which it is difficult, if not impossible, to clearly distinguish between the motives for translation and those for composing or copying an existing text. Such

[4] Two examples are the anonymous *Amat Mukamat*, Yogyakarta, inscribed 1890s. MS. MSB L8; and *Johar Manik* inscribed 1909. MS. MSB L174. Both are described in Behrend (1990).

[5] *Kumawi tan wruh basané / tan wruh ing tindak-tanduk.*

[6] *Anuwun nira kang nulis / marang mitra kang miyarsa / dèn agung pangapurané / aksara kathah kang madha/ dhasar ala abongga / ukarané kirang langkung / marma dèn gung angaksama.* Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Javanese are my own.

motives are often identical, pointing us to the likely possibility that translation was not viewed as a separate literary endeavour, one worthy of mention as distinct from other writing practices.[7]

Explicit in some texts are didactic goals, which are relevant for many of the translated texts, whether theological, hagiographical or ritualistic. Such texts include, for example, edifying tales of the lives of the prophets, episodes from the Prophet Muhammad's biography, and advice on leading a righteous life, fulfilling the role of a good Muslim wife, ruling justly and performing the daily prayers. Related to the didactic motive was the goal of communal entertainment: Javanese texts were not meant to be read silently by individuals but rather were written in poetic metres and sung to audiences of varying size in court circles, religious institutions and communal gatherings. Another, more personal, motive for telling a story can be found in a version of *Serat Kadis serta Mikrat* (Amisena MS. PP Is. 9), which recounts the Prophet's nocturnal ascension to heaven, his journey through the hells and paradise and his meeting with God. The text, written for the ill Pakualam III (r. 1858-64) in Yogyakarta, was selected for its content, to be told to a dying ruler and offer him comfort and compassion before his final journey.

Although many texts do not mention the language they were translated from, there are also many instances of Javanese texts which do so. Such texts allow us to begin mapping the cultural contacts taking place at particular periods between Javanese and outsiders, contacts which led to acquaintance with new ideas, stories and literary forms. Whereas for an earlier period (c. ninth-fifteenth centuries) many translations were based on Sanskrit works (see Tom Hunter's contribution in this volume), in the centuries of and following the Islamization process on Java major sources for literary and religious translations were provided by materials written in Persian and Arabic. There were also translations of Malay works into Javanese and Javanese into Malay. These are particularly interesting in that they offer insight, through depictions of artistic expression and local forms of knowledge, into how those translating between the two languages perceived their neighbouring societies (Robson 1992:41-32).[8]

When considering the visibility or invisibility of translation processes, interlinear translations provide the clearest view of the source language. In the traditional teaching method in religious schools, a teacher would explain an Arabic-language treatise and provide Javanese glosses to the students. Such a case is found in a 1623 copy of the Arabic *Masa'il al-ta'lim*, a text on Islamic jurisprudence, in which the Javanese notes appear beneath the Arabic lines, purposely written with large spacing and margins. Due to the resulting layout of text and glosses, such books were referred to as 'bearded books' (*kitab jenggotan*) (Gallop and Arps 1991:100).[9]

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[7] For an important discussion of the concept of writing in traditional Java, see Florida (1995:19-21). Of similar tendencies in the Malay tradition, Jedamski notes that a clear distinction between author and translator gradually emerged only "under the heavy demands of Westernization and modernization processes" (Jedamski 2005:213).

[8] The directionality of translation between these languages is not always clear. Braginsky (2004:386 and 119-20 respectively) discusses the *Hikayat Indraputra* as translated from Malay into Javanese and the Panji tales as translated from Javanese into Malay.

[9] Another example is Raslan al-Dimashqi's *Risāla fi'l-tawḥīd*. Such interlinear translations – often word

In a more implicit manner, the opening lines of the *Serat Jaka Semangun*, a text relating the deeds of the young hero Semangun, a defender of the Prophet, offer a possible reference to translatedness: the story "originates from *Ngarab*", which could mean either that the story originates from Arabia or from the Arabic language (or both), and "was told in Javanese" (Syakir Ali 1986:19).[10] This reference – although possibly mentioning Arabic as the source for translation – is still quite ambiguous, and more likely refers broadly to the Arab lands. Raslan al-Dimashqi's *Risāla fi'l-tawḥīd* exists not only with an interlinear translation but also in a Javanese adaptation. The author introduces it as an Arabic work rendered in Javanese verse (*nembangaken kitab Arabi*), although it is clearly a loose retelling of several of the Arabic text's themes rather than the same text written in a different language (Drewes 1977:52).

At other times a text which is clearly an adaptation of an Arabic work – although it could have reached Java via a different language – is simply told by the Javanese author without any reference whatsoever to an earlier text or to his having composed a specifically Javanese version. Such is the case with a version of the abovementioned *Serat Mikrod Nabi Muhammad* copied in the 1920s, a text which relates one of the crucial events in the Prophet's life. After a brief, and conventional, apology to his readers for writing in an insufficiently proper idiom, the author begins recounting the story without further ado. This is probably testimony that the story – at least in this manuscript version from the 1920s – had become thoroughly familiar. Although it had its roots in Arabia during Islam's initial years, its actual translation seems to have been perceived as a thing of the distant past, no longer worthy of mention.

There are texts, like the one translated into English by Drewes (1978) as *An Early Javanese Code of Muslim Ethics* (written in the seventeenth century or earlier, according to Drewes), that claim explicitly to be compilations of source materials from other, earlier texts. Those earlier texts – al-Ghazali's *Bidāya*, the books mentioned as *Masabeh Mafateh* and *Rawdatululama*, and others – were written in Arabic, and thus their inclusion and integration into a Javanese work implies that either direct translations from Arabic or prior translations into Javanese were used to compile the *Code*.

It appears that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries translations and adaptations from Malay were also quite popular, although it is often difficult to say definitively whether a Malay version preceded a Javanese one or vice versa. With Persian being an important language of Muslim learning and literature, it is likely that many texts written in that language were translated first into Malay – possibly in Aceh, which was an important Malay kingdom and cosmopolitan centre in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – and then from Malay into Javanese. A well-known example is the 'Tale of the Wise Parrot' (Persian *Tuti Nameh*; Malay *Hikayat Bayan Budiman* or *Hikayat Khoja Maimun*; Javanese *Serat Bayan Budiman*). The 1603 'Crown of Kings' (in Malay *Kitab Tajul Salatin*; Javanese *Serat Mahkota Raja*) was composed in Malay rather than

by word – offer the clearest indication of ongoing translation work in the strict sense of the word. Works in Arabic were copied and also composed in the Indonesian Archipelago, as testified in several catalogues specifically devoted to listing such texts. The discussion of such works is beyond the scope of this analysis.

[10] *Saking ngarab pinangkané / wus binasakaken jawa.*

Persian but its author, Bukhari al-Jauhari, was clearly well versed in the Persian writing tradition (see Braginsky 2004:431). Persian source texts by no means had to originate in distant Persia, as Persian was widely used by Indian Muslims, including those of the subcontinent's far south. Indian traders and travellers frequenting the coastal towns of Aceh and the Malay Peninsula could have transmitted such texts and stories.

Terminologies of translation

In view of this very diverse picture, and the relative dearth of information about the translation process in many Javanese manuscripts, one important path to gaining a better understanding of this culture's approaches to translation is through studying the vocabulary used in the manuscripts to describe the rewriting of a text in a different language. An examination of various examples reveals a spectrum of terms going from the specific to the general and pointing to a range of 'translation'-related ideas and practices.[11]

In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Javanese manuscripts the verb *njawakaké* is sometimes employed to indicate translation. This verb (from *Jawa*: Java) means literally 'to Javanize, to render Javanese', implying not a stress on the source language – the language from which the text is being translated – nor on the process of carrying a story across, but on the language in which it is being rendered anew. The focus on the Javanese-ness of the resulting text, which becomes its central feature, is telling. The use of *njawakaké* was not limited to descriptions of the translation process from foreign languages into Javanese. It was also used for texts written in Kawi, an archaic form of Javanese with a large component of Sanskrit, in which a body of literature was created between the ninth and fourteenth centuries. When such texts were rewritten in modern Javanese, authors often referred to their practice as 'Javanizing' the Kawi, even though the latter was an older form of Javanese. We might say then that *njawakaké* referred to adapting a text to the contemporary Javanese idiom as understood by authors and scribes.

A similar notion is expressed in this period by the verb *binasakaken Jawa*, deriving from *basa* ('speech, language') with the transitive/causative suffix *aken* and the infix *in* indicating the passive voice.[12] Often, this verb refers specifically to the use of the *krama* ('refined, polite') speech level. With the designation *Jawa* added, it means 'to render into the language of Java', 'to express in Javanese'. This term can appear with or without mention of the prior source now being rendered in Javanese. An interesting example – where the term *Jawi* ('Java, Javanese language, a Javanese') finds double use – is found in the early eighteenth-century *Samud* (Anonymous MS. LOr. 4001), where the author uses the term *binasakaken Jawi* to refer to his translation act and *wong tan Jawi* ('non-Javanese') to refer to his own identity. We are left to revel in the abilities of

[11] After conducting a somewhat similar exercise on translation terminology in several Indian languages, Trivedi (2006:117) raises the concern that to list the Indian terms as alternatives to 'translation' "is actually to enlist them under the flag of Western 'translation'. These terms ... are not and cannot become synonymous and optional words for the English term 'translation' .... Before we say that they all mean 'translation' we must remind ourselves that they cannot themselves be so simply translated".

[12] For a similar notion and grammatical construction in the Cebuano language, see Erlinda K. Alburo's contribution in this volume.

a non-local, non-native speaker who is able to retell the story in a cultural idiom that is not his own.[13] This is therefore another example of the idea of bringing a story *into* Javanese.

Less explicit but still quite similar is the way some texts define themselves as translations or retellings from Kawi. In these instances we find a stress on the transmission from ancient times, supposedly from a previous form of Javanese, as noted above. Since many Kawi texts were based on or inspired by non-Muslim Indian works or were pre-Islamic Javanese creations, the notion that Islamic tales were indeed derived from Kawi versions is questionable. It seems that the use of the idiom *kang ing panurwa kawi* (literally: 'created in Kawi') indicates the status of the story as ancient and authoritative. *Purwa* in its derived verb form, as found here, means 'to begin, to originate, to create'. Since *kawi* also means poet, the phrase could refer to a work being created by the revered poets (of the past).[14] Explicitly, the emphasis is here put on a text's poetic source and where it is coming *from*, at least in a temporal sense; more implicitly, on its incorporation, from now on, *into* Javanese.

Another notion exemplifying the particular attitude found in Javanese translation terminology is that of making a foreign story not just accessible because it has been linguistically converted but also specifically Javanese. As mentioned, in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Java texts were written to be sung according to metrical verse — most commonly, since the eighteenth century, in the *macapat* meters. These not only dictated the form verses took (number of lines, syllables, etc.), but also set the mood and tone of poetic sections with certain metres deemed appropriate to convey longing, depict battle scenes or introduce didactic material. Such classical verse is referred to as *tembang*. Sometimes the derived verb *nembangaken* – to sing for one's pleasure – is employed by translators to indicate producing a work in which a source was rewritten in Javanese verse. Emphasized here is a central component of the Javanese writing tradition and the fact that it, too, was a significant element of the translation process through which texts became localized in Java.[15]

So far I have examined terms which point to translation as a new rendering of a text in ways that are specifically Javanese, going from the most concrete – 'to Javanize' – to forms that employ the language and metrics of Javanese culture. Still in the realm

[13] The story, like the above-mentioned *Serat Jaka Semangun*, was *saka Ngarab*, 'from Arabic' or 'from Arabia'. *Jawi* can have a much wider semantic field of meaning – referring generally to the lands and people of Southeast Asia as well as the Malay language – but here I think it is referring specifically to Java.

[14] This example is from *Samud* (Anonymous MS. PNRI KBG 413). In it, *Kawi* may well refer to the poet, as the complete line reads: *kang ing panurwa kawi / caritané nabiyullah* ('That which was told / created by the poets of old / the story of God's Prophet'). An example from Amisena's *Serat Kadis Serta Mikrad* (MS. PP Is. 9) is more instructive regarding the rewriting from Kawi motif, describing itself as *lapel kawi dèn maknani basa Jawa* ('a kawi text explained in Javanese'). *Maknani Jawa*, 'give meaning in Javanese, interpret', is yet another way translation is described in the literature.

[15] Examples of this term are found in the Javanese translation of the *Tuḥfa* (*Nembang basa ing Tuḥfa*) and, as mentioned above, in the *Kitab Patahulrahman* (*Nembangaken kitab Arabi*); see Johns (1965:28) and Drewes (1977:52), respectively. Interestingly, in both these cases the term is used for translations which are explicitly from Arabic.

of story production, but in a more general sense, we find the term *winarni* ('narrated', 'told'). Blending the processes and practices of narrating, transmitting and translating stories, it can refer to any or all of these. It may appear in an introduction such as *wonten cerita winarni ... saking kitab metunèka* ('there is a story that is told … its source is a *kitab*', where *kitab* refers to an Arabic or Arabic-derived book), or simply as *wau ta ingkang winarni* ('thus it was told').[16] Although this is no doubt a more general, indeed generic term, its derivation from *warni* ('form, appearance, colour, kind') hints at ways in which, again, a story finds a shape and hue – however figuratively – that make it a part of its new, Javanese surroundings.

Several other terms are common as well. *Nyalin* implies a change, a replacement, as in a change of clothes, name, or living place.[17] This bespeaks not a repetition in another language but exchanging the text in one language for another – potentially very different – text, as one acquires a completely new name after falling ill or changes clothes for a special occasion. *Njarwani* means 'to explain' or 'assign meaning', and was often used (like *njawakaké*) for the process of retelling in modern Javanese an earlier, Old Javanese text which was no longer widely understood.

It is intriguing to ask whether the differential use of particular translation concepts may be attributed to certain places or historical periods. For that purpose, the explanatory sample presented here is too limited. The problem is further confounded by uncertainty regarding the date of composition and inscription of many works. However, it is still worth noting a potential tendency that, with much further research, may emerge as a pattern: one of the earliest Javanese Islamic texts extant, the *Tuḥfa* (early seventeenth century), translated from an Arabic source, employs the term *nembangaken* ('versify in Javanese'). A somewhat later text, the *Samud*, believed to date from the early eighteenth century, uses *binasakaken jawi* ('render in Javanese'). In an 1823 *Samud* fragment copied in Surakarta (Anonymous MS. KS 339.1) we find *jinawakaken* ('Javanize'), whereas *panurwa kawi* ('as told by the poets of old', or 'as told previously in Kawi') appears in the mid to late nineteenth-century *Samud* and an 1884 version of that same book from Yogyakarta (Anonymous MS. PP St. 80). These changes may imply a distancing from the more Java-centred terminology (like *njawakaké*) towards more general terms suggesting retelling, as such stories came to be seen much less as translations than simply as Javanese stories told anew.

From this perspective, it might be expected that the more general *winarni* ('narrated') would come into focus at a relatively late stage, but that does not appear to be supported by the current evidence.[18] Furthermore, when Malay translation terminology going back to the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is examined as a comparison (Malay *diceriterakan* and *diperkatakan* 'told', 'narrated'), it becomes apparent that a general 'storytelling' term for a translated work can be quite old. Additional research is certainly

[16] These examples are taken from *Samud* (Anonymous MS. PNRI Br. 504) and *Serat Samud* (Anonymous MS. FSUI CI 110) respectively.

[17] For the use of the Malay cognate *salin* see Haslina Haroon's contribution in this volume.

[18] For example, *winarni* is used in *Serat Samud* (Anonymous MS. FSUI CI 109), which, being written on *dhluwang* bark-paper, appears to have been inscribed in the early nineteenth century at the latest.

needed in order to draw firmer conclusions on the evolution of translation terminology in Javanese. However, it is clear that different translation terms, with their nuances of meaning, circulated concurrently. These variegated terms, rather than dictating or even suggesting a sameness of source and translation or a carrying across of a single, authoritative version from one place or linguistic code to another, express an openness to changes made in imported texts and to that which was specific to the receiving cultures.[19] Such an approach is reminiscent of the one referred to as 'transcreation' in Gopinathan's discussion of translation in ancient India (Gopinathan 2000, 2006): transcreation is a holistic approach which includes the interpretation of culturally important texts in consideration of readers' needs, elaboration, deletion, explanation, elucidation and image change. This approach "demands an intuitive and aesthetic recreation and the application of the creative imagination" (Gopinathan 2006:237), attributes which are widely evident in Javanese literature.

In the remainder of this article I focus briefly on a particular narrative and the discourse on translation presented by the makers of its translations into Javanese. I then compare its translation into that language with the way in which the same narrative was translated in Europe, pointing to some differences in the contexts, practices and meanings of translation that such a comparative approach brings to light. The narrative is one I have already mentioned in passing: the book titled *Samud* or *Serat Samud* is a Javanese rendering of a very famous and widely circulating Islamic work which was written in Arabic around the tenth century and later translated into many languages across the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia and Europe. The original *Kitāb masā'il 'Abdallah bin Salām lin-nabi*, typically known in translation as the *Book of One Thousand Questions*, recounts the story of a question and answer dialogue between the Prophet Muhammad and the Jewish leader Abdullah Ibn Salam (known in Java by the name Samud) at the end of which the Jew – having had all his questions answered to his satisfaction – converts to Islam. There are many Javanese manuscripts in which this story appears, and although their content and titles vary, they are similar enough to be considered as a single corpus.

Translation in the Javanese *Book of Samud*

In a version of the text from the Pakualam court in Yogyakarta (Anonymous MS. PP St. 80) mention is made of a poet telling the story of the wise Samud or alternatively of the ancient story being retold. Besides this brief mention, which does not indicate a source or authorship, the manuscript's date appears as 1884. Although it may be that by the late nineteenth century the text was thought of as Javanese rather than a translated work, this silence is probably also the author's following in the footsteps of predecessors who did not explicitly mention the translation act. The text is very similar in verse form and

[19] Another indication of this openness can be seen in the absence, to the best of my knowledge, of codified translation manuals in Javanese. This contrasts with the existence of manuals for a related practice, manuscript illumination. For an example of the latter, from Yogyakarta, see Gallop and Arps (1991:95).

content to several others in the corpus and was most likely copied (with some variation) from a text that had been circulating for a much longer period.

The motive for this telling of the story is found at the very end of the text, immediately after Samud's conversion and departure are described:

> All those who read [or] listen
> are granted great mercy
> the one who writes and the one who stores [the text]
> may they also be granted
> love from great God
> and the blessings of the Prophet Muhammad
> in this world and the next guarded day and night
> by the angels //
> For [taking part in this text] is equal to visiting
> the Ka'abah and reading
> the Quran for all of you
> and it is the same as
> giving as alms a mountain of gold
> and all your descendents
> granted forgiveness
> for all their sins
> guarded by a million angels
> and [gaining] all that is in this world //.
> (*Serat Samud*, Anonymous MS. PP St. 80, canto 20.33-4; my translation)[20]

We find here a common invocation of blessings to be incurred on all participants in the creation and use of the text, who are likened to those visiting the holiest shrine of Islam or reading the holiest of its scriptures. The rewards promised are immense, making an association with the text most attractive.

A further version, the 1898 *Serat Suluk Samud Ibnu Salam* (Anonymous MS. P 173a), does not mention translation or adaptation into Javanese either. It makes no reference to an author, translator or scribe, nor to a place of inscription. It does, however, mention 1898 as its inscription date. In contrast to the Pakualam text, which introduces the frame for the Samud story in its opening lines, this version discards the narrative structure that is common to most versions. In the initial canto the author explains that this text will elaborate on mystical teachings regarding the nature of the body, the soul and the relationship between Man and God. In the second canto the author mentions that it will be through the teachings of the Prophet that these truths will be revealed. There is no further mention of why or how the text was composed.

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[20] The original text reads: *Kang maca miyarsa kabèh / antuk karahmat agung / kang anurat lan kang nimpeni / mugi sami antuka / sih ing hyang kang luhur / lan barkat nabi mukamad / dunya kérat rineksaha siyang ratri / maring para malékat // Apan pinadhakaken ngunjungi / kakbatullah kelawan amaca / maring kuran sira kabèh / lawan padha puniku / lan sidhekah emas sawukir / muwah satedhak ira / ing ngapura iku / apa ing sadosa nira / pan malékat sayuta kang ngrekasa iki / muwah isi ning dunya.*

These two texts, inscribed in the late nineteenth century, exemplify some major elements discussed regarding 'translation' practices in Javanese, which are often – along with the translator's identity – entirely implicit. Although there is a variety of terms related to translation and transmission across the larger *Samud* corpus, what is shared almost without exception by the more than a dozen Javanese versions of the *Samud* whose translation history I have examined is that mention of a prior source for their telling is rare. Acknowledgment of an earlier author, a language the story was previously told in, or a source-text title is highly unusual and provides the exception, not the rule.[21]

Both the terminology used (or not used) in these works and the silence on earlier sources point to a certain distancing from the translation or retelling act and a stress on the Javanese-ness of the texts. Since in Islam generally sources and genealogies of transmission, especially as they pertain to the Prophet's words, are crucial to the reliability and authority of textual materials, this indicates a cultural element that was apparently not adopted – at least not consistently – along with the literary materials and religious doctrine.

To emphasize the major features of the Javanese translation tradition raised thus far, including the anonymity of translators, their frequent silence on prior sources and the general dearth of detail relating to translation acts, I now turn briefly to a particular translation context in medieval Europe – twelfth-century Spain – and compare it with the tendencies of the Javanese ones examined here. The point of this comparison is not to generalize in any way about 'Europe' or 'The West'. Rather, through the connecting link of a common narrative translated in two very different periods and parts of the globe, I wish to reiterate the idea that acts of translation and their accompanying narratives have had, and still possess, multiple meanings. A comparative and historical approach to translation is often central to understanding broad cultural and (in this case) religious projects.

A comparative perspective

Although for medieval Europe, too, many anonymously translated texts can be found, there is also evidence of individual translators, of their names, identities and motives for translating a particular text. Prefaces to twelfth- and thirteenth-century translations, typically from Arabic to Latin, often explain a translator's aims and provide details on the circumstances under which he worked (d'Alverny 1982). Greek science, for centuries kept alive largely in Arabic, along with the Arabs' own knowledge of mathematics, astronomy and medicine, was being conveyed in Latin by translators conscious of their role in the recovery of such critical materials and of their contribution to Western scholarship (Haskins 1927:278-302). We have no parallel evidence from Java of translators' in-depth acknowledgment of their goals and roles, neither from the corresponding period nor from later centuries.

In an example of how medieval European translators, under particular circumstances, might take a clear stance on their craft, Peter the Venerable, initiator of the

[21] One of these exceptions is a mid to late nineteenth-century *Serat Samud* (Anonymous MS. FSUI CI 110) manuscript written in *pégon* (Arabic) script, in which Muhammad's uncle Abbas is mentioned as the source of the story. This may point to a Malay connection for this particular telling.

mid-twelfth-century translation project in Toledo which produced the Latin translation of the *Book of One Thousand Questions*, *Doctrina Mahumet*, stated his motive for translating Muslim texts into Latin as being to supply his fellow Christians – typically wholly ignorant of the Muslim religion – with trustworthy information about Islam. Possessing such information would, according to Peter, bring Christians to refute elements which they would consider false in Muslim doctrine and would thus create a powerful resistance to Islam (Kritzeck 1964:42). This ideological motivation becomes even clearer in prefaces offered by some of the translators Peter employed. In his dedicatory letter to the first translation in the collection, the *Fabulae Saracenorum* – which cannot be traced to its Arabic source in part because the translator intentionally omitted its *isnād*, or chain of textual authority – Robert of Ketton explicitly outlines his actions: "I exposed the law of the aforementioned [Mohammed] by my own hand, and brought it into the treasury of the Roman tongue, in order that, once its baseness became known, the Corner stone [i.e., Christ; cf. Eph. 2:20], the most precious Redemption of the human race, might send forth His splendors farther and wider" (Kritzeck 1964:62-63).[22]

In his prefatory letter to the translation of the Quran – its first ever complete edition in a language other than Arabic – Robert writes, addressing his letter to Peter: "selecting nothing, altering nothing in the sense except for the sake of intelligibility … I have uncovered Muhammed's smoke so that it may be extinguished by your bellows" (*ibid.*:65). The very title he gave to the translation of the text on Muhammad and the early caliphs ('The stories of the Saracens: The faulty and ridiculous chronicle of the Saracens') and the mocking and contemptuous tone he used in his introductory letter meant that Robert framed the translation in a particular, very negative manner, influencing readers' concept of the content even before they saw the first page. In Genette's (1997) terms, his inserted paratexts – the title and introduction – accorded the translator a powerful sway over readers' minds.[23] Although to a lesser degree, this applies as well to the title chosen by Herman of Dalmatia for his Latin translation of the *Book of One Thousand Questions,* part of the same project: giving it the title *Doctrina Mahumet* framed the translation in a way that accorded it the legitimacy of official doctrine, which, according to Herman, meant the work possessed great authority among the Muslims.

Lastly, an additional striking feature of this early translation project and one that marked the *Doctrina Mahumet* translation has to do with notions of faithfulness to an original text. Peter deemed important the employment of a Muslim translator, known as Mohammed, who was responsible for supplying the other translators with exact meanings of Arabic words and background on Islamic doctrine. Peter stated that the translations "should not lack the fullest fidelity, nor anything be taken away by deceit" (Kritzeck 1964:68). This statement, while it may not tell us much about the actual texture of the resulting translations, conveys a conviction that equivalence in translation is both desirable and possible, a belief that would later be echoed by generations of Christian

[22] The text is a compendium of Muslim cosmology, tales of the prophets and early caliphs and Muhammad's life and light. Robert omitted the *isnād* or transmission genealogy of the text on the grounds that the Arabic names would mean nothing to his Latin readers (Kritzeck 1964:75).

[23] For further discussion of prefaces written by translators of Greek and Arabic texts into Latin about their motives and circumstances, see d'Alverny (1982:421-60).

missionaries striving to translate the Bible into a vast number of languages (Israel 2006). In the Muslim tradition, on the contrary, translation of Scripture was viewed as impossible on an ideal level and problematic on a practical one, giving rise to debates and controversies lasting into the present (Tibawi 1962; Rahman 1988; Riddell 2009).

The Toledo Collection translation project is not representative of medieval European translation models, which were often quite similar to the ones described for Java in terms of translators' apologetic stance and their anonymity. However, it does call our attention to the existence of an alternative trend, one that does not find a parallel in Javanese sources and also differs from other currents in European medieval translation: the Toledan translators did not express humility nor regret their shortcomings. Their names appeared explicitly on the translations and they expressed a clear goal for their undertaking, a religious one in the cases I have mentioned. The translator's introduction tended to frame the text in a way that complemented the translator's – or his patron's – agenda. Fidelity to the source text was viewed as an important principle in ideal terms, although it was certainly not always followed in practice.[24]

In contrast, Javanese translators and authors, including those working on the *Samud*, regularly put forth apologies for their ignorance and dearth of skills. However conventional and formulaic, these words of humbleness express a deference to prior authority and a sense that the contemporary individual is always lacking in comparison with earlier generations of teachers and scholars. That translations were often anonymous is further testimony to a particular individual's contribution being deemed unimportant to the larger endeavour, in which translations were understood as collective works. Explanations of the motives for translation were often absent. When present, they were brief and often had to do with accumulating merit and good fortune, invoking blessings, offering advice, comfort or knowledge. When appearing in a text's opening lines, such justifications framed the text in a similar way to the Latin translations I have discussed. When appearing at the end, as was often the case, they had less of an impact in this respect.

If 'fidelity' is not asserted as a virtue by the Javanese translators, this is not because translators working in Javanese could not tell precise from vague or lacked sufficient skills – linguistic and poetic – to reproduce a 'faithful', relatively precise rendering of a source text. Rather, the dominant ideal seems to have been that to 'translate', or to 'Javanize' (*njawakaké*), in this setting meant to retell or rewrite a text in ways that were often both culturally appropriate and impressively creative. Using one's imaginative powers and literary skills in making a story Javanese was considered the appropriate thing to do, a creative act that would address a specifically Javanese audience.

[24] The *Doctrina Mahumet* was translated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries into several European languages, including Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, German and French. Significantly, in several cases, the *Doctrina Mahumet* was published bound in a single volume with the Quran, as had been done originally in Peter the Venerable's project. The Dutch and German editions were printed in the same manner. This suggests that the text was viewed and used in Christian Europe as a supplement to, or commentary on, the Quran, according it great authority. On the Portuguese and Dutch translations, see Pijper (1924:8-9). On the Italian, German and French translations and the view that the text was influential in shaping European conceptions of Islam, see Bobzin (1995:334-35).

Concluding thoughts

Especially in terms of attitudes taken towards Islam and its textual sources, the two translation contexts touched upon here were clearly radically different, a fact that strongly contributed to shaping the outcome of translation. Diverging religious convictions were, however, only part of the story. Aspects including patronage systems, political agendas and religious motives are powerful elements in how translation 'happens'. Such elements bear on particular ideas and practices of how texts can, and should, be retold in another language, and how these retellings are narrated and explained. In this brief comparison, meant to highlight significant assumptions about the role, meaning and practice of translation rather than claim consistent, clear-cut opposition between the different traditions, two major points emerge. First, we see that in the particular twelfth-century European example I have presented, a stress on the individual translator went hand in hand with an idealized preoccupation with fidelity in translation, whereas in the Javanese materials anonymity – the effacing of the individual – was coupled with an ideal of creativity and change. Related to this point and perhaps even more striking is the relationship between claims to fidelity to a source text and assertions about the truthfulness of its content. In the Toledo Project's translations, the rhetorical stress on accuracy and precision was explicitly employed as part of an effort to undermine and discredit the Arabic texts' teachings; in the Javanese translations a distancing from the source in the form of creativity and poetic freedom was part of a powerful array of tools used to accredit earlier sources and present them as legitimate. Rather than delve into genealogy and the texture of a text's past lives, translators worked to make initially foreign materials familiar and evocative in their idiom and imagery. Thus, exploring the translation history of a narrative like the *Book of One Thousand Questions* allows a picture of how translation was perceived, employed, manipulated and described across cultures and time to emerge.

Translation, be it in medieval Spain, late nineteenth-century Java or elsewhere, is always intertwined with broad cultural processes, particular value systems and social and political views. Studying how people in various periods and places have conceptualized and practised translation in both similar and diverse ways enriches our understanding of their multiple, and often interconnected, histories. The Javanese perspectives discussed here suggest that in this culture translation was not so much a way to replicate or reproduce a foreign text in a highly accurate manner as an attempt to make it accessible and, perhaps most importantly, as the terminology shows, Javanese. Complementing this tendency, and despite clear indications of contact and acquaintance with texts written in Arabic, Malay and a variety of additional languages, Javanese translators showed little concern with noting source languages, source texts, names, dates, or translation motives. Those outside lands and cultures, and the processes and individuals that brought them closer to home, were often left unmentioned – un-translated into words, we might say – with the creatively adapted, newly familiar and very Javanese text taking centre stage.

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Early Discourse on Translation in Malay
The Views of Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsyi

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Abstract: *This chapter aims to examine early discourse on Malay translations as expressed by Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsyi in the mid-nineteenth century Malay Peninsula. By discourse on translation is meant any text propagating a writer's views and thoughts on translation, including those on methods, principles and practices of translation. Exploring such early discourse is interesting and relevant as it can allow us not only to trace how translation was first conceptualized but also to evaluate its relevance to, and implications for, current understandings of translation and contemporary translation practices.*

Introduction

Translation history as a field of study has emerged within the larger field of translation studies only in the past decades. For a long time debates in the field were generally dominated by issues relating to theories, methods and strategies, which is understandable considering that these issues have direct implications for the concept of translation as interlingual transfer. Scholars like Bassnett (1996:39) pointed out that "no introduction to Translation Studies could be complete without consideration of the discipline in a historical perspective"; this emphasis on the importance of the historical perspective is also reflected in a number of other titles published around the same time. One of these titles is *Translators through History* (Delisle and Woodsworth 1995). As explained by Jean-Francois Joly, the then President of the International Federation of Translators (FIT), in the preface to the volume (*ibid.*:xiv), the book, published under the auspices of FIT, has two main purposes: "first, to bring translators from the ancient and recent past out of oblivion and, second, to illustrate the roles they have played in the evolution of human thought". The publication of the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (Baker 1998) can also be seen as a positive development in terms of the recognition of translation history as a legitimate field of enquiry; the publication includes an "overview of national histories of translation and interpreting in some thirty linguistic and cultural communities" that was added to address "a seriously neglected area of translation studies" (*ibid.*:xiv).

Nevertheless, the study of translation as an academic discipline in many parts of the world has had to rely for a long time on perspectives that are deeply rooted in Western translation traditions. This is not surprising considering that these traditions are more widely researched, documented and consequently discussed in academic publications and conferences. In the above-mentioned titles from the 1990s, Asian translation traditions are not well represented, and Southeast Asia is left out altogether. This situation has improved significantly in the past few years, which have witnessed the publication of a number of studies that deal with translation in Asian language communities. In *Asian*

Translation Traditions (Hung and Wakabayashi 2005:1), the editors state that much of the effort invested in the book stemmed from their realization of "the bias in the contemporary field of Translation Studies, which remains highly Eurocentric both in its theoretical explorations and its historical grounding", adding that their effort is an attempt "to help rectify this bias and lack of information by giving Asian scholars and discourses a greater presence within the discipline" and to show that "Asian voices on translation are not merely an echo of the Western voice". Other publications such as Hermans (2006), Rukmini Bhaya Nair (2002) and Thornber (2009) emphasize these Asian voices even further by looking at literary contact nebulae in intra-Asian translation traditions.

In the second edition of the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, Baker and Saldanha (2009:xx) express sentiments similar to those of Hung and Wakabayashi in their comments on the dominance of Western perspectives on translation:

> Translation studies has traditionally been strongly Eurocentric in orientation, and in some parts of the world continues to be dominated by theoretical paradigms that originated in the West and that are oblivious to the rich and substantially different experiences of translation outside Europe and North America. However, as translation studies continues to gain a strong foothold in the academy and establish itself as a full-fledged discipline, one important and welcome trend at the turn of the century has been a sustained growth of interest in non-Western perspectives.

In the same volume Baker and Saldanha (*ibid.*:xxii) also endeavour "to expand the historical part to include more non-Western traditions", and include a new entry on Southeast Asian Traditions. Tymoczko (2009:404) argues for rigorous internationalization and de-Westernization of translation studies to cope with contemporary challenges brought about by new technologies and media.

It is against the background of these developments that the present study should be read. Research on Malay translation traditions has received only cursory treatment by translation scholars. In the context of Malay translation traditions, where little has been documented about translators' concepts and experiences, this preliminary study aims to contribute to a growing discourse on non-Western perspectives on translation, in the hope that such discourse may eventually "effect a radical and long overdue repositioning of translation studies internationally" (Baker and Saldanha 2009:xx).

Drawing on the practical guidelines provided by Woodsworth (1998:100) about a possible research focus on either practice or theory or both theory and practice, I focus on Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsyi's views on translation. I explore the comments made on the art of translation by this nineteenth-century author and translator and examine his ideas about the nature of the texts he translated. I begin, however, with a brief introduction to this eminent and controversial figure in the Malay literary world of the nineteenth century.

Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsyi

Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsyi (1796-1854) is more widely known in the Malay Peninsula as a writer rather than a translator. People's opinions of Abdullah Munsyi and

the value of his literary works in the Malay World have greatly varied over the years. Some recent examples of studies on this author are Ungku Maimunah (2002), who argues that Westerners have helped Munsyi Abdullah acquire the status of the Father of Modern Malay Literature, and Putten (2006) who discusses how Abdullah's close relationship and collaboration with the missionaries shaped certain ideas in his writings. In a momentous project, Amin Sweeney published Abdullah's complete works in three bulky volumes; the editor also critically assessed previous scholars' opinions of Abdullah and his writings and re-edited his works comprehensively (Sweeney 2005-08).

Although Sweeney (2006) and others have discussed Abdullah's role in the efforts to translate the Bible into Malay, most of what has been written about him has revolved around him as a writer and did not engage with his concepts of translation and his work as a translator. This study adopts a different approach by exploring Abdullah the translator and his views on translation.

Much of Abdullah's views on translation can be found in his memoirs, entitled *Hikayat Abdullah* (literally 'The Story of Abdullah'). In discussing Abdullah's views on translation as gleaned from this text, it must be borne in mind that *Hikayat Abdullah*, written between 1840 and 1843 and first published in 1849, is often described as a work which offers Abdullah's accounts of life during the early years of British colonization and his own observations and descriptions of life in the Malay Peninsula in the nineteenth century. However, the extent to which these observations reflect actual circumstances at the time has not been left unquestioned. Ungku Maimunah (2002:102) argued that the book was "consciously written for a Western audience" and therefore "it is hardly surprising that the book would be tailored to suit European tastes, namely the kind of thematic preoccupations and perspectives which would suit and interest a European reader". In other words, *Hikayat Abdullah* is a highly subjective text in which the historical facts presented by Abdullah may have been manipulated to suit his own purposes. Sweeney, for instance, argued that Abdullah may have manipulated reality in his writing by referring to a close rapport with several prominent personages such as Raffles and Newbold, while these colonial officials never mentioned Abdullah in print or in their letters. Abdullah's accounts of life then as depicted in *Hikayat Abdullah* may need to be approached with some caution.

Despite such uncertainty regarding the accuracy of Abdullah's accounts, there is little doubt that *Hikayat Abdullah* is an important source of information and that the author's views with regard to translation can be readily mined from this source. The book contains references to methods and principles of translation, based on Abdullah's observations of translated works and his own involvement in translation activities. It is thus curious that apart from a brief examination of Abdullah's views on the role of translation in language learning (Haslina 2003), no attempt has been made to examine his views on methods and principles of translation. This is quite surprising considering that Abdullah himself was a prolific translator, as discussed in *Hikayat Abdullah*. In examining Abdullah's views in this chapter, I refer to the 1997 edition of *Hikayat Abdullah* and Hill's translation of the work (1970).

Abdullah's translation principles based on his observation of Bible translation

The readers of *Hikayat Abdullah* get the first glimpse of Abdullah's thoughts on translation in a chapter entitled 'The Anglo-Chinese College'. Abdullah reports his first encounter with the Rev. William Milne, a missionary from the London Missionary Society, who presented him with a copy of a Malay Bible translated from Dutch. That Abdullah was given a copy of the translation of the Bible is telling in light of the fact that the earliest translation activities triggered by the arrival of the Europeans in the region were connected to the advent of Christianity (Aveling and Yamada 2009). Interest in translation was sparked by the realization that the popularity of the Malay language as the *lingua franca* of the region meant that the language could be used as a medium for spreading Christianity. One of the earliest attempts to translate the Bible into Malay was undertaken by a Basque Jesuit by the name of Francis Xavier who reached Malacca in 1545. According to Jayne (1970:200-201), in his early attempts to preach Christianity Xavier

> traversed the silent city-streets after dark, swinging his bell and calling upon the people of Malacca to pay for all sinners and souls in purgatory. The slaves and children soon learned to sing the simple verse he had written and set to music; but the mass of the people consisted of Muhammadans, who remained obstinately deaf to the most eloquent sermons in a language they could not understand.

According to Jayne (*ibid.*), Xavier soon realized he was making little progress and with the help of an interpreter began using the Malay language to proselytize the indigenous population. Xavier was of course aware of the importance of Malay for his mission in the east and began learning Malay "at least to the point that he could translate Catholic prayers and basic catechetical dialogues into Malay for use in the mission fields of the Celebes and Moluccas" (Collins 1998:16-17). Collins adds that Xavier had set an important precedent of using Malay instead of a Portuguese pidgin or one of the many indigenous languages. This trend subsequently would be followed by many others engaged in missionary work.

The first complete translation of the Bible into Malay was undertaken by the Dutch preacher and medical doctor, Melchior Leydekker. This translation was commissioned by the Dutch East India Company and published in Batavia in Roman script in 1733 and in Arabic script in 1758. Leydekker's translation was so influential that it became the standard translation in the Malay Peninsula until 1853 (Hunt 1989). It was probably a copy of this Bible translation reprinted by the British in India that Milne presented to Abdullah in their first meeting. From Abdullah's comments about this occasion and the observations he made on this Bible translation we gain insight into his views of what he considered proper translation. In the following excerpt, Abdullah recounts his experience upon seeing the Malay translation of the Bible for the first time:

> Then he [Milne] went into an inner room and fetched two or three volumes of the Gospel printed in the Malay language. When I saw the lettering, I was very

> surprised, for never before had I seen Malay printed. But after examining it closely I found that I could follow all of it. Only the punctuation marks were wrong, for in Malay manuscript-writing not nearly so many are used. I felt some concern when I asked myself "How many styles of Malay writing must there be in the world?" but this I kept to myself. When I asked "Where was this book produced, sir?" Mr. Milne replied "The Dutch produced it. They prepared a translation in Malay." Then I asked him "What book is it?" and Mr. Milne replied "The Gospel" adding "take one of the volumes away with you and read it,"... (1970:104; 1997:96-97)[1]

Being trained in Arabic and several other languages, Abdullah had little problem recognizing the letters used – *maka semuanya itu kukenal belaka hurufnya* ('I found I could follow all of it'). He was, however, taken aback, not only because it was his first encounter with a book printed in Malay but more so because according to him the book was written in Malay without any regard for its conventions of writing. Abdullah indicated that *noktah* ('marks') were improperly or differently used (*bersalahan noktahnya*) in the translation. Hill interpreted this phrase in a general manner as 'punctuation marks', but these marks or dots may also refer to diacritical dots that distinguish Arabic letters which may have had more far-reaching consequences for Abdullah's interpretation.[2]

Hunt (1989) argues that Leydekker's translation was made deficient by two elements: the use of loan-words from Persian and Arabic and the use of improper grammar and idiom. Based on the following excerpt, Abdullah's main problem seems to have been with the latter. Here, Abdullah reports the discovery he made while carefully reading the translated Bible presented to him by Milne.

> As soon as I reached my home I sat down and read it, noting carefully all the punctuation marks. After I had read the first page I continued reading with speed all through the night until I had almost finished the book. The letters and the form of the words were proper Malay but the style of writing was not. Furthermore, words were used in impossible places, or put together in impossible combinations. Therefore I found I could not understand the real meaning of the book. It all sounded very clumsy to my ear, and I was inclined to say "This is a book of the white man, and I do not know the white man's language." I was much intrigued as I sat thinking about the book for I was attracted by its printing, the lettering being very fine. Only the words were unintelligible, being neither Malay nor English, and I could not fathom them. I thought "It was useless to produce such a book. I know not how much money and energy had been spent on it but its phraseology makes it valueless." (1970:106; 1997:99)

It is clear that from Abdullah's point of view, any text that is translated into Malay should fully adopt the rules of Malay grammar and read fluently instead of sounding

[1] The English translations are Hill's (1970) unless stated otherwise; for easy reference I also provide the page numbers in the Malay edition of *Hikayat Abdullah* (1997).

[2] *Noktah* or *noqtah* may refer to a sub-component of an Arabic character. Different Arabic characters can be formed by varying the number and position of the diacritical dots in relation to the main component of the character.

'clumsy'. The replacement of foreign words with words in Malay alone is not enough in producing a translation. The translator must attempt to translate the source language into the target language, in the way that the target language is habitually used by target readers. To translate into a target language by retaining the grammar of the source language, according to Abdullah, is clearly a useless and futile act. Abdullah's preferred strategy may remind us of the concept of 'domestication' of foreign language material by modifying it to the linguistic structure and cultural values of the target language. It may also not be coincidental that this strategy was "firmly entrenched as a canon in English-language translation", applied to give the impression that the translation was 'transparent' and did not read as a translated text from a foreign language (Venuti 1993:38-39). By the 1840s Abdullah had translated for British missionaries and officers for approximately 20 years, and so must have been very well acquainted with – and internalized – this preferred method of his patrons.

Abdullah's relationship with Milne reportedly grew closer after he started to teach Milne Malay on the latter's request. Abdullah's account of teaching Malay to Milne and other colonial officers and missionaries gives us a detailed picture of the activities of the colonial officers and missionaries during that time and, moreover, brings to light Abdullah's firmly-held beliefs with regard to translation.

Abdullah's translation principles based on his teaching activities

While Abdullah was involved in teaching Malay to Milne, he was introduced to a German missionary by the name of Claudius Thomsen. Thomsen, like Milne, was also keen to study Malay, and like Milne, he too requested Abdullah's teaching services. In *Hikayat Abdullah*, Abdullah wrote about his observation of Thomsen and his attitude towards Malay, which ultimately reveals Abdullah's own views of translation.

> When he made a translation from English into Malay he was in the habit of following English idiom so that it was only a partial translation from English into Malay and the construction sounded very strange in the Malay language. Several times I intervened to stop him doing this, but still he was unable to find the right idiom. (1970:120; 1997:114)

A number of important points are apparent in this citation. First, we find an example of the word used for 'translation' or 'translate' which in *Hikayat Abdullah* most frequently is rendered as *salin*. *Salin* is a very common Malay word that refers to a 'change of medium, metamorphosis'; Abdullah used it quite frequently in his work in the meaning of 'copy' and 'translate'. Tymoczko (2009:408) contends that the word "suggests the innovative and life-giving quality of translation" because the derivation *bersalin* may be used in the context of 'to give birth to a child' (*bersalin anak*), which indeed is also found in *Hikayat Abdullah*. However, the most common collocates of *bersalin* in the period Abdullah wrote his account were *pakaian* ('change clothes') and *nama* ('name

change').[3] In the instance above the context makes it clear that the word *salin* refers to the transfer of textual material from one language into another. In a section where Abdullah relates Raffles' activities to preserve Malay texts, *salin* is used in the sense of a transfer of textual material from one recipient to another (see Abdullah 1970:76-77; 1997:61-62). The use of the single term *salin* in both contexts is indicative of Abdullah's understanding of translation as a general process of transferring and reproducing. Both instances involve emulating the original and making a duplicate. That the single concept of *salin* refers to two different languages in one instance, and only one in the other, does not seem to bother Abdullah, as both involve the concept of transfer.

Second, it is also clear from the excerpt that Abdullah made use of translation in teaching Thomsen Malay, thus reflecting his employment of translation as an essential and useful tool in language teaching.

Third, the excerpt again makes clear Abdullah's principle that in translating any work into Malay the language should conform to Malay usage and Malay writing conventions. Abdullah clearly believed that a simple replacement of the word in the source language (English) with a word in the target language (Malay) is insufficient. In other words the translation should be fully domesticated (Venuti 1993).

Abdullah's views on translation become apparent again in *Hikayat Abdullah* when he talks about the tendencies of those trying to learn Malay – tendencies which are closely linked to the use of translation in learning a foreign language. He notes the example of

> the man who declares that the Malay language is easy, and who thinks himself good at it when he can speak a few words to his employees, his cook and his groom, and can read a little. When he translates English into Malay [Malay text here reads: *dikarangkannya bahasa Inggeris itu ke dalam bahasa Melayu*] he is unaware that only the individual words sound like Malay, the idiom being English. When a Malay reads the work he is at his wits' end, being unable to fathom its meaning because it is not his own idiom. … Wherever people see books or letters written thus they know for certain that the work has been done by a white man or other foreigner, not by a Malay. (1970:226-27; 1997:249-50)

It is clear from the above that the mistake often made by foreigners learning the Malay language is the retention of English grammar when translating from English into Malay. That Abdullah repeatedly mentioned the importance of avoiding the use of English idiom when translating into Malay indicates his strong belief in a domesticating strategy.

Also interesting here is Abdullah's use of the word *karang*, literally meaning 'to compose, arrange (e.g. pearls on a string)', to refer to the act of translating. The use of this term reflects Abdullah's understanding that the act of translation involves composing something new, based on an original that needs to be copied and transferred, or *salin-ed*. *Karang* would suggest composing a new 'orginal' work, while *salin* seems to refer to a 'simple' transfer between recipients.

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[3] For a quick reference to vocabulary use in traditional Malay writing, see the brilliant Malay Concordance Project database developed by Ian Proudfoot (http://mcp.anu.edu.au).

Abdullah also touched upon another tendency prevalent among foreigners in learning Malay. In the chapter entitled *Darihal Chapel atau Tempat Sembahyang Orang Putih di Melaka* ('The English Chapel or the White Man's Prayer House in Malacca'), he observes: "As for most of those I saw learning Malay, when they could read a little, anything they found written in Malay they would translate into their own language" (1970:248; 1997:275). This excerpt seems to reflect Abdullah's understanding of one important aspect of the role of translation in language learning, that is, directionality in translation. In other words, a person learning a foreign language would be doing himself a disservice if he translates from the language being learnt to his own native language because such an activity requires only a basic understanding of the foreign language. Moreover, such an activity also does little to promote the active use and actual production of the language being learnt. In other words, although translating from a foreign language into one's own native language comes across as easy, such an endeavour does little to promote real language learning. It is not surprising then that Abdullah mocks the effort of his students who translate from Malay, the foreign language, into English, this being the easier option, as he sees little benefit in the activity: "They must surely find this easy because the language was their own, the one whose idiom they understood" (1970:248; 1997:275).

Abdullah proposed a better way of using translation in language learning to ensure that one is able to fully master the new language. This involves translating from one's own native language into the foreign language, rather than vice versa:

> My advice to a person learning Malay is that when he can read Malay letters he should start to translate words and passages which are found in his own language into the one he has newly learnt. The meanings of the words he uses must express the sense of the passage, and at the same time the Malay words he chooses must follow correct Malay idiom. When he can do this without the assistance of his teacher, then at last he may rest satisfied that his studies have been completed. (1970:248; 1997:275-76)

The excerpt clearly illustrates Abdullah's own understanding of the types of activities, specifically translating activities, that can help enhance one's mastery of a foreign language. He possessed a deep understanding of what constitutes good language-learning habits, i.e. translating by actively using the language being learnt and by producing new text in the foreign language, as opposed to merely comprehending and understanding the foreign language and translating this foreign material into the student's own native language, the usage and grammar of which he knows well.

Abdullah's views on translation become even clearer if we examine his writings and commentaries based on his own involvement in translation activities.

Abdullah's translation principles deriving from his translating activities

While writing about his translation experience, Abdullah often recalled his unpleasant dealings with Thomsen. The *Hikayat Abdullah* features quite a number of arguments

between Abdullah and Thomsen, especially with regard to the latter's approach to translation. Although Abdullah reports that Thomsen at one point did change his ways and improved, it was not long before he regressed, and "returned to his old ways" (1970:131; 1997:127). Abdullah, clearly unhappy with Thomsen's obstinacy, remarks: "I made corrections to all those phrases which followed English idiom and sounded awkward to the ear of a Malay" (1970:131; 1997:127).

Despite the fact that Abdullah was generally unhappy with the German missionary's obstinate ways, he nevertheless concurred with him when the latter suggested that they undertake a translation into Malay of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, of which only the translation in Leydekker's Bible was available. Abdullah recounts how he became involved in the undertaking:

> Mr. Thomsen had said to me one day "Now I want to do a revision of the Gospel according to St. Matthew from Javanese Malay into proper Malay. For at present there is only a Dutch version which is not in correct Malay. Let us therefore rewrite it changing all the phrases which are unidiomatic." (1970:131; 1997:127)

Although Abdullah was generally agreeable to the idea, he nevertheless set certain conditions for Thomsen if the work was to proceed smoothly:

> "If, sir, you wish to change the wording of the book you had better explain the meaning carefully to me until I have grasped it, and then I can supply the Malay words. Do not force suggestions on me but be patient. Moreover, I would like a promise that you will not dispute anything which I consider correct." (1970:131; 1997:127)

Clearly, Abdullah attached great importance to understanding the source text and its content prior to carrying out any translation work. Despite coming to an understanding with Thomsen on how the translation should be carried out, the work could not easily proceed due to Thomsen's obstinate nature. As might be expected in Abdullah's account, it was precisely because of this German's stubbornness that mistakes abound in their revision of the Malay translation of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. Abdullah warns the readers of these mistakes in the translation and at the same time defends himself against possible attacks from them:

> I have given only a brief summary of the words which passed between me and Mr. Thomsen owing to his obstinacy and his very inadequate understanding of Malay. So there remain several obscure renderings for which I will not quote chapter and verse, for readers of this book will perfectly well understand. But if they come across any mistakes in the Gospel according to St. Matthew due to Mr. Thomsen's clumsy renderings in the Malay language, they should kindly remember I was acting under instructions and could do nothing to add or remove a single word without Mr. Thomsen's full authority. I myself have fully realized that in this Gospel there are many awkward-sounding passages, and words used in impossible contexts. Because of these solecisms people are liable to misconstrue

> the sense. But what could I do, especially as I did not know the original language of the Gospel which, I believe, is a translation from the Greek? If it had been partly at least in English I would have understood a little. I hope that in view of all these troubles my readers will not heap insult and calumny upon my reputation on the grounds that I was Mr. Thomsen's teacher. (1970:132; 1997:128)

Thomsen, who was in the habit of using an English style when translating from English into Malay while he was learning Malay from Abdullah, adopted this same approach in translating the Gospel according to St. Matthew into Malay, resulting in a highly deficient translation, according to Abdullah. Abdullah also cautioned that one of the shortcomings of such a translation was that it would lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding. Concurrently, Abdullah acknowledged his own limitations, indicating that he did not know the original language of the source text, which further compounded the problem.

Upon the completion of the task, Mr. Thomsen, still oblivious to his own weaknesses and faults in translating, suggested to Abdullah that they undertake a translation of the Act of the Apostles. Abdullah, who by now was more than aware of Thomsen's flaws, was wary of the idea, and reported:

> "I felt deeply hurt when we revised the Gospel according to St. Matthew. There are many places where the text rendering does not accord with my idea of the translation, and they have stuck in my mind. But I will do it if you like. It may be our intention to make improvements but I do not know what we shall achieve." (1970:133; 1997:128-29)

Despite his initial misgivings, he finally gave in, only to regret it later. He reported that he was unhappy with the translation produced:

> I tried my hardest to infuse into the translation a character sufficiently Malay for it to be at least intelligible. ... I accomplished it only after delays and many arguments. It was still Mr. Thomsen's habit always to be guided by English or other languages in his Malay translation, paying no attention to Malay idiom. Therefore people quickly recognize any work done by Mr. Thomsen, the words only being in Malay, the construction is English which does not resemble Malay style. This is a most important consideraton [*sic*] in translating from one language into another. (1970:133; 1997:129)

That a translation must be intelligible in the target language is constantly emphasized by Abdullah, to the point that he declared this as "the most important consideration in translating from one language into another" – *satu ilmu yang besar dalam perkara salin-menyalin daripada satu bahasa ke bahasa lain*. Abdullah's use of the word *ilmu*, which literally indicates 'a body of knowledge', reflects his understanding that translation is a skill to be learned and mastered, as well as a complex and complicated endeavour that requires knowledge.

Although Abdullah most frequently used the words *salin* and *karang* to refer to the

act of translating from one language into another, he also used the Arabic-derived word *terjemah* several times in the meaning of 'to translate'.[4] One such instance is when he relates how he was asked to return to Singapore to teach, but was prevented from doing so by the missionaries who were willing to pay him the equivalent of what he was earning in Singapore in order to keep him in Malacca. Abdullah explains that he remained in Malacca where he worked for the College "translating from English into Malay, as well as teaching and supervising the printing work" (1970:229; 1997:254). Another use of the word *terjemah* by Abdullah occurs in a passage about his experience of translating *Galilah dan Daminah,* into Malay, which also offers a nice example of a literary contact zone where a long-standing translation tradition produced new cultural materials:

> By the twelfth day of October 1835 I had completed a translation from Hindustani into Malay of a tale called the *Pancha Tanderan*, or in the Malay language *Galilah dan Daminah,* a very fine literary work. I did it with the help of a friend of mine who was good at Hindustani. His name was Tambi Mutu Berpatar and he lived in Kampong Masjid Keling, a part of Malacca. (1970:279; 1997:314)

Abdullah made use of various words to refer to the act of translating. It must be noted that while he used the word *salin* to refer to both the act of copying and the act of translating, and the word *karang* to both the act of composing and the act of translating, he gave *terjemah* a single meaning and reserved it only for the act of translation. It remains unclear, however, just why Abdullah used different words in different contexts to refer to the act of translating. His use of *terjemah* in contexts of 'translations' of Tamil and English material into Malay suggests that Abdullah considered this word as a narrow 'official' or technical term for the transfer of textual material from one language to another, while *salin* and *karang* had other connotations.

In his *Hikayat* Abdullah suggests that the mistakes in the translation of the Bible he undertook with Thomsen were constantly at the back of his mind, so much so that when he was asked to assist John Stronach, a Bible translator with the London Missionary Society, to revise the translation, he jumped at the chance. Again Abdullah repeats that the translation undertaken with Thomsen "was full of mistakes", and is quick to add that "these defects had arisen because of Mr. Thomsen's obstinacy and lack of understanding" (1970:294; 1997:332). Abdullah agreed to work on correcting those mistakes and together with Stronach worked on a fresh translation from the beginning. He also mentions other factors that made this new task a relatively easy one:

> Mr. Stronach was a good Greek scholar, besides knowing some Malay and also Chinese. He was exceptionally good in his own language, that is to say English. In addition there were many books of reference which were helpful to us; that is, commentaries in which learned men had expounded the sense, the real meaning and the intention of the Gospel story. It was therefore an easy matter to revise the text, and to rewrite it in the proper Malay style. (1970:294; 1997:332)

[4] See Tymoczko (2009:407) for associations of the Arabic *tarjama* that go beyond a simple 'transfer'.

Although the translation undertaken with Stronach did not pose as many problems as his collaborative work with Thomsen, Abdullah commented that "there still remained a few obscure phrases. For the missionaries did not approve a number of expressions which are not normally used by Malays" (1970:294; 1997:332). Abdullah's greatest fear apparently was the possibility that these phrases and expressions would "sound awkward in the ears of any Malays who hear them in time to come" (1970:294; 1997:332). He strove to shield himself against any future criticism from readers and to avert the blame for any mistakes in the translation. He also hoped that the mistakes would be corrected by the missionaries involved and added that

> If they do not do so [give approval for changes to be made] I am absolved from any blame on their account and people will not be able to cast aspersions on my reputation or say that the expressions I used were wrong. For once before I had suffered from Mr. Thomsen's pigheadedness when we were translating the Gospel. He ordered me to use expressions not permissible to Malay idiom, and people still speak of me as his teacher. They do not realize that he refused to use the phrases given him by his teacher, preferring to display his own cleverness. (1970:294; 1997:332)

Abdullah's remarks as seen above underscore the importance of his own reputation as a teacher and translator producing a translation that read smoothly in the target language. It is also apparent that Abdullah never quite recovered from his unpleasant experience with Thomsen, for he again took this chance to express his bitterness over the collaboration with Thomsen and aimed his criticism at the German missionary who had returned to Europe by the time Abdullah wrote his account.

Abdullah's views of the proper way to translate, that is, by using the idiom and style of the target language, also become visible when he writes about his plans to produce a grammar of the Malay language:

> When I say that I would like to compile a grammar of the Malay language, I do not mean one like that produced by the Dutch who translated the Gospel into Malay some centuries ago, or the similar one by Mr. Robinson who applied the grammatical rules of English and Latin and other languages to Malay without understanding its idiom. The Malay style was clumsy ... What I would like to do in making a Malay grammar is to take words from the Malay language itself and classify each of them according to its type, the rule governing its use, and its position. This would allow us to follow proper Malay idiom, preventing each person drawing on his powers of invention. (1970:246; 1997:272-73)

Conclusion

This chapter examined early discourse on translation involving the Malay language, as expressed by Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsyi in his account of his life. Abdullah's views on the principles of translation are made clear in a number of ways – through

his own observations of translated work, his challenges in teaching Malay to colonial officers and missionaries, and his own experience as a translator translating into Malay. Abdullah's overriding concern was to produce a translation that read well in the target language. From his point of view, if a translation is to serve its purpose and to fulfil the aim of transmitting knowledge successfully, it must be in a language and style familiar to its target audience.

Although it can be said that there is nothing new or revolutionary about the views expressed by Abdullah, especially in the context of translation methods and strategies at present, they nevertheless represent some of the earliest recorded thoughts on translation into Malay in the Malay Peninsula. Consequently, Abdullah's writings may be considered seminal in the field of translation history in Malaysia. That said, however, the extent of the influence of his work remains unclear, largely due to the paucity of research in the field of translation history in Malaysia, particularly on early discourses on translation. Brown (1956), for instance, made no mention of Abdullah when he presented his own views on the workings of translation from English into Malay. This, however, should not be taken to mean that Abdullah's work was of little significance or importance. Rather, as already mentioned, most scholars have tended to focus on his role as writer. Although references are occasionally made to Abdullah in the context of translation, they often focus on his association with the missionaries in the translation of the Bible.

Moreover, although *Hikayat Abdullah* was written in the nineteenth century, Abdullah's views are still relevant as the principles of translation he expounded are still applied in translation practice today. Abdullah's views on translation are also significant in the context of the translation tradition in the Malay Peninsula, especially with regard to his conceptualization of translation. His use of words such as *salin*, *karang* and *terjemah* to refer to the act of translation points to his understanding of translation as a process of transferring, replicating, reproducing, composing and creating. It is of course interesting to examine how these terms diverged in meaning and usage in order to arrive at a better understanding of Malay conceptualizations of translation in the nineteenth century and earlier. This chapter about Abdullah's ideas represents a first step towards gaining such understanding.

Abdullah's perspectives on translation are also significant in that they represent an Asian voice and an Asian translation experience, thus adding to the slowly expanding discourse on Asian translation traditions and complementing Western perspectives that have so far dominated the field of translation studies.

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Rethinking Orientalism

Administrators, Missionaries and the Liṅgāyaths[1]

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Abstract: *Recent studies on the cultural politics of translation in colonial India have been preoccupied with the trope of a colonialist-nationalist divide. Such studies examine oriental discourses of translation in terms of dichotomous categories, including colonial-pre-colonial, modern-traditional and civilizing-civilized. The result is a negligence of myriad and complex translation processes closely linked with orientalism which emerged between several types of opposite cultural grids. This chapter examines translations of medieval Liṅgāyath puranas by two Western scholars: Brown and Würth. Conditioned by their respective preoccupations and working environments, they registered two different ethnographic accounts of the Liṅgāyaths in their translations. A comparison between these accounts shows that translations of Indian vernacular literatures into European languages by orientalists were not always aimed at cultural domination or containment of representation. Such a comparison also makes clear that these translations evolved through intermediary relations of both local scholars and orientalists. Such intermediary relations were neither integrated nor harmonious and their analysis points towards the competitive, resistant and appropriative energies of local voices involved in defining and representing their literatures and traditions.*

Introduction

> Although we have learned that colonial power was not monolithic and that colonialism cannot be conflated either with Christianity or with European influence, we are, even today, prone to view nineteenth-century literature as a by-product of this political divide, either as a colonial construction or as a nationalist reaction.
>
> Blackburn and Dalmia (2004:7)

Recent studies on the cultural politics of translation in colonial India have been preoccupied with the trope of a colonialist-nationalist divide.[2] These studies further extend this divide and investigate oriental discourses of translation in terms of dichotomous categories such as colonial-pre-colonial, modern-traditional and civilizing-civilized. Consequently, oriental discourses of translation, literature, law, economy and additional fields are viewed as falling within either of these categories and are examined for their role in reinforcing colonial designs of cultural imperialism, power and representation.

[1] This article has benefited immensely from invaluable help offered by my friends Chandru and Ramesh Bairy, and the discussions at the conference where it was first presented.

[2] Tejaswini Niranjana (1994) is a case in point; see also Anuradha Dingwaney and Carol Maier (1995) and Susan Bassnett (1999).

Although such studies are welcome in so far as reviewing the political and cultural dynamics of orientalism in translation is concerned, they have not made a decisive contribution beyond problematizing the trope of colonialism-nationalism. A certain complacency leads them to neglect complex translation processes that evolved in close connection with orientalism.

In this chapter I examine two Western scholars, Charles Philip Brown (1798-1884, a British administrator) and the Rev. Gottlob Adam Würth (1820-1869, a Basel missionary), both of whom translated and published the medieval *Puranas*[3] of the Liṅgāyaths[4] during the first half of the nineteenth century. While Brown translated *Basava Puranamu* (BP, a hagiography of Basava, the religious icon of the Liṅgāyaths) from Telugu into English, Würth translated *Basava Purana* and *Chennabasava Purana* (CP, a hagiography of Chennabasava[5]) from Kannada into English. Conditioned by their respective preoccupations and the localities where they lived and worked, Brown and Würth registered two different ethnographic accounts of the Liṅgāyaths in their translations.[6] These elicit two observations regarding colonial translation in connection with orientalism. Firstly, translations of Indian vernacular literatures into European languages by Western orientalists were not always undertaken with the single goal of cultural domination or containment of representation. In addition, these translations also indicate that orientalism evolved through the intermediary relations of both local scholars and Western orientalists. Translation, in this case, presents itself "as the expression of the relations between the various intermediaries that have participated in its production" (Buzelin 2007:39). These relations were neither integrated nor harmonious. Their study, rather, highlights the competitive, resistant and appropriative energies of local voices in defining and representing their literatures and traditions. My comparative analysis of the translations by Brown and Würth focuses on the collaborative and antagonistic relations that shaped the approach, function and style of translation of both scholars.

Secularizing gestures? Brown's representation of the Jaṅgams (Liṅgāyaths)

In contrast to the Utilitarian representation of Indian cultures and literatures as an embodiment of immaturity (pioneered by James Mill), there was another school of Western scholars (known as Indologists) who laboured hard to understand Oriental India and repel predetermined notions about the non-mainstream (non-Sanskrit) literatures and languages in India as immature, inelegant and heretical. Their accounts of the non-mainstream literatures exhibit renegade tendencies often at odds with the Utilitarian representation. Brown belonged to this school.

[3] *Purana* literally means 'narrative of ancient time'.

[4] Liṅgāyaths constitute a dominant non-Brahmin community in Karnataka (a southern state in India). Their *lingua franca* is Kannada. They are known by another nomenclature too, i.e. Viraśaivas ('brave Śaivites').

[5] A nephew of Basava and the first codifier of Liṅgāyaths' ethos.

[6] Trautmann's article (2009) is useful for understanding the differences and similarities between the orientalists' and the missionaries' scholarly pursuits in the colonial period.

Charles Philip Brown was born in Calcutta on the 10th of November 1798. He was educated in India in preparation for spreading Christianity in Asia. He was well versed in Hebrew and was equally conversant in Urdu, Kannada, Tamil and Persian. After receiving a college education in Haileybury College in the suburbs of London, he was appointed to the Madras Civil Service in 1817. It was in Madras that Brown learnt Telugu and acquainted himself with its literatures. His sustained interest in the Telugu language and literature resulted in the first systematic Telugu-English dictionary. His contribution to Kannada was no less important. His book for beginners in English became a standard text book in Kannada schools for a long time to come beginning in the 1850s.[7] Schmitthenner (2001:124) has argued that his discussions of Śaivite sects with Horace Hayman Wilson, the first Boden professor in Sanskrit at Oxford University, inspired Brown in his ensuing scholarship on the "non-conformist and anti-Brahminical Viraśaiva sects".

Brown's chief writings on the Jaṅgams[8] include two articles originally published in 1840 (Brown 1871; 1998), and the translation of the BP. He drew on several hagiographies of the Jaṅgams composed in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries to present a coherent picture of their history. In addition to these, he wrote commentaries on *Prabhu Linga Lila* (a hagiography of Allama Prabhu, a contemporary saint of Basava), *Chenna Basava Purana* and *Pandita Āradhya Charitra* (the hagiography of Panditārādhya, supposedly a precursor to Basava). Among these several *puranas* he especially valued the BP of Pālkuriki Somanātha,[9] finding it worthy of translation into English and considering it the principal sacred book of the Jaṅgams.[10]

Brown's research and translations were only made possible due to his collaborative and reciprocal work with indigenous experts. Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi's theory that early oriental studies did not constitute a discourse of domination but rather reflected reciprocal relations between European and Indian scholars (Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi 2003:105-106) seems to apply well to Brown's case. Brown's study on Viraśaivism[11] was a 'collaborative effort' and it would have been very difficult for Brown to access and decipher the Jaṅgam literatures without the assistance of several Smārtha Brahmins and the Jaṅgam poets (Schmitthenner 2001:33).[12] In quite a number of his Telugu letters Brown indicated that his associates were collecting Jaṅgam manuscripts on his behalf during the time he lived in Madras.[13] Brown's interactions and discussions with Vaishnavas, Smārthās (both Brahmin sub-castes) and Jaṅgams informed his ideas about the competitive struggle between them, as they represented themselves favourably before

[7] See I. M. Muthanna (1992) for Brown's contribution to Kannada.

[8] Jaṅgams form the priestly class among the Liṅgāyaths and are traditionally wandering ascetics. They are itinerant teachers whose responsibility is to spread the knowledge of devotion and mysticism among their followers.

[9] Pālkuriki Somanātha is one of the ancient Telugu poets of the thirteenth century and an accomplished poet in Kannada and Sanskrit. He was a Viraśaiva by faith and a follower of Basava (also called Basavēshwara).

[10] Unfortunately, I have been unable to verify which version of the BP was selected for translation and who procured it for Brown.

[11] Brown uses this term to identify Jaṅgams, Liṅgāyathism and the Liṅgāyaths.

[12] A Jaṅgam, Brown recalled (1978:46), helped him in translating the Gospel of *St. Luke* into Telugu.

[13] For more information on these interactions see Schmitthenner (2001) and Reddy (1977:114-15).

him while castigating the others. Nevertheless, he claimed that he ultimately was able to use his own prudence for accepting or rejecting the narratives of these indigenous scholars without succumbing to their prejudices or biases (Brown 1978:59).

In the footsteps of William Jones? Brown as a comparative scholar

William Jones's pioneering work in the development of a comparative East/West philology in the late eighteenth century was influential in setting the academic agenda of a new generation of orientalists. Like many other British scholars Jones followed one of Max Müller's adages: 'India: What can it teach us?' Jones was keen on discovering the ramifications of the study of Hindu literatures for understanding the rites and beliefs of early Christianity, a European historical consciousness and the ancestry of European mankind. German scholars like Johann Gottfried Herder and Max Müller proposed the thesis of the Orient as the cradle of the human race. Their ideas were based on their study of oriental literatures, documents and scriptures that were available at the time and they inspired many others to proceed in the same direction. The comparative perspectives of Brown are more or less similar to those espoused by Jones but were born out of (a) his differences with Indologists like Wilson, and (b) his dissatisfaction with local Brahmin scholars. Sharing the tendencies of Jones' discourse in empathizing with the Orientals but concomitantly deviating from the excessive focus on the Sanskrit literatures (by the likes of Wilson), Brown opened up the non-mainstream and non-Sanskrit literary world to Europe. He held that Western oriental scholars were partial in concentrating on and collecting only the Brahmin texts in their efforts to understand India.[14] In a region where Brown gathered a number of manuscripts, the local Brahmin experts gave a distorted picture of the non-Sanskrit literatures, especially of the Jaṅgams. They were, Brown felt, prejudiced towards the Jaṅgams. Earlier too, Brown had expressed displeasure with the inadequacy of records documented by the Italian traveller of the 1620s, Della Valle, and the British scholars Francis Buchanan and Colonel Wilks about the Liṅgāyaths. He accused them of being easily misled by the Brahmins, the 'enemies' of the Jaṅgams (Brown 1871:141). Brown, now, set out to do justice to the Jaṅgams and their literatures.

Translating *Basava Puranamu*

BP was probably composed in the thirteenth century CE. It is a hagiography of Basava and an anthology of several Liṅgāyath saints (also known as *Shiva Sharanās*, devotees of Lord Shiva) and their philosophies. In contrast to Brahminical *campu* style (poems in verse of various metres interspersed with paragraphs of prose), Pālkuriki Somanātha

[14] Wilson's two lectures on the religious practices and opinions of the Hindus (Wilson 1978) concentrate on the Brahminical Vedas and Puranas. In his lecture 'Religious sects of the Hindus', Wilson gives a brief account of the Jaṅgams and *Basava Purana*. The narration of the Purana may have seemed rather dispassionate and detached to Brown. For more information on his account, see Wilson (1980).

adopted the *dēsi* ('native') style and composed the BP in *dwipada* ('couplets'), a meter popular in oral tradition and closely related to folk songs (Rao 1990:5). Attracted to what he perceived as its rustic features, purity and beauty, Brown published the Purana in 1840 in *Madras Journal of Science and Literature* as 'Account of the Basava Purana; – the principal Book used as a religious Code by the Jaṅgams'. As the literary style of the BP rendered itself very difficult to translate, Brown did not take much pain to translate the style. Trained in the Western aesthetics and poetic tradition, he turned the *kāvya* (a traditional poetic form) style of the Purana into a prosaic modern form. He must have found it difficult to translate the traditional metre of the Purana and hence rendered it via "a process of familiarization" (Dingwaney and Maier 1995:5), i.e. assimilating the source text into culturally familiar forms and concepts of the targeted English readers. The prosaic form allowed Brown the luxury of arbitrary selection, i.e. he could delete, add or re-write the text as he saw fit.[15]

In his account of the BP, Brown emerges as a relativist and his assessment of the development of Telugu literatures exhibits an evolutionist approach. This allowed Brown, in the words of a scholar of Telugu literature "to compare the literary 'development' of both the European and the Indian languages" (Mantena 2005:530). The very first instance of such comparison is spelt out clearly in the beginning of the account,

> Legendary lore is puerile enough in all countries; and is not worse in India than that which prevailed in Europe before the invention of printing. (Brown 1998:271)

The prevalent discourse of historical progressivism is discernable in Brown's approach. He believed in the power of print-technology to forge a sense of maturity and civilization. Print is taken as a sign of progress and literary evolution which, unlike in the West, had not yet taken root in colonial India. The invention of the printing machine coinciding with the rise of Protestant Christianity and concomitant discourses of enlightenment and humanism in the West seems to have guided Brown's idea of progressivism. Nonetheless, he did not show any urgency to employ the notion of enlightenment to justify the presence of the colonialists, nor did he deride them. Yet, an urge to bring the oriental literatures into the limelight from 'the dark' through print-technology and to modernize them guided his approach. This is apparent broadly in two ways: elevating Jaṅgam literature to a par with Western literatures, and eulogizing it as egalitarian. His writings on the Jaṅgams were directed at dispelling the notion of a monolithic Hindu literature, changing the perception of primitivism attributed to the non-Sanskrit literatures, proving the latter as worthy of serious scholarly attention and attributing a rich literary history to Telugu.

To substantiate his firm conviction of similitude between the European and Jaṅgam

[15] Brown's translation needs to be qualified with what Sujith Mukherjee (1994:78-79) calls 'translation as new writing'. Mukherjee describes the re-making of old texts into modern languages as translation activity and changes in such translation are inevitable owing to cultural and linguistic elements. Brown is no exception as he re-writes the Purana by paraphrasing it in English with Western audiences and expectations in mind.

literatures, Brown frequently draws attention to parallels between the BP and Christian legends. For instance, the Jaṅgam practice of fasting is compared by Brown to the habit of Saint Nicholas, who as an infant is said to have refused to drink the milk from his mother's breasts on the designated fasting days of Wednesdays and Fridays. A legendary tale of Kannappa who offered his two eyes to Lord Shiva as a token of devotion and had them restored by the Lord himself is compared to "Saint Lucia at Naples, who likewise tore out her eyes, and had them restored" (Brown 1998:277).

Translating the 'radicalism' of the Purana into Western civilization

Brown's unhappiness with the Brahmin scholars drove him to compare the Jaṅgam literature with the Brahmin literature only to highlight the latter's repulsive features. He devoted much space in his translation to a narration of Basava's rebellion against the Brahminical ritual of wearing the sacred thread at a young age.[16] Such an anti-Brahmin and anti-ritualistic attitude exhibited by Basava makes Brown conclude admiringly that "the Jaṅgams or Vira Saivism is the modern anti-Brahminical creed" (1998:272). Wholesome admiration for the Jaṅgams is continued in the translation of another Telugu Purana, *Prabhu Linga Lila*,[17] but this time for its pro-feminine stance (Brown 1998:98). Brown showed that the Liṅgāyaths were law-abiding and admired their "considerate and decent behaviour … toward the female sex" (Schmitthenner 2001:213). A comparative analysis of Brown's translations and the above mentioned articles will attest that the translations, in more than one sense, corroborate Brown's views put forth in these two articles.

Brown's empathy is not without ambiguity, however, for it enables him also to present himself as a cultural arbiter. He is very careful in selecting only those parts of the BP which highlight the egalitarian spirit and sublime personal devotion of the Jaṅgams and concomitantly ignores those parts which would give a contrary impression on these matters. Narrating several legends and miracles of the Liṅgāyath saints occupies a large space in the translation. All these miracles are understood as allegories of decisive motives: triumph of devotion over superfluous rituals and deference to fellow believers. This point is highlighted despite the fact that

> A strong proclivity toward violence is characteristic of many of the stories of Jangamas in the BP. By killing, hurting, abusing, and destroying, the Jangamas express a steadfast allegiance to their religion. (Narayana Rao 1990:12)

Brown was very well aware of the violent gestures and actions in the BP and other puranas about 'killing, hurting, abusing, and destroying'. He does acknowledge briefly in a footnote the account of murder and violence unleashed by the Jaṅgams during the

[16] It is a ritual of the Brahmins (also known as *Dwijās*) to wear a 'sacred' thread across their shoulder to mark the superior status of a *Dwija* (twice born).

[17] This Purana was originally composed in Kannada by Chāmarasa in the fifteenth century.

last days of Basava.[18] Yet he does not dwell much on these details so that he can maintain an idealistic picture of the BP and the Liṅgāyath saints. Notwithstanding his earlier critique of Wilson for his partisan viewpoints about Hindu literatures, Brown merely transfers traditional Christian exegesis to the new oriental context as he describes the Jaṅgams lyrically as a "peaceable race of Hindu puritans" (1998:124) and neglects the indigenous contexts of sectarian violence and antagonism shaping the production of the puranas. This exegetical exercise indicates Brown's critical authority as a literary scholar and as a Christian.

Colonial domination or dialogic relationship? Würth and the Liṅgāyaths

> When I know your *shastras* better, I shall be able to understand your way of thinking, and talk to you with understanding.
>
> (Mögling 1838-39, in Jenkins 2007:1.12)[19]

This view of the early Basel missionary Hermann Mögling, reflecting a general pursuit of many missionaries, was born out of his interactions with a Liṅgāyath *swāmy* in June 1838. Mögling's words show more than a basic keenness to know, a 'naïve' curiosity and an interest to engage with the Liṅgāyaths on their 'own terms'. Würth's translations of the two Liṅgāyath puranas, akin to Mögling's view, emerge as efforts to make a comparison between the Liṅgāyath scriptures, expose their ambiguities, and justify the presence of missionaries. His translations provoke a series of questions about the history of orientalism in Karnataka. To what extent did the evangelical entanglements bear upon the missionaries' act of translation and chronicles? Of hundreds of Liṅgāyaths puranas, why were only two puranas studied and translated? What factors provoked Würth to highlight ambiguities in these texts? Were the ambiguities inherent in the puranas or were they reflections of colonial discourse imposed by missionaries? Any attempt to address these questions must address the fact that the translation of these hagiographies bears the marks of religious battles between Liṅgāyath and missionaries who played a critical role in the former's "making and unmaking of historical forms, social identities, ritual practices and mythic meanings-enacted over time" (Dube 2004:162). I hold that Würth's account of the Liṅgāyaths' literary traditions in the two translations reflect simultaneous attempts to bring social welfare to the people, challenges to such welfare activities, obstacles encountered, differences exhibited, reactions uttered and power exercised. These translations are assertions of the superiority of the West and the Word (the Bible), yet appear under the guise of conceding to the pre-eminence of the heathens' religious beliefs.

[18] Brown mentions the Jaina version of Basava's life story to corroborate his views.

[19] Some of the reports mentioned in the article are taken from Basel Mission reports translated from German into English by P. & J. M. Jenkins (2007).

Entering the world of missionaries

The Basel missionaries in Karnataka, under the stewardship of Samuel Hebich and Hermann Mögling, began propagating Christianity in Hubli-Dhārwād, north Karnataka, in the early 1830s. The most important group of people in this region was the Liṅgāyaths who, the missionaries thought,[20] were favourably disposed towards them. The majority of these Liṅgāyaths, the missionaries discovered, were illiterate goldsmiths, carpenters and farmers. By the time Würth began his missionary activities in these regions, especially in Gadag, Lakkundi and Betagēri during the 1840s**,** previous missionaries like William Carey, John Hands, Samuel Hebich, Hermann Mögling and B. H. Rice had sown the seeds of modern linguistic and literary traditions, and also had written evangelical accounts in their reports, documents and catechists' chronicles. Translations, undoubtedly, occupied a very important place in their discursive practices.

Gottlob Adam Würth was born in Pleidelsheim, Württemberg on September 18th 1820, entered the Mission College in Basel in 1840 and made an excellent use of his six years stay as a student of philological and theological studies. The Hebrew Bible was his favourite object of study, even to the last months of his life. In 1845 he was sent to India together with J. Gottlieb Kies for missionary purposes. Hubli was his first station, where he was assigned to preach. Very soon he mastered the Kannada language and became well versed in Sanskrit too. Itinerating remained his chief activity and he preached the Gospel in several places in north Karnataka from 1851 to 1866. He was instrumental in winning several converts despite many ordeals. Paul J. Kattebennur (1965), a historian of missionary activities in Karnataka, has pointed out that Würth worked for the Shāgoti Church in Gadag from 1845 to 1857. He was in charge of a school and preparing text books was one of his many activities.[21] Würth was one of the members of the Revision Committee of the Bible in Kannada and translated the Old and New Testaments into Kannada in collaboration with G. Weigle in 1861 for pedagogical purposes (see Muthanna 1992:159). He also collated and published a collection of ancient Kannada poems under the title of *Prakkāvya Mālike* (1867) and helped Mögling in collating and publishing the Kannada version of the BP which was included in the school curriculum in 1850. He passed away in 1869.

Encountering the 'heathens'

Würth's translations are neither a neutral linguistic transfer from one language to another nor the act of possessing absolute control over representing the orient. Like Brown, Würth enjoyed considerable leeway in the matter of selection, deletion and addition of sections in his translations, allowing him a freedom of interpretation. The interpretations, which find place in the prosaic translations, are intended to expose a series of deficits in the Liṅgāyaths: lack of absolute faith, irrationality and an inability to distinguish

[20] Mögling clearly indicated Liṅgāyaths as their foremost target for proselytization activities (Jenkins 2007:1.10).

[21] The locals' desire for education encouraged the missionaries to set up schools in the region. Würth realized the significance of basic education for the locals "to make considered judgments" (Würth 1846, in Jenkins 2007:5.19).

between history and fables. These interpretations are always followed by a strong message advocating that the heathens must renounce their illogical religion, reject idolatry and accept Christianity. Such advocacy in the translations was born out of his mundane experiences as catechist.

The 'discovery' of deficits seems a self-defense strategy of Würth's (probably true of other missionaries as well) in reaction to the countless religious and doctrinal interrogations he and his contemporary missionaries faced during their proselytization journeys vis-à-vis the Liṅgāyaths who believed in Lord Shiva and doubted the relevance of Christ. A series of such episodes and encounters with the Liṅgāyaths suggest a struggle regarding meaning and self-definition for both parties.

A few pragmatic questions Würth encountered reveal the broader contexts that shaped his views about the Liṅgāyaths as these questions constituted direct attacks on his proud claims on behalf of Christianity. When he visited Liṅgasāgar during a severe draught in 1855 to do social service and spread the Word, many asked him,

> Why should we join you, if we must still labor? – Christ and Channabasava are one and the same! – you are so powerful a nation! – can't you then make rain? (15th report 1855:12)[22]

> At Manakawadi we were repeatedly visited by the disciples of a Liṅga priest, who pretended to be an incarnation of Christ. (16th Report 1856:22)

There are three important points here: the first one is that the preaching of Würth is counter-attacked by highlighting Christ's inability to bring rain and alleviate the problems. The second is the confidence with which the Liṅgāyaths drew parallels between their God (Chennabasava) and Christ. This was astounding to Würth as he always avowed the superiority of Christ over the heathen Gods and deities. The third point is the insidious threat to the activities of the missionaries by 'pretension' of a Liṅgāyath who claimed to be an incarnation of Christ and put forth the theory of identical images of Christ and Basava. The intention behind such an act was to thwart the influence of Christianity on the Liṅgāyaths. As challenges to the missionaries proved to be futile and the fear of Government enforcement of conversion amplified,[23] the Liṅgāyaths, who were not blind listeners of the Gospel, resorted to an appropriation of Christ himself. As reported by Müller, a close companion of Würth, in 1856 there were many Liṅgāyath pundits and believers who held that their religion and Christianity shared 'wonderful' similarities (16th Report 1856:2).[24] A few years before Müller, the Rev. Hiller, Br. Leonberger and the Rev. G. Kies state in their report on the Liṅgāyaths that "when they were exhorted to

[22] Quoted from the 15th report of the Basel German Evangelical Missionary Society. I have procured this and the other annual reports from Karnataka Theological College, Mangalore.

[23] The report of Rev. Layer in 1840 expresses this fear of the people: "They had the idea, for instance, that Government would enforce Christianity as the true religion by force of arms, and would punish those who resisted" (Jenkins 2007:2.1).

[24] Iconoclast tendencies and monotheism of the Liṅgāyaths and the Protestant Christians were pointed out in such contexts.

make their choice between truth and error, between Chirst and Basava, they pretended to think that Christ and Basava were incarnations of the same God" (11th report 1851:20). The act of 'impersonation' always agitated the missionaries because they were afraid of calumniation of Christ and the Gospel by local seers.

The act of impersonation was supplemented by a scriptural challenge to the Gospel. Würth reports one such case when an anonymous author wrote a book on Christianity and criticized it vehemently for its reformist zeal (16th Report 1856:23). The author made indirect reference to the missionaries' stinging criticism of the ineluctable caste system among the local people and their efforts to eradicate it by means of the Gospel and conversion. He argued that it was a futile effort to change the system and urged the missionaries to give up such efforts. Highlighting the inability of the Gospel to eradicate the deep-rooted system was a way of downplaying the missionaries and their preaching. It was possible for this scholar to cast doubts about the Gospel as he compared his 'heathen' system with the former which was already made available in the Kannada language through Bible translations. Series of such comparative perspectives from both the Liṅgāyaths and the missionaries, thus, were not just examples of naïve intellectual curiosity but an extension of religious confrontations in the bazaars and *mutts* (religious centres of the Liṅgāyaths).[25] These encounters put the pressure of failure on Würth to such a degree that he sometimes felt depressed: "I began to lose faith, like the disciples in the storm on the sea. But like them, I pulled myself together" (Würth 1847, in Jenkins 2007:5.22).

It would be taking a reductionist approach to confine ourselves to the study of the encounter between the Liṅgāyaths and the missionaries. Many reports and diaries of the missionaries provide numerous indications about rivalries and hostility based on social hierarchy among the 'heathens' themselves (11th report 1851:20). The age-old conflicts between the Brahmins (mainly Vaishnavas), the Liṅgāyaths (mainly the priestly class) and the Jains for superiority and status persisted. These conflicts were always interpreted by the missionaries as the result of the 'heathens' "stubborn and childish" nature (Würth 1846, in Jenkins 2007:5.19). It was against this backdrop that Würth straddled registers of evangelism, translation and contempt for the two puranas.

The Liṅgāyath world in the eyes of Würth

By paraphrasing the mammoth puranas[26] Würth was the first scholar to translate them from Kannada into English and to introduce them to the West. These two puranas are the most sacred texts of the Liṅgāyaths, regularly recited at local traditional schools and religious centers. While the BP depicts the life of Basava, the CP illustrates the life of Chennabasava. These two puranas are concerned, for the most part, with doctrinal

[25] Joseph Mullens, a missionary reporter, writes that a bigoted Lingāit priest had someone sprinkle pepper on the missionaries, who were preaching in a village, and was mightily pleased to see them coughing and leaving the spot (1854:445).

[26] Würth probably translated the BP which had been collated and printed by Hermann Mögling in Kannada at the Mangalore Basel Mission.

expositions, soteriology, recitals of mythology, praises of Liṅgāyath saints and accounts of their miracles. They narrate the tales of religious triumphs of these saints over rival groups, their divine interventions, nature of mystical attainment and devices of achieving spiritual perfection. While the former was composed in the thirteenth century by Bhimakavi,[27] the latter was created by Virupāksha Pandita in the fifteenth century. Both are consciously engendered canonical texts for the purpose of spreading Liṅgāyath faith and the exegetical tradition of these two puranas had long been in existence. The received tradition of the Liṅgāyaths and the reports of the missionaries indicate that access to these two hagiographies was refused to outsiders (Rev. Hiller in Jenkins 2007:2.6). Only the learned priests, specialists, or head of a Liṅgāyath mutt had the traditional right to study, recite and spread its message among the devotees. However, during the time Würth was there the sacredness and inscrutability of the puranas had been encroached upon by the missionaries.

While the translation of the BP does not contain additional details like footnotes, the CP is densely annotated, clarifying many references, allusions and metaphors of Sanskrit and Kannada origin. The literary style of the CP *Vārdhika Shatpadi,* a verse containing stanzas of six feet or lines,[28] is introduced in meticulous details while there is no such introduction to the BP, which was composed in *Bhāmini Shatpadi,* another literary style. In the following discussion, I examine Würth's style of translation with regard to the BP.

Translation of the *Basava Purana*

Würth's translation of the BP**,** published under the title 'The Basava Purana of the Liṅgaits' in the *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1863-66), seems to establish two points simultaneously: a deficit of meaning in the puranas and a surplus of meaning in the Gospel. While the former is achieved by exposing supposedly primitive and uncultured beliefs of the Liṅgāyaths, the latter denotes efforts to convince them of the supposed sublimity of Christianity through preaching.[29]

The meta-commentaries in the translation bring out Würth's attempts at exposing deficits and highlight his interpretive maneuvers and premeditated comparisons. He disregards the classical notion of 'faithful' translation by inserting his critical views. With the intention of exposing the false and contradictory image of Basava, demystifying his divinity and demonstrating the untruth of his doctrines, he concludes the translation by

[27] Bhimakavi's *Basava Purana* is based on *Basava Puranamu* of Pālkuriki Somanātha (composed in Telugu sixty years before him).

[28] Scholars in Kannada such as Virabhadrappa Halabhavi and S. S. Basavanal (1934) hold that the literary style of *Shatpadi*, practised by Bhimakavi and Virupaksha Pandita, was a progressive step ahead of their predecessors who composed puranas in *Campu* (prose-poetic) style, inaccessible and undecipherable by 'common' readers. Shatpadi was popularized by the successive Śaiva poets in the medieval period as it was easy and simple for reading, reciting and singing. For more details see the first part of the CP, compiled and published by Liṅgāyath Vidhyabhiruddhi Samste (Dharwad) in 1934.

[29] This is very clear at the end of the translation of the CP where Würth defends the presence of the Christian missionaries dedicated to redeeming the heathens.

highlighting Basava's nexus with King Bijjala to retain power, his flight for his life and his ultimate act of suicide (drowning himself in a well). While castigating Basava, he purposefully attributes historicity to Basava's personality:

> There can be no doubt that the leading facts of Basava's history – his Brahminical descent, his marriage with the daughter of the minister of Baladeva, his employment as prime minister of King Bijjala at Kalyana, his zeal for the propagation of the Lingaite creed – are historical. (Würth 1863-66:97)

These 'historical facts' are emphasized to strengthen his interpretations. Such interpretations of the Purana were possible for Würth as he drew details about Basava from other versions of his life history, especially the Jaina (believed to be sworn enemies of the Liṅgāyaths) version. The work of Jaina poet Linganna's *Rajāvali Kathāsāra* – a semi-historical document of Karnataka commissioned by Col. Meckenzie in 1824 – contains a derogatory version of the Basava story. Perhaps it were such accounts that helped Würth consider the BP as a source of history, allowing him to reconstruct Basava's life and heap criticisms upon him. His comparative analysis of the BP and the Jaina version, albeit briefly, at the end of the translation was possible for him due to his interactions with several members of the Jaina community and conversion activities among them.[30] Such comparison was not dissimilar to that offered by the Brahmins who also possessed a long tradition of comparing, abridging, deriding the Liṅgāyath doctrines and avowing their supremacy over them, an act that was reciprocated by the latter with equal force. The act of abridgement in such cases symbolically states the condescending approach of each group to the puranic tradition and religious values of the other. Würth's translation also participates in a similar process of abridging and expunging traditional connotations of the BP and his meta-commentaries emerge as discursive strategies to determine the reading of the translated text.

Würth's comparison was confined to textual traditions of the Liṅgāyaths and the Jains; exposing distrust between them and underestimating the importance of Basava. His consistent castigation of Basava and the Liṅgāyaths was, many reports of the missionaries point out, due to their failure to maintain consistency between the letter (the puranas) and the spirit (ability to follow the doctrines of the Purana honestly).[31] Caste conflicts between and within several sects, ineluctable social oppression, polytheism in quotidian life and contradictory doctrines in the puranas were consistently cited to expose their primitive way of life and indifference to adhere to the *nudi* ('gospel') of Basava. The contents of the Purana in the translation, too, corroborate this notion. The symbols

[30] Würth's companion Br. J. Leonberger mentions several instances of Jains' desire to become Christians. See 13th Report to the German Evangelical Mission (p. 23). In this report, Leonberger notices that the Jains, who showed interest in the Gospel, were discouraged by Liṅgāyath astrologers and priests from converting to Christianity. Würth seems to have been familiar with Colonel Mackenzie's collections on historical subjects in Kannada which give ample evidence of hostility between the Jains and the Liṅgāyaths.

[31] One of the doctrines emphasizes monotheism and 'pure personal devotion'. But idol worship with innumerable rituals of the Liṅgāyaths betrayed these doctrines, according to the missionary reports (see Jenkins 2007).

of hatred and violence towards non-believers such as Jains and Brahmins consolidated Würth's persistent criticism. The intention of such comparisons was to persuade the Liṅgāyaths that it was indispensable for them to overcome such divisive hostility and find redemption in Christianity.

Comparison between the Liṅgāyath and the Jaina puranas helped Würth in questioning the moral base of the Liṅgāyath religion itself. An extract from his translation of the 6th chapter will make this point clear:

> It is remarkable, however, that of this man [Basava], whose sanctity is so highly extolled, it is said in the very same chapter, that he was in the habit of supporting twelve thousand profligate *Lingaite priests*, who lived in the houses of prostitutes in the town of Kalyana. We meet these twelve thousand repeatedly in the history of Basava, and there can be no doubt that there must have been a very large number of profligate men and women amongst the first adherents of the Lingaite sect. (Würth 1863-66:71; italics in original)

Since the Liṅgāyaths swore by the truth of the BP and worshipped it, Würth ridiculed them and tried to prove profanity in the Purana. Large claims of sublimity and devotion by the Jaṅgams are thus invalidated with such examples in the translation. Würth did not stop at this. He opined that these kinds of "Lingaite" priests were known as Jaṅgams, "an appellation of which the meaning is not perfectly certain" (Würth 1863-66:71). Highlighting imperfections of the Liṅgāyaths was intended to expose their immature thoughts.

Straddling two registers: Brown and Würth

The "shameful history of translation" in colonial India, an accusation made by Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (1999:5), suggests translation to be a unidirectional process. Such an approach to colonial translations tends to ignore an "imbalance of knowledge-production" (Trautmann 2009:240) and to develop a tendency to homogenize multi-layered and differentiated translation processes and practices. The foregoing discussion pointed to the ways in which Brown and Würth represented two different orientations towards translation at the time. It also strove to retrieve and foreground, in however preliminary a way, the agency of local scholars (either as collaborators or as detractors) who are virtually absent from the study of colonial translation history despite their critical role in its fashioning. Clearly there is much future work to be done on these collaborative translations and on their implications for broader debates in translation studies.

It is apparent that the two translations discussed throughout this chapter cannot be reduced to an overarching framework of a Christian interpretation, as both translators interpreted the BP differently and their interpretations were conditioned by different experiences, purposes, linguistic elements and cultural environments. While Brown seems to have been a secular and enlightenment-tinged orientalist who was open to Liṅgāyath religion, Würth was completely absorbed by his Christian ethos. Brown had several helpful hands at his disposal due to the availability of manpower and money.

In addition, he was sympathetic towards the Jaṅgams who were ignored in the study of literature. The combination of Brown's disagreement with prevailing Western notion of oriental literatures, his suspicion towards Brahmin scholarship and his admiration for the puritanism of the Jaṅgams shaped his approach and translation of the BP. He tried to trace the earliest stages of European civilization and to break away from the contemporary Euro-centric perspective of understanding 'world-civilizations'. Hence, throughout the translation Brown immersed himself in comparisons and analogies. While doing so, he did not hesitate to acknowledge the assistance offered by local scholars in explicating countless concepts and vocabularies of the Telugu puranic literatures. He mentioned a long list of such scholars who helped him decipher the Telugu manuscripts (see Brown 1978).

Yet, the self-imposed urge of Brown to 'revive' the lowly state of Telugu literature which had reached the nadir of degeneration due to "the incursion of the Mohamedans [and] neglect on the part of Telugu writers" (Mantena 2005:515-16) and his stinging criticism at the Brahmins' prejudices should draw our attention to a sectarian angle in the Telugu literature. It was a clear demarcation of Telugu literature into Brahmin/non-Brahmin that framed Brown's research pursuits. His Christian commitment moved him to castigate a Muslim influence on Jaṅgam literature and conclude that resurrecting it from decay was inevitable. Nonetheless, this should not be taken to mean that he inaugurated 'communalization' of the Telugu literary traditions of the Jaṅgams. He voiced sectarian impressions of existing traditions and pioneered the study of non-Sanskrit literatures hitherto ignored by mainstream scholarship. Such a move put limitations on Brown's comparative perspectives and, consequently, caused him to ignore the intertwining of the Muslim and Liṅgāyaṭh literary traditions.

The case of Würth is different. In his translation there was a conscious reluctance to equate Liṅgāyaṭhism with Christian Protestantism and he exercised considerable pre-emptive censorship of the source as compared with Brown's. Würth, unlike Brown and other Western scholars, did not highlight the 'anti-Brahmin' elements as radical ideas or monotheism, which are given an elaborate articulation in the source text of the BP. Rather, he interpreted them as the sectarian feelings of the Liṅgāyaṭhs. His comparative points critically make reference to the primitive elements in the Old Testament and their similarity with the heathenism of "idol-stones" which "survive through the centuries" (Würth 1847, in Jenkins 2007:5.19).[32] Würth meant that the state of contemporary Liṅgāyaṭhs was similar to the primitive society of the European past, which purportedly showed evidence of an infantile humankind. Implicit in this point is a proud claim of a progressive and mature Christianity in the contemporary period and the need for the 'heathens' to imitate it and attain a similar level of progress. It was ideologically impossible and 'regressive' for Würth to compare on equal terms the 'evolved' Christian religion with an 'immature' Liṅgāyaṭh faith. The anti-Brahminical and anti-caste principles of the Liṅgāyaṭhs, the basis for Brown's lyrical identification of Liṅgāyaṭhism as a 'principled protestant reaction' and its followers as 'peaceable puritans', were inadequate for Würth

[32] See translations in Jenkins (2007). Geoffrey Oddie has expounded the beliefs of the Protestant missionaries about an "evil character of idol worship" (2006:24). He shows that during the early decades of the nineteenth century Protestant missionaries across India shared these common beliefs.

to offer a positive picture of the Liṅgāyaths and their scriptural ethos, as he discovered their pantheistic and casteist practices during his visits to north Karnataka. The textual philosophy of monotheism on the one hand and a contradictory practice of pantheism on the other substantiated his persistent criticism of the Liṅgāyaths, further enhanced by their hierarchical caste structure.

Against the backdrop of the present discussion it would be simplistic to conclude that colonialism erased heterogeneity and contained the traffic of representation. Instead, it opened a Pandora's Box in so far as reception, interpretation and appropriation in translation were concerned. Nationalist recuperation of the Liṅgāyath literatures in colonial Karnataka subscribed to Brown's discourse and struggled to come to terms with Würth's, while postcolonial assessments of colonial and nationalist discourses on the Liṅgāyath literatures have not yet unearthed this history nor engaged with its complexity. The further study of individual translators – both local and foreign – and their translation practices and ideologies as they relate to the literature of the Liṅgāyaths and additional communities in south India is key to attaining a more nuanced understanding of the past and of its echoes in the present.

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Translating Vice into Filipino
Religious, Colonial and Nationalist Discourses on Sloth

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Abstract: *Given that translation is the dynamic mediation between social worlds expressed in language, translations of what is constructed as virtue or vice reveal dynamics involved in social change. This essay looks at the translation of the capital sin sloth from late medieval Spanish Catholicism and its reception in Philippine society from the sixteenth century onwards. It focuses on how sloth was translated into Tagalog and what discourses it evoked from Spanish and American colonialists as well as Filipino nationalists. It traces how its characterization as sin of individual believers developed into a stereotypical representation of a people, clearly linking religious meaning with colonial interests. The study sets out to show how translation shapes and is shaped by the dynamics of social change. Different interests – religious, colonial and nationalist – construct what vice consists in, and translation studies provides a powerful tool in unmasking such interests.*

Points of departure

Bassnett and Trivedi (1999:2) rightly point out that "the relationship between the text termed the 'original', or the source, and the translation of that 'original' remains the crucial issue in translation studies". Earlier translation theorists viewed this relationship as nothing more than the simple search for literal or functional equivalences between languages. But such a view has been criticized because it implicitly posits 'a third text' by which the faithfulness of the translation is judged.

One finds such a critique in Ricoeur's posthumously published lectures on translation:

> The faithfulness/betrayal dilemma claims to be a practical dilemma because there is no absolute criterion of what would count as good translation. This absolute criterion would be *the same meaning*, written somewhere on the top of and between the original text and the target text. This third text would be the bearer of the identical meaning, supposed to move from the first to the second. (2006:34)

But because such 'a third text' does not exist, one would do well "by suggesting the abandonment of the dream of the perfect translation and by admitting to the total difference between the peculiar and the foreign" (*ibid.*:34). As a result, translation studies "focus(es) not solely on the source text, nor on the target text, but looks instead at how different discourses and semiotic practices are mediated through translation" (Gentzler 1993:191). Translation may now be characterized as the dynamic mediation between social worlds expressed in language, as it "does not happen in a vacuum, but in a continuum; it is not an isolated act, it is part of an ongoing process of intercultural transfer"

(Bassnett and Trivedi 1999:2). 'What is lost' and 'what is gained' are recognized as legitimate and essential dimensions of translation. And "the work of the translator does not move from the word to the sentence to the text, to the cultural group, but conversely: absorbing vast interpretations of the spirit of a culture, the translator comes down again from the text, to the sentence and to the word" (Ricoeur 2006:31).

In line with this recognition of the nature of translation, the link between translation and social dynamics and therefore power cannot be denied or suppressed. In their introduction to the anthology *Translation and Power*, Tymoczko and Gentzler (2002:xvi) maintain that "the key topic that has provided the impetus for the new directions that translation studies have taken since the cultural turn is *power*". Pálsson (1993:15) in another anthology draws attention to the fact that translation is never innocent but necessarily infused with attitude; decisions about whether or not to translate, what texts to select and what kind of receptor languages to use are not as straightforward as one might think.

All these decisions constitute ways through which translations shape and are shaped by social processes, making "the act of translation partisan: engaged and committed, either implicitly or explicitly" (Tymoczko and Gentzler 2002:xviii). Thus translations become a privileged locus for understanding the dynamics involved in historical processes such as colonization. Bassnett and Trivedi (1999:17), for instance, speak of translation as being "at the heart of the colonial encounter". They further show that the invention of the idea of the original – the non-existent 'third text' in Ricouer's language – "fully coincides with the period of early colonial expansion, when Europe began to reach outside its own boundaries for territory to appropriate" (*ibid.*:2).

From these perspectives of translation theory and postcolonial studies, the role of translation in the Philippine colonial experience becomes an enticing field of study. Spanish colonization was accompanied by the romanization and codification of native languages, the introduction of printing and the production of translated and original texts in these languages. Among historians, Rafael remains singular in focusing on the significance of translation: "For the Tagalogs, translation was a process less of internalizing colonial-Christian conventions than of evading their totalizing grip by repeatedly marking the differences between their language and interests and those of the Spaniards" (1988:213). His subsequent study links nationalism, which he describes as "the conjuring of the nation by way of substitution and estrangement", with translation, "that double process of appropriating and replacing what is foreign while keeping its foreignness in view" (Rafael 2006:xvii).

Furthermore, historical and theological analyses suggest that the relation between Christianity and cultural context is a dynamic encounter engendering different shapes of Christianity, an encounter best described in terms of translation (Francisco 2007:70-84). Thus the translation of Spanish into native Christianity was accompanied by linguistic practices which mediated transcendence. Thanks to the preaching of Spanish missionaries and their catechetical texts in Romanized native languages, Christian discourse in these languages emerged, and native subjects could speak to God in their own tongues (Francisco 2008).

With these points of departure, this study examines the translation of Catholic tradition regarding the seven capital sins and its reception in Philippine society. From its

early monastic origins to its scholastic articulation, this tradition sought to identify root causes of all other sins. It singled out pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, gluttony and lust as capital or deadly sins, and its description of these sins has provided a key to how vice and, conversely, virtue are constructed.

Of these seven sins, the present essay focuses on sloth. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, sloth, or *acedia* in its original Greek root, has surprisingly attracted much contemporary interest among writers on spirituality or philosophy as well as psychology and medicine. This overarching interest comes from the fundamental view that sloth manifests itself in modern maladies like apathy, ennui or even depression, and that it resonates with the modern preoccupation on human interiority (Norris 2008). In one Jungian author's words, "sloth as we term it today is the unrecognized but inevitable outcome of current events in contemporary life. The task for each one is to recognise it, admit it and accept it as part of the personal shadow" (Maguire 2004:140).

Secondly, discussions of sloth often appear in analyses of social situations or historical processes characterized by dominance and exclusion. These analyses show that the 'other', that is, those excluded by the dominant, whether by virtue of race, gender, class or whatever reason, are commonly referred to as slothful, indolent or lazy. Studies indicate how masters and colonizers have typically complained about the laziness of slaves, women and natives. Given the long colonial history of the Philippines, one is compelled to examine how sloth was translated into Tagalog by Spanish missionaries and what textual discourses this translation evoked from Spanish and American colonialists as well as Filipino nationalists.

Carrying-over sloth into native society

Texts explaining Christian doctrine and practice known as catechisms were produced since the early Patristic period. But these catechisms took greater significance after the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) when "the alarming challenge of popular heresy loomed large in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the Church was determined to define and enforce the boundaries of orthodoxy" (Bast 1997:3). Intended for the instruction of catechumens, newly-baptized and 'simple folk', these usually included sections on common prayers, the Ten Commandments and the commandments of the Church. They often discussed the seven capital sins, as these offered an effective way of explaining complex issues about the nature of sin, its causes and manifestations.

As may be expected then, sloth and the other capital sins were first introduced in Dominican Juan de Oliver's *Doctrina cristiana* (Cruz 1995). This late sixteenth-century catechism translated sloth from *pereza* in Spanish into *catamaran* in Tagalog in a rather straightforward manner and with little gloss. The related entry in Franciscan San Antonio's contemporary dictionary is simply listed under its root-word: "*TAMÁR*.{l. *Tamád* LC} pc. Pereza de hacer algo [laziness to do something]" (Postma 2000).

What this meant to Oliver and other missionaries emerged out of a complex and multifaceted development of the concept of *acedia*, which Wenzel traces from its origins to popularization. First conceived in relation to the monastic experience of fourth-century Egyptian desert hermits, sloth was articulated by Evagrius Ponticus as being weary of

life inside the monk's cell. John Cassian, a monk from the Western churches, later associated it with "idleness, somnolence, rudeness, restlessness, wandering about, instability of mind and body, chattering, inquisitiveness". Here, in the shift from Evagrius to Cassian, from desert to monastery, lie the "two tendencies – adaptation to new situations, and theological and psychological analysis together with a more solid systematization – [which] continued to be at work throughout the Middle Ages" (Wenzel 1967:21-22).

Further developments in the understanding of sloth were propelled by changing situations and new concerns. For example, Gregory the Great, pope and last of the Latin Fathers, subsumed *acedia* under *tristitia* (sorrow) probably because monks in the West lived in community and therefore were less prone to the burden of desert solitude. Moreover, the concept of *acedia* had to be universalized: if sloth were to be truly considered a capital sin – that is, a sin that leads to other sins – then it had to be applicable to the life of every Christian, not just hermits or monks.

This more general formulation came with its systematization by the great medieval thinker, Thomas Aquinas. According to Wenzel (1967:46),

> In the Summa theologiae of Thomas Aquinas *acedia* is a general, universal form of moral misconduct. From "boredom with the cell" through "negligence in performing spiritual deeds" it has reached the abstract, psychologistic stage of "aversion of the appetite from its own good because of bodily hardships that accompany its attainment," losing in the process all accidental references to a specific social class, geographical area or form of religious life.

This view of sloth dominated in the Western tradition and became popular throughout Europe through iconography and literature. One such instance is a medieval Spanish tract on vices and virtues which describes sloth thus: *Accidia es tristeza muy grande por la qual se afoga el amor de Dios e el alegria espiritual* ('Sloth is great sorrow on account of which love of God and spiritual joy disappear'; Johnson 1993:89-90).

This view of sloth was what Oliver, along with other European missionaries, brought to native society from the sixteenth century onwards. In the section 'De la pereza', Oliver's catechism describes *catamaran* ('sloth') in Thomistic vocabulary as aversion to what is good:

> Sloth regarding good things is the last capital sin; this behavior and evil deed are indeed the death of the human soul; how wretched of men that they are attracted by all that appears evil, and they tire of the teaching of God and do not put any part of it within their heart … (Cruz 1995:184)

In keeping with its late medieval understanding, sloth is here related to the feeling of sorrow (*aba ñga nang tauo*) as well as evil behaviour (*anyong masama*). But Oliver's catechism goes further in specifying what this resistance to what is of God demands of the natives:

> be not weary of doing many good deeds … don't dillydally in following God's commands: go to church, pray everyday, confess yearly; abstain during Lent, so

> that God will not be weary of you, when you face him and are repaid eternally with all glory of the soul in heaven. (Cruz 1995: 187-88)

One may be surprised that Oliver identifies slothful behaviour with not fulfilling Christian duties – attending Sunday Mass, praying daily, going to yearly confession and fasting during Lent. Such identification, however, was recent; only some 50 years earlier during the Council of Trent did the Church define for the first time what is expected of every Christian. In explaining sloth in terms of these duties, Oliver's catechism clearly echoes the prevailing tradition of Spanish Catholicism at the time.

However, in order to translate or 'carry-over' this view into native society and to deliver the full force of the Christian message, the catechism employs fierce rhetoric against the natives and betrays colonial attitudes towards native culture. It points out examples of sloth in common native behaviour. Missionaries linked drinking alcoholic brews with 'pagan' rituals and considered excessive the native fascination with gold artefacts and ornaments as signs of power and prestige (Cruz 1995:184). They also berated them for their failure to abide by the preaching of the missionaries who, like the Three Wise Men in the Christmas story, have come from afar and at great sacrifice (*ibid.*:187).

This perceived disregard and ingratitude for the work of the missionaries became a persistent theme in the treatment of sloth. The priests "weep because you cannot be pierced by our teaching, as if your ears have no holes" (*ibid.*:185). They would even have been able to convert Corazain and Bethsaida, biblical towns condemned by Jesus for their obstinacy, with greater ease (*ibid.*:185).

What lies behind this fierce indictment of the native appears when one reads the following sections in context:

> we ministered to China, Siam, even Borneo, and we taught all those places, do we know if they conformed themselves to the Lord God? Do we know if they became true to their being Christians, if they came to be baptized? Do we know if they followed the Lord God's command? You are dead compared to the Mexicans, Japanese, the Priests went there, why are they good? Their love for the Lord? Their being Christians to boot, which proves what I say, while you, though previously taught by the Fathers, and you did not change one bit. (*ibid.*:185)

To use such historical falsehood about the conversion of China, Siam, Borneo, Mexico and Japan indicates how missionaries could distort history to elicit native compliance to religious and colonial interests.

Moreover, the catechism's translation of sloth as *catamaran* shows the link between its religious meaning and colonial interests. Natives were criticized as slothful (*quinatatamaran*) for fleeing to the mountains to till their lands instead of going to church on Sundays: "you are lazy and weary about all these, if you are asked to go to church you make working in the mountains the excuse" (*ibid.*:187). Here the meaning of sloth has been extended – failing not just in fulfilling religious duties but in submitting to mandated *reducción*, the colonial practice of forcing natives into settlements for greater control. Hence those who fled from these settlements were referred to as *remontados* ('apostates').

This link between the religious conception of sloth and colonial interests continued until the nineteenth century when colonial discourse suggests their almost complete identification. Throughout the Spanish colonial period, countless catechetical and devotional texts in Tagalog propagated this link. Stories about saints like Isidro Labrador, patron of farmers, extolled their religious fervour in doing their work. Moral lessons (*aral*) from the *pasyon*, the epic-like poem of Christ's life chanted and dramatized during Holy Week, condemned *catamaran* in its manifold manifestations.

Spanish burden of native interests

Postcolonial studies have shown that the common myth of the lazy native is part of the ideological apparatus of colonization and therefore an essential cog in any colonial regime. In his well-known study of how this myth applied to Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, Alatas (1977:52-59) points out the role that visitors like Careri, friars like Sebastian Manrique and observers like Sinibaldo de Mas played in propagating the myth about the Filipino native. Moreover, his analysis shows that "what was actually lacking in the peoples of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines was not so much the will to work as the will to acquire greater and greater wealth in the Western capitalist sense" (*ibid.*:213). What Alatas fails to bring out is the relation between this myth and Christianity, in particular its understanding of sloth.

This relation is what Mojares (1983:82), a prominent literary historian, highlights in his discussion of the changed situation in the nineteenth century: "the world of the *doctrina*, the outpost for evangelization, has given way to that of the *parroquia*, the settled Christian community", and thus the link between the religious and the colonial in the understanding of sloth turned into identification, especially in popular books of manners. In such books, "faith and breeding became synonymous, made manifest in a decorous and ceremonious life that turned on the axis of obedience to God and His Church" (*ibid.*:80). As a result, "the good Catholic was also the perfect colonial" (*ibid.*:80).

Though written by the native diocesan priest Modesto de Castro, *Urbana at Feliza* (1864) embodies such an ideal. As Mojares (1983:84) observes, "decorum is the dominant theme of the book. The exposition of the duties of the individual to his fellowmen, family, Church and Government is governed by a concern for the maintenance of a moral and social equilibrium".

Structured as an exchange of letters between sisters, De Castro's work asks women and men, young and old, parent or child, not to be slothful (*houg catamaran*). The young pupil it enjoins "to exert every effort not to be lazy in studying the lessons; if unable to understand, ask one's classmate or teacher" (De Castro 1864:27-28). The farmer it insists must not be lazy: "If when plowing his field, his beast of burden becomes restless and refuses to follow, the lazy farmer immediately looks for a shady place and relaxes" (*ibid.*:122).

Because *Urbana at Feliza* is primarily addressed to young men and women, many of its comments on sloth have to do with married life. For example, "women and men about to be married should both have industry, goodness and holiness" (*ibid.*:115). But greater attention is given to wives whose status is indicated according to patriarchal views. They

are extolled to be industrious in serving their spouses and family, in household chores and weaving native thread and imported lamb wool fibers:

> A husband's esteem and honour and even wealth lie in his wife's hard work rather than her desire to be extraordinarily bejewelled and decorated in a manner not appropriate for someone in her stature, in taking care of housework, looking for thread and lamb wool to be woven intended for her husband and other housemates, rather than in eating bread one did not labour for. (*ibid.*:113-14)

This understanding of sloth in the context of manners found in *Urbana at Feliza* is the mirror image of discourse on industry. Such a discourse is found in an 1879 Tagalog translation of a Spanish translation of a German rendition of Daniel Defoe's narrative *Robinson Crusoe* (Mojares 1983:88). Its familiar English original was written at the time of British colonial expansion, and thus its praise of industriousness must be viewed within the hierarchical relations between the white master and the native servant. Its Tagalog rendition preserves the story's focus: "At the entrance to Robinson's home on the island is engraved the motto: "Industry and Moderation" (*casipagan at casucatan*)" (*ibid*.:89). Other ingenious touches are added. For example, while Robinson's experiences are narrated, "the children [the listeners] are made to occupy themselves with useful tasks as they listen to the story as idleness is a bad thing" (*ibid.*:88).

The often-cited work of Franciscan Lucio Miguel Bustamante's *Tandang Bacio Macunat* ('Old Stubborn Bacio'; 1885) represents the greatest conflation of religious and colonial interests. With the didactic impulse characteristic of other books of manners, this forerunner of narrative fiction in the native languages is a story within a story. The main story is told by the narrator, presumably the author, who converses with the poor native Bacio about sending young natives to Manila to study Spanish and other subjects. Bacio argues against such practice and to prove his point, reads the story of Kabesang Andres who sends his son Prospero to Manila. Bustamante cleverly uses the name Prospero, meaning 'prosperity', for one goes to Manila in search of advancement but the journey ends in perdition.

This narrative technique makes Bustamante's argument against educating natives more compelling. For example, Basio reports on an exchange between Kabesang Andres and his parish priest on this matter. The priest asks Kabesang Andres what Prospero already knows, and Andres replies that he knows how to pray, read, write and count. He further assures the priest that he knows "how to plough, take care of the carabao, gather firewood, and other things involved with their livelihood, and other matters regarding other duties of a Christian" (Bustamante 1885:25). Then the priest slyly asks "what else are you after or seeking for Prospero" (*ibid.*: 25). Andres replies that he desires for his son "better ability in human relations, and as you know the people in our town are very ignorant, hardly knowing how to respond" (*ibid.*:25).

Because Bustamante has already indicated at the beginning of his narrative that education leads to perdition, and thus his implied audience knows what would happen to Prospero in Manila, this exchange exposes the folly of Andres and of all others who desire further education for their children. Using Bacio as his mouthpiece, Bustamante's narrative then appears justified in its colonial and racist conclusion: "The Spaniard is

Spaniard, and the native native. The monkey, even when clothed in shirt and pants, remains a monkey and not human" (*ibid.*:15). Therefore the natives should not learn Spanish.

With such texts as Bustamante's, the conception of sloth undergoes a shift in focus. It is no longer primarily concerned with the observance of religious duties by individuals, regardless of their personal circumstances. Sloth has been turned into a characteristic of all natives: the collective 'other' identified in contrast to the Spanish, religious missionary or civil bureaucrat, both part of the colonial apparatus.

Nationalist moorings from Filipinos

Because colonial ideology had associated sloth with the stereotype of the native as a lazy and unreliable colonial, well-salaried colonial functionaries and other Europeans propagated this stereotype in their writings. As a result, nineteenth-century nationalist Filipinos such as Gregorio Sancianco, Graciano Lopez Jaena and Jose Rizal targeted this characterization of natives as slothful. For instance, Sancianco's 1881 work on the Philippine situation mounted "an impassioned yet carefully reasoned and documented refutation of the Spanish commonplace of '*indolencia del indígena*'" (Schumacher 1973:24-25). Their indictment of this colonial stereotype employed two essentially related arguments – that prehispanic native society was not characterized by indolence, and that the so-called indolence was the result of Spanish colonization.

The nationalist argument about native industriousness was based on a reconstruction of prehispanic native society from early missionary records. Though this reconstruction at times verged on the romantic, such as those by Isabelo de los Reyes or Pedro Paterno, these records indicate the manufacture and trade of gold jewellery, metal tools and textiles in prehispanic society. One finds the most thorough analytical assessment of these sources in Rizal's edition of Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* ('Historical Events of the Philippine Islands') and other essays. Rizal, for example, mentions the testimonies of San Agustin and Colin about the industry of the natives and notes that "in those times the Philippines exported silk to Japan" (Schumacher 1973:199).

With this refutation of the natural indolence of the native, the nationalists turn the tables and proceed to their second argument – that what the colonizers saw as slothful behaviour is actually the effect of colonization. Sancianco writes, the so-called indolence of the native is "only a pretext to commit disgraceful abuses which discredit the Spanish name as well as ruin the poor Filipino farmer" (Sancianco 1881:236-37). Not to be outdone, Rizal asks, "Who is the indolent one, the *indio* coadjutor [native priest-assistants], poorly paid and badly treated, who has to visit all the indigent sick living in the country, or the parish priest who gets fabulously rich, goes about in a carriage, eats and drinks well, and does not trouble himself unless he can collect excessive fees?" (Rizal 1972:231).[1] Moreover, other nationalists like Lopez Jaena point out the contrast between the colonial experiences of the Filipinos and other Asian nations:

[1] Cf. Rizal (1954:6) for text in Spanish: *Quien es el indolente, es el coadjutor indio, mal pagado y mal tratado, que tiene que acudir a todos los enfermos pobres que viven en los campos, o el cura fraile que se enriquese fabulosamente, se pasea en coche, come y bebe bien y no se molesta si no cobra excesivos derechos?*

> In Singapore, in Calcutta and Java, with the colonial regime and the example of the English and Dutch respectively, the Malay *indios*, brothers of our own, abandoned their laziness to give themselves to the energy of activity and of work; in our Archipelago of San Lazaro with our colonial regime and the example of our colonizers, who though they had been diligent in the Peninsula, on coming among the *indios*, rather than opening their eyes to civilization, rather than guiding them along the path of progress, have lived like them. Therefore, as must necessarily happen, the *indios* continued being indolent. (Schumacher 1973:37)

These comments, though helpful in dispelling the stereotype of the lazy native, remain preparatory to Rizal's systematic analysis. In his well-known 1890 essay, 'On the Indolence of the Filipinos', Rizal (1972:232) writes that "the evil is that indolence in the Philippines is a magnified indolence, a snow-ball indolence, if we may be permitted the expression, an evil which increases in direct proportion to the square of the periods of time, an effect of misgovernment and backwardness, as we said and not a cause of them".[2] Then the essay proceeds to enumerate colonial arrangements that hindered productivity and encouraged passivity. On the one hand, the initial impact of colonization as well as protracted wars and piracy resulted in depopulation and economic losses. On the other, colonial and church authorities were not only encouraging but introduced gambling and costly religious functions. Thus did Rizal achieve his goal "to analyze, historically and sociologically, why the phenomenon exists and how it is perpetuated, by looking both at the impact of imperial conquest and the ensuing colonial policies and practices, as well as the unwitting complicity of the natives in reproducing a social system that is conducive to indolence" (Schumacher 1973:197).

Through this nationalist discourse on sloth, Rizal "examines its [the nation's] past, describing how it lost its traditions, its way of writing, its literature, its moral code" (*ibid.*:197). His discussion of indolence is part of his "interrogation of Empire, a critique of Spanish orientalism and colonialism that required not only the deconstruction of "white mythologies" but also, more importantly, the historiographic strategy of always contrasting the present with the past" (Quibuyen 1999:196). Within this context, the meaning of sloth was no longer primarily a vice in religious terms but has now been thrust into the realm of the political.

Treading the American neo-colonial path

The translation of sloth under American rule manifests both change and continuity. From the Spanish *pereza* to the Tagalog *catamaran*, it has become 'laziness' in plain English. But apart from this change in vocabulary, its meaning was shaped by new historical forces as well as common features of colonialism.

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[2] The original text reads: *el mal está en que la indolencia en Filipinas es una indolencia exagerada, una bola-de-nieve, si se nos permite la palabra, un vicio que aumenta en razón directa del cuadrado de los tiempos, un efecto del disgobierno y del atraso, como dijimos, y no una causa de ellos* (1954:7).

Given the historical exigencies of the Spanish-American War and the resulting 1898 Treaty of Paris, American involvement in the Philippines began under apparently different auspices. As the historian Diokno points out, "the notion of American rule as a 'mixed blessing' was unwittingly authored by the Americans themselves when, on 21 December 1898, President William McKinley, declared a policy of "benevolent assimilation" of the Philippines" (2002:75).

At the dawn of the twentieth century, American national and cultural experience could not have been more different from that of sixteenth-century Spain. Its pioneering spirit in the frontiers and its ideals forged from struggles against colonialism and slavery were reflected in its avowed aims in the islands – "to come not as invaders or conquerors but as friends, to protect the natives in their homes, in their employments, and in their personal and religious rights" (*ibid.*:75).

Behind this rhetoric however lurked the same dynamic characteristic of colonization and its link with religion. Unlike the Church in the Indies under administrative oversight of the Spanish monarchy as provided in the *Patronato*, the American Protestant churches were not institutionally integrated into the American state. However, both shared the same view of the American mission in the islands and of the Filipino as one who needed to be 'educated', 'uplifted', 'civilized' and 'Christianized' (Anderson 1969:293).

This view which included the myth of the lazy – therefore slothful – Filipino was based on Protestant American criticism of "the deplorable moral state and an indolent culture". In Clymer's words (1986:83-84),

> Spanish colonial rule, for example, deserved considerable blame for both, thought most missionaries. For one thing, it was said that Spanish Catholicism made little if any connection between religious conviction and moral behavior; and the priests, with their concubines and children, their use of tobacco and drink, hardly provided ideal models for the people.

As Protestants of their day, the new missionaries considered popular religious practice tainted by Spanish Catholicism as superstitious, or at best, deficient. As Americans aware of their growing imperial power, they regarded Filipinos as inferior on account of race and 'arrested' cultural development. Based on at the time current theories of social evolution and biogenetic law, the Filipino was portrayed, according to Halili, as child and as Indian or Negro (2006). Such portrayals were common in American popular political cartoons. In one published in the *Chicago Tribune*, the Philippines is represented as an orphaned black child with similarly drawn images of Cuba and Puerto Rico, knocking on a door marked U.S.A. and opened by Uncle Sam (Halili 2006:45-48). Together with its clear image of racial and cultural inferiority, the cartoon recalls Christ's words, "know and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 6:7). Thus concludes Halili (2006:48), "Since he [Uncle Sam] is a Christian having the 'purest form of Christianity,' it was but moral and natural for him to respond".

These attitudes toward the Filipino shaped American strategies of both churches and government in combating the vice of sloth which missionaries paid much attention to (Clymer 1986:79). As expected, they blamed the indolence of the Filipino on "the

alleged Spanish disdain of manual labor" (*ibid.*:84). Moreover, they debated "whether Filipinos or Burmese were lazier, with Methodist Harry Farmer opting for Burmans and Baptist W. O. Valentine selecting the Filipinos" (*ibid.*:79).

To combat such laziness, they proposed conversion to the Protestant Gospel as well as the establishment of a supportive ethos different from the dominant Catholic culture. As a Presbyterian missionary proposed, "would [to] God he [the Filipino] might exchange his contemptible cock fighting and the hell breathed spirit of gambling for the love of healthy, manly sport without which no nation has ever yet been worth the while" (*ibid.*:85). Thus Protestant groups organized alternative social activities such as sports, especially of popular American games like basketball and softball, through the interdenominational Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). School dormitories provided living conditions aligned with Protestant practices and therefore minimized opportunities for the typically Filipino Catholic vices of drinking and gambling.

As a concrete alternative to sloth, "the gospel of hard work, thrift, and frugality" was preached. The dislike for manual labour had to be changed "to encourage a more "progressive" culture" – or, in more theological language, "to help men possessed of bodies to create those outward conditions which will best enable them to use their bodies as instruments of the enlarged mind and soul which are the earliest gift of Christian conversion" (*ibid.*:84).

American government strategies, especially in education, worked hand in hand with these missionary efforts. After initially aiming "to create literate, independent-thinking citizens", school sought "to prepare Filipinos for productive labor" (May 1980:113). Though complex strategic and ideological factors caused this shift ordered by Governor-general W. Cameron Forbes and executed by Director of Education Frank White (*ibid.*:113-26), the emphasis on hard work, manual labour and what was then called industrial education was still viewed as an antidote to laziness.

The American educational enterprise also preached the missionaries' gospel of hard work. It did not print catechisms and devotional literature but textbooks for Philippine civics based on similar American materials but authored by Filipinos employed by the American colonial government. One such author was Camilo Osias, an eminent product of American education, who produced the entire *The Philippine Readers* series for all schools. In Book One of the series, he includes a simple poem about a lazy man whose garden became overgrown with weeds because he refused to wake up when the cock crowed (Osias 1927:46). In Book Six, the poem 'The Little Brown Hands' by Mary H. Kraut ends thus: "The pen of the author and scholar/ The noble and the wise of the land/ The sword and the chisel and palette/ Shall be held in the little brown hand" (Osias 1948:29). These lines clearly point to hard work as the key to success in scholarship, literary and visual arts and governance. At the same time, the jarring juxtaposition of 'little brown hands' – presumably a metonymy for Filipinos – with images in the other stanzas associated with American realities like wheat fields and dusky grapes is not lost on Osias. Though he recognizes the American origins of the poem, he asks his readers whether the poem describes life in the Philippines (*ibid.*:28). Given this, his textbooks could be said to have propagated the gospel of hard work within the public school system established by the American colonial regime.

Such cooperation to combat sloth and promote hard work approximates civil religion. For the functionaries of both Protestant Christianity and the American government colonial regime, laziness – the new name for sloth – was a vice characteristic of Filipino Catholics who were seen to be deficient on account of racial inferiority and cultural backwardness. In their American eyes moreover, this vice and its manifestations in drunkenness and gambling did not only reflect the decadent character of Spanish Catholicism but also hindered their avowed aim of 'benevolent assimilation' through responsible citizenship and economic progress.

Points of further exploration

This essay has traced the somewhat tortuous journey along which the vice sloth was translated into Philippine society. As with many others, it does not end in a final destination but leads to further paths linked to the nature of translation and the dynamic of Philippine society.

Firstly, this journey involved many languages – Latin and Greek (*acedia*), Spanish (*pereza, indolencia*), Tagalog (*catamaran*), and English (laziness). Though one can speak of some linguistic continuity within and through these various languages, the meaning of 'sloth' varied with the contexts in which it was used. *Acedia* took new nuances in its application to hermits, monks and ordinary Christians in medieval Christianity. Upon arriving in the tropical landscape as *pereza*, sloth became *catamaran* and underwent transformations from its religious meaning as aversion to God and godly duties to its appropriation as social disease by colonial and nationalist interests. Then, under American rule, it was called *laziness* – now a vice against civil religion.

On account of these transformations, sloth itself became predicated as both behaviour and condition and was viewed in terms of both individual and group. It manifested itself in native behaviour such as drunkenness and gambling, but could be referred to as a lingering condition. Catholic tradition spoke of the slothful person who did not fulfil religious duties because of an aversion to God. But once linked with colonial or nationalist interest, sloth became characteristic of a group defined as 'other'.

These complex transformations assume an iconic representation in the folk character of Juan Tamad [John the Lazy], the Tagalog counterpart of the Spanish Juan Bobo or Tonto [John the Stupid] and the hero of numskull tales found in other Philippine and Asian cultures (Meñez 1996:39). Local folktales, plays, TV sitcoms and movies present him caught in different predicaments and called to task by an irate parent or nagging wife, but – unlike in other cultural traditions – always winning in the end. Characterized variously as trickster, wit or pure indolence, he typifies the victorious underdog and thus connects with a self-image shared by many Filipinos.

One can then say that this journey of linguistic and iconic translation on the Philippine landscape validates the so-called 'cultural turn' in contemporary translation studies. Finding equivalences among languages continues to be a heuristic strategy in translation work, but it does not adequately describe the nature of translation. The ever-evolving meaning of sloth through different languages and in varying contexts shows that translating or the 're-creation' of meaning across these languages and contexts is subject to all

the vicissitudes of life and history. Personal experiences, cultural attitudes, ideological interests and economic forces all play a role in the production of translation.

Secondly, this journey focused on sloth suggests why the boundaries between the religious and the civic are continually negotiated in contemporary Philippine society. As the path traced by this study indicates, the understanding of sloth as vice has constantly moved between the religious and the civic. The religious meaning of sloth interacted with colonial and nationalist interests throughout the Spanish colonial period. Its conception by American civil religion is another instance of this interplay. Moreover, even when set, the boundaries between the religious and the civic remain constantly porous, so that what transpires in either realm includes undercurrents from the other. The 1986 EDSA (Epifanio de los Santos Avenue) People Power Revolution that installed Cory Aquino as the nation's President provides the most dramatic instance of the vigorous interaction between the religious and the civic on all levels, above and below ground. It involved political opposition, military mutineers, civil society networks and religious groups, all acting from their perspectives but meeting at the conjuncture of overthrowing the Marcos regime.

Thirdly, this paper's choice of the vice sloth was made because of continuing discussions in Philippine society about the causes of its underdevelopment, why it has earned the title of 'basket-case of Asia'. Invariably in such discussions, the stereotype of the lazy Filipino rears its ugly head. Tracing the paths that translating sloth took in the local landscape will hopefully contribute to a more enlightened assessment of the construction of 'cultural dispositions', be they vices or virtues, be they religious and/or civic. As many have insisted, Octavio Paz among them, "translation is the principal means we have of understanding the world we live in" (Bassnett and Trivedi 1999:2).

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Translations in Romanized Malay and the Revival of Chineseness among the *Peranakan* in Java (1880s-1911)[1]

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Abstract: *At the end of the nineteenth century the Chinese in colonial Java – most of whom were descendants of Sino-Javanese marriages and known as* peranakan *– prospered economically, but were held in contempt by the Dutch and the Javanese, encountered legal discrimination and faced challenges to educate their children at European schools. This marginal position drove them to reinvent their Chinese identity, at a time when most had lost the ability to speak and write Chinese. Concurrently, their position as second-class citizens also made them strive to become 'civilized subjects', on a par with the Europeans. This chapter highlights the role played by several figures among the 'enlightened Chinese' in completing the double task of inventing 'Chineseness' and attaining a 'civilized' status. Paradoxically, the reinvention of Chinese tradition among the* peranakan *was shaped not by Chinese language and script, but rather through a* lingua franca *they all mastered: Malay. Translations of Western and Chinese sources into Romanized Malay played a critical role in the* peranakans' *acquiring of a new Chinese identity and in their struggle for acceptance as a 'civilized', 'modern' community.*

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the *peranakan*, the local born Chinese, who were partially assimilated into the society of the Dutch Indies. As offspring of mixed marriages between Chinese fathers and local women, the *peranakan* lost certain cultural characteristics related to Chineseness. This phenomenon was reported by observers from the 'Celestial Kingdom', such as Ong Tae Hae (Wang Dahai), who worked as a tutor in Central Java in the eighteenth century. He observed that

> [w]hen the Chinese remain abroad for several generations without returning to their native land, they frequently cut themselves off from the instructions of the sages; in language, food and dress they imitate the natives and, studying foreign books, they do not scruple to become Javanese. (Ong Tae-Hae 1849:33)

Ong presented a careful, albeit quite simplistic, observation: the descendants of his fellow countrymen did not simply 'become Javanese', but created a more complex

[1] The author wishes to thank Anthony Reid, Ronit Ricci, Jan van der Putten and Evelyne Yudiarti for suggestions on earlier versions of this chapter. However, he alone is responsible for the content of this contribution.

identity. According to George W. Skinner, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards the *peranakan* of Java constituted a discrete and stable community alongside, but clearly distinguishable from, the Chinese as well as the indigenous society (Skinner 1996:51-52). They were neither Chinese nor Javanese, but created a new identity as *peranakan*.

This new group of people prospered economically since they successfully served as mediators between the Dutch and the Javanese. However, in their daily lives they experienced discrimination in legal matters and it was not easy for their children to acquire a European education. Many did succeed, however, and as a reaction against their 'pariah' status, towards the end of the nineteenth century the 'enlightened Chinese' community (*kaoem moeda bangsa Tjina*, hereinafter *kaoem moeda*) was born. Its members wished to be considered as modern subjects of the Dutch Indies, yet at the same time present themselves as 'authentic' Chinese. One of their most important means to accomplish this goal was the translation of materials related to Chineseness.

In this chapter I explore several questions touching on the *peranakans'* relationship to translation: what materials did they translate and where did these materials come from? What were the difficulties in translating them? What impact did the translations have on *peranakan* identity? The first part of this chapter discusses how *peranakan* Chinese acquired the ability to use the Roman alphabet, and a knowledge of Malay and Western languages despite the fact that they had few opportunities to receive a proper formal education in colonial Java. It will also tackle the question of why Romanized Malay soon became their main medium of expression. The second part of the chapter will explore the revival of Chineseness at the end of the nineteenth century and how translations into Romanized Malay played an important role in shaping 'a new Chinese identity' among the *peranakan.* Therefore, the 'invention of Chinese tradition' was not served directly by Chinese language and scripts, but ironically by the *lingua franca*, Malay, which is perhaps one of the greatest paradoxes in Indonesian history.

The *Peranakan* and being 'civilized' in colonial Java

In an editorial in *Pewarta Prijaji* (Aristocrat's Reporter) from August 1902, a clerk at the Ngawi Regency and editor of this monthly magazine, Raden Tjokroadisoerjo, noted the importance of mastering Western languages:

> It is clear that currently we Javanese noblemen are mostly busy at improving our knowledge of modern sciences [*pengetahoean matjem baroe/moderne wetenschap*], but unfortunately, I presume, not all the subscribers hold one of the keys of that modern knowledge box (what I refer to as the key here is Dutch, French, English and so on). (Tjokroadisoerjo 1902:71)

The editorial contains many references to the novelties of the twentieth century, while Tjokroadisoerjo was one of the few educated Javanese aware of the magical powers of the word 'modern'. The content of his editorial reflected the situation in Java, where the main inspiration for educated people was the modernity introduced by Westerners. It was exemplified by popular Dutch words, such as *vooruitgang* ('progress'), *opheffing*

('uplifting'), *ontwikkeling* ('development') and *opvoeding* ('upbringing'), all words that signify forms of modernity (cf. Shiraishi 1990:27). The Javanese who were inspired by European learning referred to it by the hybrid term *kawruh Eropah* (European knowledge; see Ricklefs 2007:136). In contemporary sources Western learning was known in Malay as *adjaran kemadjoean Eropah* (in Dutch: *de leer van de Westersche beschaving* – 'the doctrine of Western civilization'),[2] and *moderne wetenschap*, as quoted above.

Western knowledge found admirers among the Chinese, such as the *peranakan* Chinese from Makassar who sent a letter to the Governor General, exclaiming that "the science of the Dutch nation, who rules over us here in the Indies, is the perfect learning, as it is used around the world by various nations".[3] Anyone educated in the Dutch system should strive to master *Westersche beschaving* (Western Civilization), because being considered a *beschaafd* (civilized) person was one of life's ultimate goals. As Shiraishi (1990:90) has argued, mastery of Dutch was indispensable to becoming 'civilized':

> The key was their knowledge of Dutch and their access to the Dutch world in the Indies, for the Dutch exemplified modernity and the Dutch language was the key to open the modern world and age.

The struggle to be 'civilized', and thus equal to Westerners, was a common phenomenon in Asia at the turn of the twentieth century (Winichakul 2000; Hirano 1993). Because of their pariah status, the Chinese of Java were even more exposed to this pressure to strive for a civilized status than the Javanese. In the late nineteenth century, due to criticism from Dutch politicians and journalists who saw the tragic poverty among the Javanese, the Dutch government adopted an 'ethical policy' to improve their lives. The critics tended to blame the Chinese, 'the bloodsuckers of the Javanese' (Dutch: *bloedzuigers der Javanen*), for causing the misery of the population in the colony (Lohanda 2002:22-30).

The 'evil' image of the Chinese was a common stereotype in the nineteenth-century Indies. In the mid-nineteenth century, during the pacification of West Borneo, the Dutch military commander called the Chinese "the most immoral of all immoral nations" who would "only listen to force" to mend their ways (Moor 1989:59). Another officer admitted the importance of the Chinese, but at the same time was derogatory towards them: "If it weren't for the Chinese, we would have missed out on a lot of things, but still we despised those dog eaters" (Dharmowijono 2001:116). Dutch authors enhanced this negative image through their novels about life in the Indies. M. T. H. Perelaer (1831-1902), in his famous novel *Baboe Dalima* (1886), depicted good and evil Dutch and Javanese characters, but did not mention any good Chinese, since they were all *aterling* ('miscreants'). He depicted the Chinese males as lecherous, amorous characters, who "would do anything to satisfy their desires" (*ibid.*:115-16). The 'miscreant' (*aterling*) and 'cunning' (*sluw*) Chinese were among the common stereotypes of the Chinese in Dutch

[2] 'Lezingnja R.M.Soeleiman, redacteur soerat kabar "Taman Pewarta", hal hendak berdiriken soerat kabar', *Perniagaan* 2 November 1909.

[3] Letter from a Chinese of Makassar, 9/11/1905, Nationaal Archief (NA) The Hague, *MvK*, 2.10.36.04 #418., Vb 28/11/1906.

Indies novels from the late colonial period (Dharmowijono 2004). It is not surprising that the Ethical Policy supporters deliberately painted a "negative picture about the Chinese involvement in a wide range of economic activities" (*ibid.*:171). This is related to their role as middlemen in economic life, in which the Chinese were active in trade, money lending, opium and tax farming, and other 'pariah' activities, considered as 'dirty jobs' by the Javanese and Europeans (Carey 1984).

Therefore, the late nineteenth century was not a good time for the Chinese. The Dutch put severe restrictions on Chinese children entering European Schools; they had to live in their special quarters of town and apply for travel passes if they wanted to go anywhere. Long a source of colonial government income, the revenue farm was abolished and changed into a government monopoly. The rising Japanese, fellow Asians, were given European legal status in 1899, leaving the Chinese to languish as second class 'Foreign Orientals'. How then could they attain the 'civilized' status?

The 'enlightened' Chinese and the invention of Chineseness

The end of the nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of a group of Chinese who defined themselves in Malay as *kaoem moeda bangsa Tjina* (literally: youth of the Chinese nation; see Rivai 1906/7; Kwee Tek Hoay 2001:414). I have rendered this in English as 'Enlightened Chinese', because members of this group often called themselves the carriers of 'the light' (Malay: *terang*), in contrast to their fellows who lived in conservatism or 'an age of darkness' (*djaman kegelapan*).[4] The *kaoem moeda* consisted of Western-educated, or otherwise progressive men and women, primarily *peranakan* ('locally-oriented') but also with a few *totok* ('the China-oriented'), who were not satisfied with their position as second-class citizens in the new world of the twentieth century. They believed that only by embracing modernity could they reach a 'civilized' status in colonial Indonesia.

In the eyes of the Dutch, a perfect Chinese was "a highly civilized, Dutch speaking and Christian Chinese" (*een zeer beschaafde, nederlandsch sprekende christen-chinees*).[5] However, instead of obediently following Dutch modernity as described by Shiraishi above, the *kaoem moeda* created an 'alternative modernity' by utilizing their transnational networks (Nonini and Ong 1997:3-33). While required to study Dutch, they also promoted English and Mandarin because of their aversion towards the arrogance of the colonial establishment that had turned Dutch into the 'Great Language' of the Indies (*bahasa agoeng*; Fromberg 1921:59).[6] Furthermore, the *kaoem moeda* wanted to match the Europeans without joining them as Christian converts, equal in modernity but distinctly Chinese. Thus, the *kaoem moeda* faced a paradox, in that they sought to embrace modernity which was presented to them in largely European forms, and thereby rejected the cultural patterns of their parents' generation, but did not seek to 'become' European.

[4] The dichotomy of light and darkness was a common phenomenon in the early twentieth-century public sphere; see Anderson (1979).

[5] 'Wat de Chinees Vertelt', *Koloniaal Weekblad*, 1 April 1909, p. 5.

[6] Hoa Djin (1907:1). For another much cited essay by Phoa Keng Hek of a similar tone, praising English in 'Chinese Schools and the Indies Chinese Situation (1907)', see Suryadinata (1999).

Rather, they desired a new modernized and sanitized form of distinctive identity which could still be seen as 'Chinese'.

Modernization processes caused identity crises among Asians at the turn of twentieth-century Java. Ricklefs' latest study shows that the Javanese nobleman (*priyayi*) also faced an identity dilemma. Javanese *priyayi* realized that the modernity offered by the Dutch could give them access to a better future, but they were also Muslims who did not wish to follow a path of mounting Puritanism. However, a Javanese form of mysticism or Christianity was unacceptable as an alternative and finally many adopted a pre-Islamic Javanese culture (Javanese: *buda*) as a badge of ethnic pride (Ricklefs 2007). This was similar to what happened among the *peranakan*. In colonial Java, legal and daily discriminations faced by the *peranakan* brought them to a 'revival' of their Chinese identity. At the same time Christianity was regarded unfavourably by the majority of *peranakan* in the early twentieth century (Coppel 2002). The *kaoem moeda* needed a cultural symbol to 'reinvent' their Chineseness and the *peranakan* started what Morgan (1989:99) coined 'the hunt for the past', and seemed for a time to find their symbol in Confucianism.

Confucianism, an ancient ideology reinterpreted and reintroduced to the overseas Chinese communities by Kang Yu-wei,[7] played an important role in the 'revival' of Chineseness among the *peranakan* in Java. They were aware that their 'Chineseness' was compromised by local practices and their modernity by popular superstition (Lohanda 2001:137-38), and the only way to bring change was to ransack the past and transform it to create a new Chinese identity which would "instruct, entertain, amuse and educate the people" (Morgan 1989:99). Against this background, the *peranakan* began a campaign that propagated living a proper life in accordance with 'Chinese social conduct and Confucian teachings' (Malay: *kasopanan Tionghoa dan pengadjaran Khong Tjoe*).[8]

Paradoxically, the *kaoem moeda* enthusiastically adopted Western modernity, yet concurrently needed symbols from ancient Chinese culture. This movement enabled the *peranakan* to emulate and match Christian Europeans without joining them as converts, and although it promoted the use of English and Mandarin, its members predominantly used Romanized Malay to express their ideas. The importance of this factor has been ignored in studies of colonial Indonesia. In fact, the *peranakan* Chinese were instrumental to the establishment of a Romanized Malay print capitalism in the Dutch Indies, as discussed below.

The rise of Romanized Malay as the *peranakan* medium of expression

One day in November 1877, a Chinese *peranakan* reader of the leading Surabaya newspaper *Bintang Timor* expressed

[7] Kang Yu-wei (1858-1927) was a reformer, philosopher and a propagator of Confucianism in late nineteenth-century China.

[8] Nio (1940:5). I am grateful to Myra Sidharta for this rare source; see also Lohanda (2001:137).

> his disgust over the 'naïve and stupid' articles by people of his own race on the type of dress a Chinese lady should wear. He said it would be better if the Chinese think more about education for Chinese children. He also proposed that a body be set up to run a Chinese educational institution where the culture, languages, and customs of that community could be taught together *with instructions in reading and writing in the Dutch alphabet*.[9]

While 'authentic' dress and habits were not unimportant to modernizing elites, the overriding concern was a modern school teaching the 'Dutch alphabet'. The cited letter was one of the earliest signs of the growing consciousness of the importance of the alphabet among the *peranakan* of Java. It signified not just a different way of writing, but a new world of opportunities made possible by a simple alphabet of twenty six characters. One of the most overlooked items in the inventory of modernity is the spread and adoption of the Roman alphabet by various non-Western communities. Benedict Anderson (1991), who emphasizes the contribution of print capitalism to the rise of nationalism, treats literacy in the Roman alphabet as something to be taken for granted. Of course, print capitalism made it possible for people to express and disseminate their ideas. But a literate reading public in the Roman alphabet had to be available beforehand. Otherwise, how could print capitalism succeed?

Here I argue that literacy in the Roman alphabet was a crucial means for the Chinese *peranakan* to fulfil two paradoxical aims: (1) to join the 'modern and civilized world' as it was understood in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and (2) to reinvent the Chinese tradition, which had long been languishing. It was the Western alphabet, rather than Chinese script, which enabled the *peranakan* to rediscover their Chineseness. *Peranakan* were illiterate in Chinese and therefore religious tracts, manuals of Chinese customs and other materials were translated, ironically, from European sources. Even when the *peranakan* studied the Chinese script, the alphabet was again needed as a learning medium. The alphabet was indispensable to the *peranakan* in order to become modern and yet authentic Chinese at one and the same time.

Three linguistic factors were particularly crucial in the late nineteenth century in the making of the so-called 'enlightened Chinese': (1) the shift from vernaculars and *Jawi* (Malay written in Arabic script) to the Roman alphabet, (2) the adoption of Malay as the medium for printed expression and communication, and (3) the acquisition of Dutch and/or other Western languages as a gateway to modern knowledge.[10] The adoption of a new script and new languages signified the birth of a new people, the enlightened Chinese, and a new era, the 'era of progress' (*djaman kemadjoean*). Chinese capital's

[9] *Bintang Timor*, 17 November 1877, as quoted in Ahmat Adam (1995:61-62, n. 19; italics added). Dutch alphabet here refers to the 'Roman alphabet'.

[10] Claudine Salmon was the first scholar to notice the linguistic and alphabetic shifts among the *peranakan* in Java during the nineteenth century (Salmon 1981:15-33). Salmon raised the first and second points, while I add the third.

involvement in the printing business from the 1880s onwards provided a timely forum for the *kaoem moeda* to express their ideas of progress.

Sources of literacy in the Roman alphabet in the late nineteenth century

The best opportunity to obtain Western knowledge in colonial Indonesia was through the European Elementary School (*Europeesche Lager School*/ELS) and Dutch High School (*Hogere Burgerschool*/HBS). However, Dutch authorities intended to serve mainly the children of Europeans and prevented most Chinese and native children from attending these schools (Groeneboer 1998:98-103). This discrimination was not strictly imposed, and in several cases *peranakan* children managed to enrol. There were more than 200 *peranakan* children enrolled annually between 1880 and 1888 in the Dutch Indies. The figures appear small but, in the context of the nineteenth century, are nevertheless remarkable, since it was not easy even for children of the indigenous elite to study in prestigious Dutch schools. In due course the Chinese students received praise from their teachers because they distinguished themselves through diligence and good behaviour.[11]

For Chinese children who were not admitted to European schools, there were some other choices available to learn the Roman alphabet. The first possibility was the so-called *Gouvernements Openbare Lagere Scholen* (Government Public Elementary Schools), which were mainly intended for children of indigenous parents. As was the case in other Dutch-sponsored schools, Chinese children could join in as long as there were places available. Some Chinese students enrolled in the so-called Subsidized and Unsubsidized Special Schools, while missionary schools also had a role in educating the next generation of the *kaoem moeda*, because they did not charge tuition fees (Tio Ie Soei 2002:389). However, the number of *peranakan* enrolments was always low, because of parents' concern that their children would be converted to Christianity.

Private tutorial was another means of educating *peranakan* children, amidst the various restrictions to enter the best available European schools. As early as 1879, the press already noted that private 'tutorials in Western knowledge' (*peladjaran tjara Eropa*) were quite popular among *peranakan* parents in urban areas such as Batavia (Sugiastuti 2003:72).

Aside from educational institutions, private publishing houses and certain authors also played an important role in propagating the Roman alphabet by creating a genre of teaching manuals for reading and spelling Romanized Malay, in the same vein as Dutch publishers had done before them. Lie Kim Hok (1853-1912) was probably the *peranakan* pioneer in this enterprise, as author cum publisher. It is not simply coincidence that he wrote his first three books on how to read the alphabet.[12] A great number of manuals with various titles soon followed Lie Kim Hok's successful effort. It was no surprise

[11] *Koloniaal Verslag 1881* (Batavia: Landsdrukkrij, 1882), p. 104.

[12] These three books are: *Spelboekje* ('A booklet of spelling', 1876, reprinted 1877); *Sobat Anak-anak* ('Friend of the Children', 1884, revised in 1887 and 1899) and *Kitab Edja (A.B.C.)* ('Book of Spelling (A.B.C.)', 1884, revised 1885 and 1918) (Salmon 1981:228-29). Lie Kim Hok was a teaching assistant at a Dutch missionary school when he composed these teaching manuals for his pupils.

that these books, known as *Kitab Edja* ('Spelling Book'), were best sellers and enjoyed frequent reprinting. While there were Dutch and *peranakan* names printed on the covers of some of the books as authors, most of the manuals are anonymous.

Translation of works related to Chineseness

The interest in anything more purely 'Chinese', including culture, religion and language, found a growing popularity among the *peranakan* around the late nineteenth century. Books on Chinese festivals, Confucius' life and teachings and the study of Chinese language and characters met with an increasing demand, alongside books on Western knowledge. Eminent *peranakan* literati made a major contribution to this 'invention of tradition' by means of translating Western and Chinese sources. Below I present a concise survey of translated works related to Chineseness.

There were various Chinese titles on history and classic literature published, including books on edification, medicines, fortune telling, and a number of Chinese classic novels (such as the *Three Kingdoms*). Occasionally, a contemporary theme such as the Sino-Japanese War was also documented in a book. Many of the books' titles contained phrases such as 'translated from Chinese books' (*tersalin dari boekoe/kitab Tjina*) and most were anonymous (see list in Salmon 1981:373-90). There were also translations of Western novels on China, such as *Tjhit Liap Seng (Bintang Toedjoeh)* or *The Seven Stars*. In this 8-volume, 800 plus page-long work, the translator Lie Kim Hok creatively combined two Western novels, one of them with a Chinese setting, into a single new novel depicting Chinese characters in Java.[13]

The spelling books referred to above, interestingly, not only contain an introduction to the alphabet, but also provide didactic stories derived from classical Chinese literature. Hence, this genre served as more than just a reading manual and enhanced Chineseness among its readers, as may be clear from the following examples. *Kitab bergoena boeat anak-anak jang soeka berladjar hoeroef Wolanda bahasa Melajoe* ('A Useful Book for Children Who Like to Study Romanized Malay', 1892), contains: (i) the spelling of the days and months in Romanized Hokkien; (ii) particular utensils from the Chinese kitchen, and (iii) a few stories with Chinese characters (Collins 1995:152). Another telling example is *Boekoe Peladjaran bergoena pada Anak-anak aken Mengenalken Letter Olanda* ('A Useful Text Book Introducing the Roman Alphabet for Children'; fifth edition, 1904), which followed a similar pattern by including the classic dialogue between Confucius and the boy Hsiang T'ou.[14]

Cultural materials, such as those relating to religious materials and legal codes, were translated as well. Religious materials originated from both Chinese and Western sources. The most important figure here was Confucius, whose biography in Malay was written

[13] The originals for this book were *Klaasje Zevenster* (1886, 5 vols) by the Dutch author J. van Lennep, and *Les Tribulations d'un Chinois en Chine* (1879) by the famous French author Jules Verne (Salmon 1996).

[14] *Boekoe Peladjaran* (1904). Its popularity was demonstrated by the book's frequent reprinting, the fifth printing in 1904 and the tenth in 1922.

by Lie Kim Hok in 1897, *Hikajat Khong Hoe Tjoe* ('The Story of Confucius') based on works of Western scholars (see below). Confucian tracts, however, originated from two different sources. The first complete translation of the Confucian books *Zhongyong* ('The Doctrine of the Mean') and *Daxue* ('The Great Learning') was made by Njio Tjoen Ean, a Chinese officer from Ambon, the Moluccas. He published the translation of three books in the last three years of the nineteenth century based on Dutch sources (*tersalin tjara bahasa Malajoe deri pada bahasa Walanda*) as was mentioned on the covers.[15] Since they were written in Ambonese Malay, the books were less popular among the *peranakan* in Java, who used a different form of Malay. Another edition of *Daxue* ('The Great Learning') and *Zhongyong* ('The Doctrine of the Mean') were translated from Chinese sources in 1900 by Tan Ging Tiong and Yoe Tjai Siang as *Kitab Tai Hak, Tiong Yong, disalin dalem bahasa Melajoe* ('The Book of *Daxue Zhongyong*, translated into Malay'), discussed further below.

Finally, there is a single, and therefore remarkable, extant work on Chinese Legal Codes: Tjoa Sien Hie's (1838-1904), *Atoeran Hak Poesaka orang Tjina dan hal mengangkat anak, tersalin daripada kitab Tai Tshing Loet Li* ('Chinese Inheritance Law and Matters of Adoption, translated from the Great Qing Code, 1900; see Salmon 1989:359). Although only a ten-page fragment of the total legal code, this was an important work which received praise from a notable Dutch sinologist, G. Schlegel (Review 1900). The inheritance law for the Chinese in the Dutch Indies was a problematic topic for which none of the Dutch lawyers or sinologists could give a satisfactory solution. Tjoa, a Chinese officer from Surabaya, translated this work and added his own opinion to help solve the problems (Ong 2006:83).

Translation and invention of Chineseness: two examples

In the following section I present two examples of translation and their contribution to the invention of Chineseness among the *peranakan*.

First Example: Lie Kim Hok's *Biography of Confucius* (*Hikajat Khong Hoe Tjoe*)

In the introduction to this work, Lie confessed that among the Western sources he summarized for his book was a work written by a certain 'Mr De Lanessan, a Frenchman who knows well the customs of the Annamites and Chinese' (*Toewan De Lanessan, saorang Prasman jang kenal baik adat-lembaga bangsa Anam dan Tjina*; Lie Kim Hok 1897:7). Claudine Salmon (1996:255-56) has identified this person as J. L. de Lanessan (1843-1919), the former French Governor General for Indo-China (1891-1894), who

[15] Njio's three translations are *Taij Hak* (Daxue) (Ambon 1897); *Tiong Iong atau Kitab jang Kadoewah deri pada Kitab2 Soetji, deri orang2 Tjina jang ditingalkan oleh Nabi Kong Hoe Tjoe (Confucius)* ('Zhongyong or the Second Chinese Holy Book Inherited from Confucius'; Ambon 1898), and *Siang Loen [Hak Djie] Bahagian Pertama dari Loen Gie atau Kitab jang ka tiga deri pada Kitab2 Soetji, deri orang2 Tjina jang ditingalkan oleh Nabi Kong Hoe Tjoe (Confucius)* ('Siang Loen [Hak Djie] The First Part of Loen Gie, or the Third Chinese Holy Book Inherited from Confucius'; Ambon 1899). For the covers of these translations see Salmon (1981:261-62).

was working as a natural history teacher in Paris when he published his book, *La Morale des Philosophes Chinois: Extraits des livres classiques de la Chine et de l'Annam* (Paris 1896).[16] It is interesting to note that, according to one of his critics, De Lanessan did not understand Chinese and for his book relied on 'the somewhat diluted translation' of *Confucius et Mencius: Les Quatre Livres de Philosophie Morale et Politique de La Chine* (Paris 1852, repr. 1890) by Guillaume Pauthier. Therefore, at best the book was "the outcome of a praiseworthy attempt to understand the guiding principles of the people over whom he [De Lanessan] was called to rule" (Martin 1897:796). A well-known missionary cum sinologist, W. A. P. Martin, commented on the book and pointed to De Lanessan's misunderstandings of Chinese culture: "It is not surprising that the author, wholly unacquainted with the Chinese language, should make some mistakes" (*ibid.*).

Despite its apparent flaws, the book contains a positive evaluation of the Chinese which could stimulate *kaoem moeda* members' sense of pride about their ethnic background. Two reviewers clearly could see the aim of the book:

> The object of the author, it must be confessed, is not to enlighten the student of international ethics, but to *convince his countrymen of their mistake in speaking of China and Annam as semi-barbarous regions*. (Martin 1897:797, italics added)

> An interesting collection of extracts from the classical Chinese moralists, accompanied by a running comment … This book may be recommended to *students of national character, and it is likely to prove a happy hunting-ground for collectors of ethical extracts*. (Bosanquet 1896:573; italics added)

Lie Kim Hok, as a prominent *kaoem moeda* member, made good use of De Lanessan's message to argue that the Chinese were not 'semi-barbarous', as the Dutch thought, but instead have a "high civilization" (Martin 1897:796). Lie Kim Hok argued that, according to De Lanessan,

> the customs of the two nations [Annamites and Chinese] are equal to the customs of the Europeans, who are famous as a civilized nation [*bangsa sopan*]; therefore whenever somebody truly follows the teachings of CONFUCIUS and of his disciple MENCIUS, he will not only be respected and highly regarded [*ada diëndahi dan dihormati*] in Shanghai or in other places in China, but also *in London and Paris* (Lie Kom Hok 1897:7-8; emphasis added).

Here Lie Kim Hok appeared as – quoting Bosanquet's review – a 'student of national characters' showing that the Chinese are also 'civilized' (*beschaafd*) subjects and stating that a good Confucian 'will be respected and highly regarded in London and Paris'. It is telling that *Hikajat Khong Hoe Tjoe* was frequently reprinted, a rarity for a prewar Sino-Malay book and a sign of a high demand from its audience.[17]

[16] The discussion of the book is based on two contemporary reviews; see Bosanquet (1896) and Martin (1897).

[17] Salmon (1981:231). The book was reprinted in 1903, 1910, 1913 and 1921,

Together with a number of *kaoem moeda* figures, Lie later played an important role in the foundation of the first modern Chinese organization, *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan* (THHK), in Batavia in 1900. Thanks to Lie Kim Hok, Confucianism became an important element in THHK's early years. Lie's, and other *kaoem moeda* members' glorification of Confucianism could be interpreted as an act of 'reverse orientalism' (Ooi 2005; Hung 2003).

Clearly arguing against examples of such an orientalist attitude on the part of Dutch colonial officials, the Executive Committee of the THHK wrote a letter addressed to all Chinese to make a clear political statement in which Confucianism was glorified:[18]

> There must be many Chinese who have heard or understood that the teaching of the prophet [*nabi*] Confucius *is not only beautiful but also good*. Not only we the Chinese say so – which sounds like blowing our own trumpet – *this is also the opinion of many Europeans who are well known as civilized people* [*bangsa sopan*].
>
> A European who is well-versed in Chinese classics has translated *Ta Hsüeh* [The Great Learning], *Chung Yung* [Doctrine of the Mean] *Siang Beng* [?] and *He Beng* [?] into Dutch.[19] He argues that since the invention of the printing technique, *there has probably been no other work which is as beautiful as that of Confucius.* The gentleman also says:
>
> *The teaching of Confucius is not only good but also profound and sacred* … a number of priests in the last two hundred years have come to China. They felt compelled to praise the teachings. If 2,400 years later Confucius and his books continue to be appreciated in China, this is due to the fact that those books are really beautiful. …
>
> Mr. De Lanessan, a Frenchman who knew the Chinese people well, maintains: If a person really follows the teaching of Confucius and that of his student Mencius, *he will be highly regarded not only in China but also in the European continent* …
>
> Although Confucius lived in the ancient time – about [two] thousand years ago, and the present era is known as the "era of light" (*djaman terang*), men of virtue in this era still describe the works of Confucius as a beautiful garden where man can pick any flowers he likes.
>
> The above shows that *the teachings of Confucius are very good* [*pengadjaran Khong Hoe Tjoe amat baik adanja*].

[18] The letter is taken from 'Letter to all Chinese from Members of the Executive Committee of the Tiong Hoa Hwe Koan in Batavia (1900)', in Suryadinata (1999:4-5), which is a translation from the original Malay letter published in Nio Joe Lan (1940:201). I made a few amendments to the English translation and added emphasis. The letter contains several parts quoted from Lie Kim Hok (1897:3-10), which may be an indication that he was the main author of this letter.

[19] In her study Audrey Jane Heijns has identified this person as Henri Borel (1869-1933), a well-known Dutch sinologist cum government translator of Chinese; see 'List of Chinese Literature in Dutch Translation 1767-1999', p.1, at www.cuhk.edu.hk/rct/staff/cld.pdf. Borel seems to have been quite sympathetic towards the *kaoem moeda* movement.

This letter, addressed to 'all Chinese' [sic!], can be regarded as one of the most important 'political' documents in the modern movement of the Chinese in Indonesia. The message in the letter is very clear, that China and Confucianism were not of an inferior class. Confucianism was repeatedly praised in the letter with words such as *bagoes, baik* (both meaning 'good') and *indah* ('beautiful'). Citing Western authors' praise of Confucianism is meant to show that China 'has a glorious and rich history, and is superior to the West in many ways' (Ooi 2005:15). In this obvious act of 'reverse orientalism', the THHK Executive Committee promoted the view that the Chinese were 'civilized' subjects of the Indies, equal to the Europeans.

Second Example: Tan Ging Tiong and Yoe Tjai Siang's *Tay Hak* and *Tiong Iong*

This second case presents quite a different example, as the *peranakan* translators in this case turned directly to Chinese, rather than Western, sources. In 1900 Tan Ging Tiong and Yoe Tjai Siang translated the great books of Confucianism, *Daxue* ('The Great Learning') and *Zhongyong* ('The Doctrine of the Mean'),[20] into Romanized Malay under the title *Kitab Tai Hak, Tiong Iong, disalin dalem bahasa Melajoe* ('The book of *Daxue, Zhongyong*, translated into Malay'). Soon after its publication, the book could be purchased everywhere: 15 agents sold it in West Java, 13 in Central Java, 11 in East Java, 1 in Madura and 2 in Sumatra.[21] Although perhaps a little less spectacular than Lie Kim Hok's translation with its four reprints in two decades, this one was only reprinted in 1935, indicating an existing demand 35 years after it first appeared (Salmon 1981:317). Tan explained his motives for translating the classical tract thus:

> … Confucian teaching (religion) is known to everyone as a good teaching … Not a few people praise this teaching, and it can be said that none dare to disapprove of it. Sometimes other nations also glorify it. However, if one asks about it, only rarely can anyone explain, because this teaching is only written in Chinese books. Even people who praise it, rarely understand those books … [Therefore] *there is no other way other than translating those books into the language and character familiar and understood by the people in the Indies* … [*Tida lain tjoema ini kitab-kitab misti di salin dalem bahasa dan hoeroep jang banjak di kenal dan di ketahoei oleh sekalian orang di Hindia ini*] …
>
> And we also do not evade the readers' criticism that 'this translation is very awkward' [*ini salinan bahasanja kakoe sekali*]. Not only are we *aware that the Chinese language cannot be translated properly into Malay* [*taoe jang bahasa Tjina tida bole di salin betoel dalem bahasa Melajoe*], also the vocabulary of religious books is different from the language in romances, which can be embellished (Tan Ging Tiong 1900:3-4; italics added).

Tan emphasized that to spread the teachings of Confucius it was imperative to translate them into the 'language and character' of the people in the Indies, which was

[20] For an English translation, see Plaks (2003).
[21] *Li Po*, Nomer Tjonto 1 (12 January 1901) and Nomer Tjonto 2 (n.d).

none other than Romanized Malay. It is clear that Tan Ging Tiong and other *kaoem moeda* members on the one hand acknowledged the importance of Romanized Malay in inventing Chineseness, and on the other were also aware of the difficulties of translating Chinese texts. Against this background, remarkably, the translation is also indicative of an intra-Asian network of religious knowledge with Singapore as one of its centres. In the late nineteenth century the *peranakan* in Singapore underwent a reform under the leadership of Lim Boon Keng (1869-1957), an England trained medical doctor. On the agenda of Lim's reform was the revival of Confucianism.

Lim Boon Keng, with the help of Song Ong Siang and Tan Teck Soon, published *The Straits Chinese Magazine* (hereafter SCM) as a mouthpiece for their reform movement in 1897. Despite its title, the contents were not limited to events and developments in the Straits Settlements, or topics concerning only the Straits Chinese, but it was truly a cosmopolitan magazine, with a worldwide distribution. The magazine published essays written by intellectuals from the region and also had reporters in various places, covering the progressive activities of the various Chinese communities in *Nanyang* (the South Seas).

This progressive magazine soon reached *peranakan* readers in Java, and linked them to the discourse on modern Chinese identity in *Nanyang*. SCM's main language was English, with only very few articles written in Malay. However, this was not an obstacle for the *peranakan* who, though they lived under the Dutch flag, could often understand English. In relation to the *peranakans'* access to multilingual publications, a Dutch journal wrote in 1905: "The Chinese read and translate and comment upon Dutch, British and Malay papers".[22]

Lim's constant efforts in promoting Confucianism led the translator Tan Ging Tiong, a *kaoem moeda* member, to sail from Java to Singapore in December 1899 (just two years after SCM's first issue). Tan came to ask Lim – as the 'authority' on Confucianism in *Nanyang* – about his effort to translate *Tai Hak* and *Tiong Jong*, which are among the most important tracts of Confucianism. According to Lim Boon Keng, who also spoke Straits' Chinese (*Baba*) Malay, 'there is no one who can translate *Tai Hak* and *Tiong Iong* perfectly' (*jang kitab-kitab Tai-Hak dan Tiong-Iong tida ada satoe orang jang sanggoep salin itoe dengan samporna*) (Tan Ging Tiong 1900:4). Upon publication, Lim and the Confucian associations wanted to check the translations (*ibid.*). The book was published a few weeks later with the help of Yoe Tjai Siang, a *peranakan kaoem moeda* fluent in Dutch and Malay, who edited the translations.[23] Why was 'The Great Learning' so important for the *kaoem moeda*? According to Wang Gungwu (1996:9, emphasis added):

> A text from *The Great Learning* sums up the central ideas of Confucius. 'The Great Learning' was for the educated and expounded virtue; it strove to reinvigorate the people, that is, *make them new and awaken them afresh to seek achievement and not stop until the highest excellence has been reached*.

[22] 'Vreemde Oosterlingen', *Indische Gids* (XXVII) II, 1905:1074-75.

[23] According to Yoe Tjai Siang, the text was translated from 15 January to 24 February 1900, when it was submitted to the Department of Justice for permission. See Y.T.S (Yoe Tjai Siang), 'Slamat kepada Pembatja!', *Li Po*, 11 May 1901:1.

The book apparently would lead the *peranakan* 'to reinvigorate' themselves, into a 'new society', and strive for the highest possible achievement. This was, therefore, a spiritual tract purportedly badly needed by the enlightened *peranakan* in the early twentieth century.

After this translation, Tan and Yoe embarked on an even bigger project: they published the first Malay newspaper with a Chinese title, *Li Po* ('Newspaper of Decorum'), in Sukabumi (West Java) between 1901-1906. While commonly *peranakan* newspapers were funded by Chinese capital and hired non-Chinese editors, *Li Po* was the first paper with *peranakan* as owners cum editors. In its first issues, *Li Po* translated Lim Boon Keng's serial on 'The Reform among the Straits Chinese', originally published in SCM under a pseudonym, into Romanized Malay. *Li Po* refers to the movement in the Straits Settlements as *Dr Lim Boon Keng poenja perobaan* ('Dr Lim Boon Keng's reform'), referring to the dominant role played by Lim.[24] This Sino-Malay newspaper uniquely promoted 'authentic Chinese customs' in the form of Confucianism, yet at the same time propagated modernity, being the mouthpiece of THHK, in Batavia.

Finally, in the opinion of Yoe Tjai Siang, the translation of *Daxue* and *Zhongyong* (15 January-24 February 1900), the foundation of THHK on 17 March 1900, and the publication of *Li Po* (12 June 1901) were regarded as three defining pillars that contributed to the invention of Chineseness in early twentieth-century Java. Yoe claimed

> [T]hat these three matters have one single aim, one united with the others *to enlighten the darkness by means of harmony-conformity-peace ... as taught by our Prophet Confucius* [*hendak menerangken kagelapan dengan djalan karoekoenan-karempoekan-perdamean…sebagimana dipeladjarken oleh Nabi Khong Hoe Tjoe*].[25]

Conclusion

Michael Laffan (2003:237) has noted that by the end of nineteenth century "Roman script Malay had become accepted as the language of communication between all the various groups in the Indies". This situation posed Romanized Malay as the logical choice for the *kaoem moeda* during a period when they wanted to present themselves as modern citizens and at the same time invent their own form of Chineseness.

In this chapter I have shown how translations into Romanized Malay played an important role in shaping 'a new Chinese identity' among the *peranakan:* they were 'civilized' subjects and yet, concurrently, 'authentic' Chinese. Lie Kim Hok cleverly crafted a combination between the Sage's biography and arguments for Confucianism's glory. Lie encouraged his fellow *peranakan* to unhesitatingly adopt Confucianism, since, he argued, it is equal to Western civilization. Paradoxically, he based his arguments on European orientalists and convincingly translated them into Romanized Malay. On the other side, a pair of *kaoem moeda* members, Tan Ging Tiong and Yoe Tjai Siang, were aware that

[24] Yoe Tjai Siang, 'Hal kamatian dalam Natuur', *Li Po*, Nomer Tjonto 2, 1901:2-3.
[25] Y.T.S (Yoe Tjai Siang), 'Slamat kepada Pembatja!' *Li Po*, 11 May 1901:1; emphasis added.

in order to enable *peranakan* to understand the sacred words of Confucianism, there was no other way than to translate them into the language and the characters that were understood by most of their brethren. Despite the difficulty, they successfully translated two of the most important Confucianist tracts into Romanized Malay, thus providing the *peranakan* with a spiritual guide cum identity marker as 'authentic' Chinese.

Therefore, the efforts of Lie Kim Hok and the *kaoem moeda* to connect with Confucianism and being 'civilized' was "a reaffirmation of the reverse orientalist image" (Ooi 2005:15). When the THHK bylaws were drafted, the first point that came up was "[t]o improve Chinese customs so that they will be in accordance with the teaching of Confucius" (Suryadinata 1999:6). The first modern organization among the Chinese in Indonesia had selected its spiritual icon and at the same time reversed Orientalism. Through the translations in Romanized Malay, the *kaoem moeda* showed the Westerners that Confucianism could guide them toward the civilized world. This was a choice that, ironically, was supported by Western scholars and mediated by translators and *kaoem moeda* members, such as Lie Kim Hok.

Finally, 'the invention of Chinese tradition' – after Hobsbawm and Ranger (1989) – was predominantly served not by the Chinese language and scripts, but by Romanized Malay. This is perhaps one of the greatest paradoxes in Indonesian history, as *peranakan* Chinese were instrumental in promoting print capitalism in Romanized Malay, a development that was arguably situated at the heart of a budding nationalism emerging during the same period.

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‘Riddling-Riddling of the Ghost Crab’
Translating Literature in Cebuano

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Abstract: *Literary translation in Cebuano, the language of the central islands of the Visayas and parts of Mindanao in the Philippines, like other expressive practices, deserves further study in the context of national politics and cultural aesthetics. Among the Cebuano-speaking people, translation into the national language is almost non-existent in comparison with translation into English. This is a result of psychological resistance to the hegemony of Manila, the seat of Tagalog, the basis of the national language called Filipino. The practice of translation should also be considered against native concepts for the valuation of art and translation itself. Some examples will illustrate such concepts that inform the writing and translating of Cebuano literature.*

Introduction

Cebuano – also known as Binisayâ – is the language spoken in the Central Visayan islands and parts of Mindanao in the Philippines. The phrase ‘riddling-riddling of the ghost crab’ in the title is taken from a popular riddle in this language, which goes *Tigmò tigmò agukoy, Ugmà na ta mag-asoy*, literally meaning ‘Riddle riddle ghost crab, tomorrow only shall we narrate’. The phrase captures the qualities of an elusive transparency that characterizes translation from Cebuano, since the ghost crab might be there now but as you blink it may have already scuttled to its hole, or it may still be there but is hard to see because of its seemingly transparent body and disguising sand-speckled shell. (The answer to this riddle is *damgo*, or ‘dream’, itself ephemeral and its retelling on the morrow not quite what was dreamt.)

Up to the present day there seems to have been no non-Cebuano speaker ever to have translated a work from Cebuano into English. Translators of Cebuano literary works are the Cebuano writers themselves who also write original works in English and realize that their works have to be translated into English for them to be recognized beyond the Cebuano shores. They either lack sufficient command of the national language or are reluctant to translate their works into Filipino. Although there are a number of studies using a postcolonial perspective on Filipino literature, there is as yet, as far as this writer knows, no such study on Cebuano literature. The present study will consider translations of Cebuano works into English, which started only after independence and thus did not serve an anti-colonial agenda. The translators address not a foreign readership in English, but both Cebuano and non-Cebuano audiences in the country. The motivation for translation is to affirm the existence of Cebuano literature that is worth reading and studying. In the wake of the language policy that gives the national language equal status with English as medium of instruction, there is a growing advocacy in the regions of the Philippines urging for equal status of regional languages with the national language.

Although there are other, sometimes quite 'violent' metaphors for the act of translation, such as the postcolonial images of 'cannibalism', or 'vampirization' (Ketkar 2005), the *agukoy* or ghost crab metaphor better fits the practice of literary translation in Cebuano, capturing the non-violence perceived by its practitioners and its readers even when the translation may be said to depart somewhat from the original. Referring to a certain arbitrary nature of translation, the elusiveness of the crab is one way of describing the 'now you have it, now you don't' impression that a translated text can give, especially to an audience familiar with both original and target languages. Translation into English is seen as a challenge by such an audience who would enjoy comparing more than one attempt at translating a text.

This chapter will explore the politics and aesthetics of translating Cebuano literature, and by discussing a number of samples will illustrate certain features that may pertain exclusively to the practice. The politics of translation have forced Cebuano writers to produce literary works and translations that were, until recently, relatively independent of the publishing industry in Greater Manila. Furthermore, the aesthetics of translation are also informed by general qualities of Filipino art which may work against strict fidelity, such as a lack of boundaries, a love of ornament, spontaneity as originality, and a preference for indirection. Aside from enriching the field of translation studies by introducing culture-bound ideas of the mastery of language and translation, this study will also introduce the literature in Cebuano to a wider audience.

Cebuano language and politics

Cebu was a busy port even before the Spaniards arrived in 1521. One of its chieftains who killed Magellan, Lapulapu, is considered the first local hero. After Magellan came Legazpi, who made Cebu the first Spanish settlement in the archipelago. Cebu also became the first centre of Christianity in the Philippines, and its ecclesiastical jurisdiction extended even to the Marianas in the Pacific during the Spanish period. The seat of government, however, was eventually moved to Manila as early as the sixteenth century. Since then and until recently, there has been a remarkable Manila-centrism not only in terms of policies but also in a cultural hegemony that has resulted in resistance to the imposition of the national language that is based on Tagalog, the language of Manila.

Native responses to the encroachment of Spanish into their own culture and especially to the proselytizing efforts of the missionaries is well-documented by Rafael (1988). One issue that emerges from his book is that of the native's attitude toward language and its mastery. The metaphor of 'listening-as-fishing-for-meaning', as for instance in church during a sermon where converts were caught in an ebb of foreign words hoping to catch phrases that they understood, suggests the conditions that permit subjugation and submission to exist, for converts would get the meanings that they needed to reinforce what they already believed (Rafael 1988:3). Rafael also cites a book from the Tagalog printer Tomas Pinpin, *Librong Pagaaralan nang manga Tagalog nang uicang Castila* ('The book with which Tagalogs can learn Castilian'), saying that "the assumption that most Tagalogs never learned Spanish is premised on a specifically Western notion of what it means to master a language" and that Pinpin's work "points to a different kind

of investment in a foreign language, one that aimed not necessarily at fluency but rather at pleasure and protection" (*ibid.*:57).[1]

Mastery in local languages was very relevant to retain a position for a local chief or to gain the respect among one's peers for the precolonial Bisayan (Scott 1994:98). Such verbal skills are important in traditional societies where, as Rafael notes, "wealth was measured on the basis not of private property but of ever-shifting popular support" (1988:14). Indeed, the art of verbal interaction had reached such sophistication in Cebuano that by the seventeenth century there were different terms for speech modes, such as in shifting tone, mocking, influencing feeling, contradicting, deceiving, repeating, speaking secretly, etc.[2]

The turnover of the Philippine islands from Spain to the United States was effectuated by the Treaty of Paris at the turn of the twentieth century, while the defeat of the Filipinos in the Philippine-American War ushered in the second colonial period. Subjected to two colonial masters from the sixteenth century until the Second World War, Filipinos tried to master the colonizers' languages, Spanish and English. The difference is that for Spanish, only the old elite class learned and spoke it at home, but because of the American policy of mass education, almost everyone was taught, and could express themselves in English. It was only during the 1970s that legislation of a bilingual policy in education pushed for the spread of the national language, Filipino.

According to this policy, English and Filipino (the name given to the national language which still has not fully developed from its Tagalog base) shall be used as media of instruction. An expected effect of the policy is the increase of speakers of Tagalog/Filipino. Cebuanos, who are aware of the threat to their own language, have continued to promote Cebuano by writing in it. In fact, a few Cebuano writers of national repute have turned or returned from using English to writing in Cebuano, such as fictionists Lina Espina-Moore and Godofredo Roperos, and the poets Rene Estella Amper, Simeon Dumdum, Marjorie Evasco and Ester Tapia. Many of the educated younger writers now choose to write exclusively in Cebuano.[3]

Even in remote places of Mindanao where migrants from Cebu have settled, Cebuano remains alive through radio stations that broadcast news, commentary and drama in Cebuano. These stations are based both in Cebu and in the bigger cities of Mindanao, and are complemented by the popular magazine *Bisaya* (which, ironically, is based in Manila) and by several newspapers in English that carry a Cebuano section, as well as a few that are published exclusively in Cebuano. However, the fate of Cebuano and the

[1] At the same time, in spite of the insistence of the Catholic church on the use of the local language in the holy rituals, in private functions such as praying for the dead the practice is still for a local *manalabtan* or prayer leader to say the prayers in Latin even if those attending do not understand the words. This points to the belief in the efficacy of the official language of the church that they would have memorized for certain liturgical purposes, not unlike the chanting to ward off sickness and evil intentions.

[2] See Alburo (1998) where I list 198 verbs distributed among 25 categories that include both deferential and non-deferential verbal action.

[3] In interviews with Cebuano writers conducted by Yu (2008, 2009), many have explained why they write in Cebuano only or in both Cebuano and English.

other Philippine vernaculars seems brighter now, especially with a bill sitting in Congress that requires their use as medium of instruction, alongside Filipino and English, in places where they are the primary language of home.

In order for writers to gain national reputation, their works have to be translated into either Filipino or English. However, Cebuano works translated into either language are few and far between, resulting in a lack of appreciation from the larger national community.[4] The paucity of translations from Cebuano, according to a literary historian, is a problem of power:

> Cebuano has historically been relegated to a position subordinate to Spanish, English, and Tagalog. The concentration of state power and media resources in a Tagalog-speaking primate region and the promotion of Tagalog as 'base' for the national language, or as *the* national language itself, have marginalized regional languages like Cebuano. As a consequence, the development of Cebuano has been stunted: the language is not formally studied in the schools, the literature is only marginally considered in Philippine literature courses, Cebuano-language publications lead a struggling existence, and there is little state promotion of Cebuano language and letters. (Mojares 1990:79)

Cebuanos consider such lack of attention as unfair especially because Cebu is a leading hub for industry and commerce south of Manila. In response, Cebuano writers continue to produce works that appear in the only Cebuano periodical surviving from the pre-World War II period that serves mainly as literary outlet, the *Bisaya* magazine. But what keeps the literature truly alive are the local groups of writers who regularly hold their own workshops, readings, and book launches without help from the capital, where the publishing industry is centred. The young writers hold hands, figuratively speaking, with the older ones in such activities which, according to one young writer,[5] is in the tradition of *tagay* or communal drinking:

> For one striving to ground my creative identity in a politically marginalized language, the effort is already fraught in a two-fold challenge. My generation of Cebuano poets is not only tasked with every writer's pursuit of finding an authentic voice; there is also the struggle of standing up in an ancestral ground already swamped with the encroachment of the influences from the English and Tagalog languages as well as inroads of hypertext. (Obenieta 2005:249)

[4] A listing of published Cebuano translations started in 1990 (Alburo and Mojares 1990:36), updated until 2000, is informative of the state of language politics in the country, as shown in the distribution of frequencies as well as the direction from source to target language: translations from Tagalog to Cebuano – 150; from foreign language, mainly the colonial languages of English and Spanish, to Cebuano – 99; from English by Filipinos to Cebuano – only 5. In the other direction, from Cebuano to English, including three collections, – 21; and from Cebuano to Tagalog, including 2 collections, only 5.

[5] The writer Obenieta was head of the group known as BATHALAD, which stood for *Batan-ong Halad sa Dagang* (Youthful Offering of the Quill) when it was founded in the 1960s, but now the word *Batan-ong* (Youthful) has become *Bathalan-ong* (Divine) as the founders have matured. However, the officers of the group are still young and the present head, after Obenieta migrated to the USA in 2007, is in his early 30s.

To be read today, older writers in Cebuano who are used to a classic vocabulary (known as *lalum* which may be translated with 'deep') have to adjust their style and form of writing to a contemporary audience. They sometimes have to rely on younger writers to translate their works from Cebuano into English, if they want their works to survive.

The independent stance of the Cebuano creative writers and, by extension, of the Cebuano translators, backfired a few years ago when a respected literary historian and critic, who obviously was uninformed regarding developments in the regions, said in a published interview that Cebuano writing was 'dying' (Alburo 2002b:98). The article drew quite some protest from Cebuanos who felt that Manila editors and critics should actively seek information about regional writing, so that their writings would include the author's background and current developments in the region. Such omission, they felt, would further marginalize the literature. The marginalization of local writing is also seen in a collection of short fiction that carried a story by a Cebuano written in Spanish and translated into Filipino, as the section on the contributors lacked any information about the Cebuano author.[6] Another example is the dearth of Cebuano data in the 10-volume *Encyclopedia of Philippine Arts* published by the Cultural Centre of the Philippines (1994). An earlier guide to the literature in Cebuano published locally (Mojares 1975) had featured 120 writers in Cebuano; the *Encyclopedia* had, among some 480 entries, only 39 Cebuano writers (including those living in Mindanao). That small number included Cebuanos writing in Spanish and in English, as well as those writing after the publication of the earlier guide, or from 1975-1993.

To address the problem of marginalization of the regional literatures, the Commission on Higher Education issued a directive in 1996 that requires all undergraduate programmes to include a course in Literatures of the Philippines. As a result, the number of literary anthologies in the vernaculars has risen. Such collections come with translations either in English or Filipino since the course may be taught using either language as the medium of instruction. Thus, to be understandable to college students from outside the Cebuano-speaking regions, the works in Cebuano have to be translated and, except for the very few trilingual writers among them, Cebuano writers who are asked to translate their own works choose to do so in English, the language they are more used to, instead of Filipino.

Recent translations of Cebuano literature into English have gained an audience among the Cebuanos themselves, especially the students who need to learn more about their own language, particularly its vocabulary. In spite of the finding in a survey that for Cebuano-speaking students "the language issue was not something to get excited about" (Gonzalez & Bautista 1986:37), 81% of Cebuano students in a later survey have expressed interest in a vocabulary training programme (Alburo 2004:109).

Because of the said directive, the regional literatures will finally be part of canon-formation which, according to one bilingual poet, opens many possibilities:

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[6] In that section of the collection (Sayas 1997:114) we find a statement that no information was available on some writers from the regions. A more diligent editor could have stated that the Cebuano Buenaventura Rodriguez, who was a prolific and popular writer in Spanish and Cebuano, was a Zobel Prize awardee in playwriting, a governor of the province of Cebu and even a member of the Philippine National Assembly.

> First, it offers a revaluation of the perceived canonical status (or lack of it) of writers who may be excluded from the canon at certain periods simply because they are not in the 'mainstream.' Region-based literary scholars… have often noted the Manila-centric literary politics that puts the writers from the region at a certain disadvantage when it comes to the publication of their works by Manila publishing houses, as well as their access to writing grants and literary awards. Second, it offers an assertion – a pro-active stance – that interventions emanating from the regions necessarily correct lopsided hegemonic views about the literary value of works from the margins. (Evasco-Pernia 1998:119-20)[7]

With the liberalization of policy not only in the teaching of regional literatures but also in the granting of projects in the arts by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, translators from Cebuano will be needed. For translators preparing materials for courses in Philippine literatures, translations into English are more problematic. Translating from Cebuano into Filipino seems less troublesome, not only because of a shared grammar and syntax, but also because of a common base of native values that include the aesthetic.

Native aesthetics

Filipino scholars and critics have touched upon the following characteristics of Filipino art in its various forms: the lack of boundaries, the love of ornament, spontaneity as equivalent to originality; and in its verbal form, a preference for indirection. Perez (1962:262), for example, writes that to the average Filipino, creativity is equated more with indiscriminate accumulation rather than with the selection and control underlying much of Western art. Guillermo (1986:53) also notes the characteristic of "filling up of space or the covering of the entire surface with design motifs", and a frequent use in traditional art of the curvilinear line that is "expressive of emotional spontaneity in the arts … bound with much that is lyrico-romantic in feeling" (*ibid.*:56). She adds a penchant for bright colours that indicate "a folk openness, vigour and strength of feeling" (*ibid.*:63).

The characteristic of spontaneity as equivalent to originality may be found in the verbal art forms that display native skills at indirection. In fact, early forms of Philippine poetry have the quality of enigma or riddle – called *tanghagà* – that baffled the Spanish compilers of the native lexicons.[8] Spontaneity is also seen by Alegre (1993:13) at the

[7] At the time this was written, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, which is tasked to ensure that all arts in the country are appreciated and developed, had just embarked on a more aggressive programme that includes regional workshops, writing grants, awards and contests.

[8] The word *tanghagà* refers to a poetic metaphor but also has a more general meaning of 'a mystery' or 'puzzle'. Cf. what the Spanish missionary Alcina observed in 1668 (cited in Scott 1994:97): "what they say in verse is so figurative that everything is the subtlest metaphor, and for one who doesn't know and understand them, it is impossible to understand them in it". A dictionary (de la Encarnacion 1885, expanded edition) has the following explanation of *tanghagà*: 'sleight of hand, ingenious invention, secret locks, or a piece of machinery that moves by itself, such as a clock or a steam engine'.

core not just of Filipino art but also of a general Filipino personality: "the Filipino is always swaying, alert, ready to make immediate adjustments. … forever exploring the possibilities. His charm rests in his lack of rigidity". Such spontaneity combines with enigmatic expressions not only in his ordinary speech but also in the oral poetic forms, but seems to be lacking in written forms.

Both spontaneity and indirection work towards giving an impression of Cebuano art as play. As a departure from Western criticism that seems to valorize the individual art object as commodity and permanent record of the artist's angst, I would argue at the risk of sounding romantic or nativistic that art as play, which is associated with oral tradition, is valuable not only because of its sheer ephemerality, but because it concretizes the concept of continuous creation, one that is based on self-confidence on the part of the performer. In the song-debate-dance form called *balitao*, for example, the elaborations and digressions of the debate involve the intelligence and wit of the performers, and how well and fast they can construct short verses for repartee (Coseteng and Nemenzo 1975). Translating the extemporaneous and playful exchange of the *balitao* is indeed a challenge because as oral performance much of the content of the *balitao* is inspired at the spur of the moment and may sometimes seem illogical, although there may be repetition to aid in understanding.[9] On occasions that need translation, it is not uncommon for the man and woman performers to pause to allow intermittent translation, which becomes as spontaneous as the *balitao*.

In studying aesthetics one pays attention to such concepts as embodied in particular forms and styles that speakers of the language themselves consider as worthy of praise and giving them delight. How the local artists and their community view their work may be deduced in the use of three terms in Cebuano: *bagay, lagdà* and *tagik*, which cross several genres and thus point to art as a cultural system.[10]

Bagay is an adjective that points to the value of harmony among individuals in the community and among objects as they are arranged together; it also describes appropriate use of materials in the environment, and rhyming in a poem.[11] *Lagdà* generally refers to a guide, applicable to everyday life, handicrafts and sewing; it is used in carpentry to refer to the wood marking that serves as a guide in sawing, to a rule or maxim in literature, and to make a rough sketch or drawing by a painter or sculptor before the final work. *Tagik* means to weave or bind any kind of material, including sleeping mats, baskets, a story woven by a teller and a song created by a composer.

What are the implications of these three concepts for creative writers and translators?

[9] In a study of ritual dance in Cebu, an American anthropologist noted the local style of speaking: "Speakers did not typically deliver 'punch' lines; they did not drive home their main points. Instead, they would repeat a line judged to be particularly important a number of times, letting it echo resiliently, usually in an abbreviated phrase that had two accents, so that its meaning could sink in before continuing their arguments" (Ness 1992:54).

[10] These terms are also current in the two other major languages of the Visayan islands: Hiligaynon (West Visayas) and Waray (East Visayas; see Alburo 2009).

[11] The meanings of *bagay* come from the vocabulary of general art estimation (referring to symmetry and method), of music (for instruments or singers being in tune and for dancing partners to mingle their motions with vocal accompaniment), and of literature (where the term valorizes the power to animate or stimulate an audience with the use of allegories and enigmatic verses; Alburo 2006).

Bagay would have us fit our writing to a specific instead of a generalized faceless readership at the same time as its parts are made to cohere. Aesthetic standards then would not be limited to keeping within formal conventions alone but would also address the demands of social function. Thus, a translation is considered good or bad not primarily for its fidelity or nonfidelity, but for its feeling of being fit to the occasion.

Lagdà would have us consider loose boundaries instead of rigid ones, for the cord used to rule the carpenter's work is elastic, and the proverbs that are called *lagdà* are often, like proverbs elsewhere, subject to different applications. With this concept in mind the Cebuano audience expects to find conventions of genre but also appreciates the spontaneous improvisations that have always marked 'Cebuano creativity'. *Tagik* calls attention to the act of creating something beautiful but useful out of ordinary and natural materials, so that poetic and other literary forms should provide the pleasures of recognition and innovation at the same time that they serve an occasion.

A word on the native script is in order here, since it helps explain the tentative attitude of the local people towards translation. Because the old script (Tagalog as well as Cebuano) only contains the characters for consonants, the reader fills in any of three vowels, when these are not suggested by a dot above or below a consonant, according to his understanding of the intent of the message. Rafael (1988:49) calls attention to the fact that the word for script, *baybayin*, which means to learn the alphabet and to spell a word, also refers to the seacoast (*baybayon* in Cebuano), or the act of coasting along a river. He writes that "this sense of the word highlights the seeming randomness involved in the reading of the script as one floats, as it were, over a stream of sounds elicited by the characters".[12]

Cebuano literary arts

Notwithstanding the lack of boundaries and looseness attending much of the early literary production, it would not be right to say that the traditional literary arts are lacking in structure, because the prosodic conventions and demands in combination with different forms in a work or performance are themselves reflective of a discipline, observance of which is precisely what gives rise to the play. In other words, the basic frame is steadfast and it is only what goes in and out that is free, not unlike the various native baskets which may be made of different materials and styles but which are held together by a specific shape.

The loose classification of the old poetic forms may be seen in the appearance of similar images or arguments in verses variously referred to as *garay, saloma, harana, duplò,* and *kulilisi* (Alburo *et al.* 1988), which are categories of social function or occasion rather than form and structure.[13] In traditional poetic forms we find a recurrence of

[12] Rafael continues that " written characters were not expected to point to a specific sound, [but] generated certain sounds whose possible range of meanings were evoked with reference to how they felt to the body that listened and spoke. ... to suspend sense in favor of sensation" (*ibid.*:53).

[13] Such cross-fertilization is associated with looseness of boundaries, which Scott (cited in Rafael 1988:88) ascribes to the continual movement of goods and people that characterized precolonial island relations, "a certain kind of economy – one based on the sea rather than one oriented toward a centralized

metaphors from nature, such as parents as the trunk which a suitor must climb to reach the fruit, words of promise (variously of the girl and of the boy) as a clinging vine that survives the dead host plant, the ignored suitor's lament as the plaint of any of various birds, the girl as a nourishing fruit, virtue like humility or fidelity as a flower or star, and other figures of similitude using marine images naturally occurring in the speech of a people well-versed in the matters and manners of the sea. For a non-indigenous audience, such metaphors may appear redundant but local writers have felt free to play around with them, while at the same time trying to retain the required rhyme and rhythm. There seems to be a communal reservoir of metaphors and images that can be mined by any poet, whose originality resides less in the presence of fresh images than in a new combination or use of existing ones.

Here are a few lines from a recorded *balitao* that indicate similar metaphors from nature and the sea:

> *Laki: Ang gugma sa babaye/ Sama sa balagon/ Bisan namatay na ang lawas/ Bilikis lang gihapon*.
> (Man: The love of a woman/ Is like a vine/ The trunk's already dead/ Still it winds.)
> *Babaye: Dili ka magasalig/ Sa imong pagkabaskog/ Gani ang baha sa tubig/ Sa dagat nagahikog.*
> (Woman: Don't be too sure/ Of your strength/ Even the flood of water/ Strangles itself in the sea.)

Such exchanges where each performer attempts to outdo the other by argument can go on and on, with the comparisons ever changing, so that the vine becomes a comb of tortoise shell or a specific flower and the flood of water may be substituted with a termite-ridden post, etc.[14]

The dissipation of creative energy found in the song-debate-dance form of *balitao* was gradual, as it was first reduced to song-and-debate forms aired over the radio and finally as debate alone in printed form. As to poetic language, the *tanghagà* or enigmatic metaphor that was noted in the early poetry still exists in oral performance especially in rural areas, but the wit is worn down from constant repetition especially since only the old performers still practice it. Also, the colonial experience must have contributed to the gradual disappearance of the *tanghagà* that was an integral part of the *balitao*.[15]

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realm in the interior – … [that] stressed mobility and deemphasized territorial boundaries." According to Mojares (in the preface to Alburo 1988, vol. 1), the authentic impulses within native poetry are the values of play, fancy, incantation, and orality.

[14] An article on the *balitao* using a feminist perspective (Martinez 1992:116) notes that "there is an eventual victory of the male in the antiphonal love song right after a lavish display of female triviality" and that "this display of a shrew in a sense, just becomes a showcase for her inevitable taming".

[15] Missionaries, who used the vernacular in their preaching, were certainly more interested in conveying their message than in using poetic metaphors. They were the first to compose written poetry in the vernacular that was unavoidably religious in content. "Catholic devotional literature – catechisms, prayers, hymns, meditations, sermons, spiritual exercises, and others – accounted for close to ninety percent of the printed literature in the Philippines before 1900" (Mojares 1998:306).

The *balitao* of today has lost its crispness and the exchange becomes tentative, indeed becoming incoherent in parts and sometimes resorting to one-line exchanges. Where the girl or boy singer in the older texts would directly identify her-/himself as tree, flower, bird, or sea wave, the contemporary singer uses simile.

Another form that has practically disappeared is the *kulilisi*, a dramatic form that engages two sets of debaters on various topics. Like the *balitao*, *kulilisi* is performed today only in cultural programmes and does not play an important social function anymore during the nine-day funeral wake. Still another form, one that has survived in some remote rural areas, is the *pamalaye* or negotiations for marriage involving poets who serve as spokespersons for the two families of the bridge and groom. All these forms are in verse and follow conventional structures, but the participants are free to recite memorized or invented lines full of *tanghagà* in accordance with the flow of the argument.

One development in Cebuano literature, the use of free verse, has released translators from the burden of having to phonetically fit the lines together.[16] Still, some poets continue to use rhythm and rhyme in folksy forms but with contemporary attitudes that may result in exciting reading.[17] The more difficult type of poetry to translate would be the humorous type which centres around word-play or punning. Translation of such poetry becomes an exercise in futility and is rare. In any case, even in print the oral quality of Cebuano poetry persists. The younger poets have returned the poetry from the solipsistic meditation of older peers schooled in the Western romantic tradition, to the dramatic monologue or the repartee reminiscent of traditional jousts.

One must note that the short story is a fairly modern form in Cebuano, with the first modern story written only in the 1960s (Maceda 1986:ii). However, prose narrative in Cebuano was fairly common, originating from local narrative practices that included addressing a specific audience together with the modifications demanded by such an audience. The early terms given to such fiction reflect its informality, such as *pinadalagan* (make do), *biniris-biris* (scribbled) and *dinaklit* (of a moment).

The faces and practices of translation

Translation seems less problematic between languages within one language family, as from one Philippine language to another. Specific problems arise when the target is English, "a language formulated, built and reworked by minds obsessed with logic and clarity of expression" and which "eschewed decoration, even elegance, in favor of

[16] It was easier to translate poetry from Spanish to a Philippine language because writers themselves used Spanish metrics, but as Rafael (1988:62-63) notes, "the rhythmic correspondence between the two languages is not always coincident with a semantic one. Indeed, the meaning of a Castilian line is often linked only tenuously to that of the Tagalog line that precedes it. Acoustic consonance, then, is privileged over semantic fit".

[17] This includes the contemporized *balitao* in written form, which becomes a brief dramatic monologue usually by a female poet that responds to an imagined speech by a male counterpart. Cebuano writers who are members of the Women in Literary Arts, Inc. Cebu, which is the only organized women writers' group in the Philippines, are especially noted for this type of writing.

clarity and precision" (Ryan 1980:52-53). When the source language is Cebuano, which like other Austronesian languages is oriented to the passive voice, has aspect instead of tense focus, and has a propensity for indirection, something is bound to be left behind in crossing over the divide between the languages.

There are several ways in Cebuano to express the idea of 'translate'. The most common is an inflected form with the prefixed passive marker /*gi*/ and the infix /*in*/ 'made according to the mode or style of' added to the root which is the name of the target language, as in *gibinisayà* 'converted into the Bisayan language', and *gi-iningles* 'converted into the English language' (in the latter, the infix /*in*/ comes after a glottal stop indicated by a hyphen).

Three other possible terms referring to the act of translation differ only in the medial consonant: (1) *hulad* – 'to copy, reproduce; to pattern after, model on'; (2) *hubad* – 'to solve, unravel, as riddle; translate, interpret, construct, be translated; untie, as knot, to unfasten, undo, to take off garment, disrobe'; and (3) *huwad* – 'to pour out, transfer to another container'. Wolff (1972) gives the following related meanings of *huwad*: 'to pour intensely; for an image or likeness to appear in one's offspring or on something it was transferred to'.

There is also an expression that does not literally mean 'to translate' but describes what Cebuano translators do when they choose only that part of an original that is considered usable or relevant: *gipu-pò*. The word literally means 'picked from' like a fruit is picked from a tree, or an item is selected from among a number of items. Due to restrictions of space, local publishers and editors have tended, at least in the popular periodicals, to 'pick' – whether summarize or paraphrase – parts of a longer text, especially of fiction. For writers of fiction, who translate works they like for content and style, such a process became training ground for more original writing of their own.[18]

Cebuano translators who use any of the forms of translation suggested by these terms express a certain attitude toward the text to be translated. Is translation the forceful entry of the foreign to the local, or conversely, the appropriation of the native by the foreign? The various religious texts proliferating in the Spanish period as well as the verses and songs of Christian ritual that were not relevant to native life were of the former type, while the folk forms of the converts that were studied by the colonizers were of the latter.

Translation, of course, may also solve problems in comprehending a certain work in the source language. Cebuano translators will sometimes offer their own versions for the one considered more comprehensible or a better fit.[19] Such versions follow the concept of *hulad* ('copy') and address expectations of fidelity; indeed *hulad* also refers to a single issue of any periodical which follows a certain template.[20] In such a *hulad* mode, translating poetry attempts to rhyme the words even if the sounds are different,

[18] For example, Florentino Suico 'adapted' the novel *Ben-Hur* to fit his contemporary audience (Alburo 2007:498).

[19] The Cebuano Studies Centre of the University of San Carlos has collected several versions into Cebuano, for example, of canonical texts like Jose Rizal's 'Mi Ultimo Adios' and 'Lupang Hinirang', the Philippine national anthem in Filipino.

[20] The term is also found in the word *hulagway*, a compound of *hulad* and *dagway* ('countenance'), which refers to image or photograph.

and to retain the length of the lines and sometimes even to approximate the rhythm of the original.

Translation as *hubad* ('unravel') would sometimes simplify the content of the original and leave out the figurative level. It is commonly used for works with specific cultural content, the translation of which provides a challenge to the fidelity norm, and includes attempts to explain or clarify what the original says. It may sometimes be a simple insertion of the English equivalent next to the Cebuano term, as in works full of local colour. A free 'unravelling' translation that results in losing the imagery in the original is found in the last part of the poem about the modern Filipina, *Maria Clara* (Alunan 1998), wherein the translator unnecessarily explains the lines *Maalam molalik sa awit nga iyang tukaron*, *Maabtik mangitag idalit nga sud-anon*, that literally reads 'to know how to compose the song she will play/ be quick to find the food she'll serve'. In the translation these lines become 'savvy, ability to buck the circumstances/ straight-talking, fair-minded, able to care for herself/ though unlucky in her mate'. Such license, however, is not uncommon, and if the author of the original considers it unacceptable, she will simply offer her own translation. Possibly, the translator of those lines felt it fitting to expound the traits of the modern Filipina, since the anthology in which it was published was exclusively for women poets.

How the title of Marcel Navarra's story *Siya ug ang Iyang Tungdonon* (in Alburo 2009 vol. 2) was finally rendered into English illustrates the use of translation to solve a problem in understanding. The word *tungdonon*, from the root *tungod* meaning 'right on a spot' provided a challenge. Literally, the title could be rendered with the unpoetic "He and His Marked Spot". A reading of the story reveals that *tungdonon* refers to a special physical point that the main character appropriates as his marked spot right above a certain coral reef in the sea where fish was abundant. This spot is a point of convergence for the end of a jut of land on the left side and the edge of a hill on the right. The final title is "Within His Compass" which captures not only the physical setting but also the psychological context of the story. The need to translate the story unravelled its meaning and inspired the title.

Translation could also be a mere displacement or transfer from one container language to another, in a recycling practice called 'remaindering' by Mojares (1990:80). The politics of translation, however, would add certain meanings to the act. The translation of popular Tagalog texts into Cebuano as practiced by publishing houses in Manila aims for profit; by widening their audience they increase sales through a print syndicate. On the other hand, the translation of Cebuano texts unfamiliar to a Tagalog audience is motivated less by an economic motive than by ethnolinguistic pride, to show 'imperial Manila' that there are remarkable texts in Cebuano.

The image of a smaller container receiving what is poured from the original source (*huwad*) comes to mind in the case of Lina Espina-Moore's story *Ang Bisita* ('The Visit'), which the author herself translated from the original Cebuano. The version in English becomes a much shorter story; for instance, the two-paragraph opening in Cebuano, with 299 words, is reduced to 207 words in the translation. In the original Cebuano, Moore uses repetition and piling of details which she omits in the English version (Alburo 2009, vol. 2:121-33). The native penchant for accumulation of details cited earlier seems operative

here, but the author chose to omit some details in her translation knowing that to retain them would result in verbosity. Besides, those details come from a nostalgic mood which she must have speculated would impress a reader in English as 'sentimental'.

What Moore has done in *Ang Bisita* cited earlier as an example of *huwad* may look like an example of *gipu-pò* as well, since she omits some parts from the original. But *gipu-pò* is 'intentional' in that it selects specific items deemed more worthy of retaining, while *huwad* is considered more 'natural', just letting something flow into the new container during which process there is something that is bound to spill over. The nature of the medium plays a role here. Being a bilingual writer in Cebuano and English, Moore has a feel of what is considered natural for each vehicle to contain.

National Artist N. V. M. Gonzalez suggests that a translator into English should consider and experiment with a Filipino variety of literary English, noting that "characters in Filipino literature in English manifest speech patterns almost directly translated from the local languages, or use code-switching" and "the concept of a Filipino variety of English is crucial for an inventive poetics of translation" (cited in Villareal 1994:32). This issue is still debated among young writers, some of whom believe that the use of fluent English implies that the hegemonic values of the West are stronger. Those who so believe are more competent in Cebuano and will deliberately translate in broken English, while the bilingual writers can and will translate fluently into English. The former makes for an effect of opaqueness, the latter that of transparency.

With more poets now in Cebuano competing for scarce printing space, oral performance has become a regular fare for them, aside from blogging in cyberspace. Translation into English occurs when the audience is mixed. One observes that the translators would rather be fluent than literal, opting for effect rather than fidelity. A reason may be because of the desire to impress a listening audience, who doesn't have the opportunity to compare texts on nuances and syntactic effects, something that the written text does provide to its reader. On the other hand, the oral translator sometimes retains lines with phonetic resonance in Cebuano. For example, the line *ug mitulò ang luhà gikan sa iyang mga matá* might be rendered by the oral translator literally as 'and the tears fell from her eyes' but in print, the same translator might remove the redundant phrase 'from her eyes', which in the original reinforces the rhythm with assonance. In both oral and written form then, a translator can choose to be literal or inventive.

Ambiguity in a poem is illustrated by *Balibaran Ko Ikaw sa Balak* by Michael Obenieta which could be translated to mean 'I'll Refuse You a Poem' or 'I'll Refuse You in a Poem' because the preposition *sa* could mean 'in', 'on', 'of', 'at', 'towards', or simply be an object marker. The whole poem derives from the familiar debate form of the *balitao* and illustrates the quality of indirection cited earlier. It is addressed to a girl who seems to suggest intimacy aboard a ship, which the translator may render either as a request for sex or for a new poem.

Conclusion

A review of both the politics and aesthetics of literary translation in Cebuano illustrates some ideas about the practice of translation. The politics reveal why Cebuano writers and

translators aim at a larger audience, while the aesthetics explain some attitudes towards translation like tentativeness and harmonizing with an expected audience.

The indigenous terms show a variety of practices in translation which include processes of introducing local texts to the outside world (*hulad*), of appropriating texts and extracting from them what is 'usable' or relevant (*gipu-pò*), of transferring or recycling texts from one language to another (*gi-iningles, huwad*), and of explaining an enigma or mystery (*hubad)*. Instead of privileging one practice over another and relying on specific criteria, translators tend to look at the occasion.

As a teacher of both English and Cebuano languages and literatures, I recognize the value of having Cebuanos majoring in English and thus competent in reading and writing both languages. Some of them will be future teachers themselves and will have to use translated works in class. Or, when translation courses will be offered, they can themselves translate. However, the teacher is only another mediator. The privileges of the original mediator, the translator who considers him-/herself as creative whether translating from or into Cebuano, should be considered. Even the idea of something being lost in translation may not be of primary importance anymore, since there may be something new in relation to the original. In a sense, translators become performers in their deliberate acting out of their choices. In fact, the phrase 'lost in translation' would refer to the sense of having left out something of the original only when one takes a fixed text as 'the' correct translation.

Cebuano writers continue to dream of being read, even in translation, beyond the borders of the Visayan islands and the Philippine archipelago. In commenting on the prominent status of our writers in English within the country but not outside it, one literary notable says:

> … though our writers in English have long enjoyed this advantage, they have not been able to gain significant entry into the house of universal literature. But there are outstanding regional writers who may be able to do that. There might be something in the ingredients and flavor of their product that might appeal to the outside world. All that they might need is to be translated into other languages. (Bautista 2008)

The primary need, nevertheless, for translation from Cebuano is addressed to young Cebuanos who have forgotten the nuances of their language and can learn these through the medium of another language, with the help of a discerning teacher. At this point of our history when globalizing forces threaten to anesthesize our modes of expression, Cebuanos who have become more conscious of their heritage call on the writers to continue pushing the frontiers of Cebuano usage, exploring and re-inventing the traditional poetic and narrative forms.

In the meantime, while Cebuanos continue to feel marginalized and express their resistance to Filipino, there is always English as a medium for translation. Finally, in using the ghost crab metaphor, one can appreciate that translation comes with an illusion of transparency. When taken out of context, removed from its natural setting, the ghost crab's sand-speckled shell is clear against a non-sandy background.

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In Tongues
Translation, Embodiment, Performance[1]

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Abstract: *If we understand 'translation' in its expansive, rather than narrowly linguistic, sense, then all performance making entails a process of translation, and all translation has a performative dimension. However, the interest of many Euro-American 'intercultural' theatre makers in the performance forms of the Asian region, while offering great potential for a vital 'theatre of translation', has arguably led to a downplaying of linguistic complexity on stage, in favour of a mode of gestural transfer that is, ironically, informed by a 'source-target' translation model. This chapter recounts an instance of theatre-making in the cosmopolitan Southeast Asian city-state of Singapore, where translation was not only a theme, but the means by which the performance unfolded. In so doing, the writer argues that the theatre can provide a privileged site for the reinvigoration of translation as a situated, relational practice, which emerges out of an embodied encounter with the world and with other people.*

Introduction

Anglophone scholars of performance should need only a moment's pause to realize that the relationship between translation and their conventional objects of study is a profound and significant one. In my own case, I used that pause for thought to recall Quince, one of the 'mechanicals' in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1596?), who, upon discovering his friend's transformation into an ass, exclaims: "Bless thee, Bottom, bless thee! Though art translated!" (3.2.119). In this line, from one of Shakespeare's best-known and most frequently-performed plays, 'translation' is used in an expansive sense, reiterating the etymological origins of the term in the Latin *translatus*: being 'carried across', or moved from one place or condition to another. But of equal interest to this expansive usage – rare today – are the specific circumstances under which it is invoked. Bottom is placed under a spell and given asses' ears. In the theatre, this scene normally causes much hilarity, at least part of which derives from discovering the often ingenious ways in which actors, designer and director have chosen to effect the change on stage. In this complicated amalgamation of fictional and actual transformation, we can identify a characteristic of all theatrical performance: to the extent that it involves representation, it entails a carrying over of people, places, meanings and experiences from one state or place to another.[2]

By this token, performance-making is inherently a process of translation. And yet, the fact that I began this discussion by noting the necessity of a pause for thought – however

[1] This publication is an outcome of the Relocating Intercultural Theatre project, Singapore Ministry of Education Academic Research Fund Tier 2 MOE2008-T2-1-110.

[2] For an elaborate analysis of the various meanings of translation in this play, see Sallis (2002:21-45).

momentary – on the part of the performance scholar, also indicates that the translational qualities of performance are neither acknowledged nor reflected on as fully and often as they might be. In part, this is because other more medium-specific terms (such as 'mimesis') spring to mind, and in part it is because this 'expanded' sense of translation as spatial practice has been occluded by that of linguistic transfer and expression. A brief survey of the mainstream translation studies literature reveals it to be overwhelmingly concerned with texts, and most distinctions and variations are discussed *within* that paradigm, for instance those between 'literary', 'technical' and 'everyday' language and usage. For its part, the theatre studies literature is little more forthcoming on the theme of translation. Admittedly, there are defining characteristics of the art form that, from the perspective of translation as a linguistic practice, render the theatre somewhat recalcitrant. The theatrical event is time- and place-specific, and requires the corporeal co-presence of performers and spectators. From a practical point of view, this can present impediments to mobility across contexts, and a resistance to easy reproduction. Simply put, texts translate more easily than performances, so it is unsurprising that what limited critical writing there is on the topic has tended to follow suit by focusing on the translation of dramatic texts, rather than that between or within theatrical events.[3] In addition, one has only to think of the British propensity to trumpet the literariness of its theatre culture to be reminded that textual bias may be as much a product of national interests and ideologies as practicality.[4]

And yet, while the abovementioned characteristics of theatre may be an impediment to mobility and a disincentive to translation scholars in some respects, in others they are, of course, precisely what make the theatre appealing. The very fact that the theatrical event is always already a translation (in the expanded sense), as well as unevenly conducive to translation across language and cultures, is, I would argue, the reason that performance scholars should take more interest in translation studies, and vice versa. Conversely, even this brief consideration of the theatre should be sufficient to remind us that *all* translational processes are time- and place-specific to some degree; that every translator, however solitary, works in and through their body and its memories, in anticipation of the receiver (reader, listener, spectator), to summon the sounds, associations and apprehensions of thought and experience they will require to discover *le mot juste*;

[3] It is telling, for instance, that although Susan Bassnett is exercised by the challenges that the theatre poses to wider translation conventions, and goes on to explore complex features such as the relative 'performability' of a given translation, ultimately she proposes a tighter scholarly focus on the text: "We need to go back and develop the work proposed by Veltrusky on the dramatic text as literature. We need to examine more closely the variations in deictic patterns between source and target texts" (1998:107). Similarly, Umberto Eco concludes his discussion of translation and performance on an equivocal and faintly desperate note when he writes: "the fact that there can be many nuances in the wealth of semiosis does not mean that it is inadvisable to establish the basic distinctions. On the contrary, it is essential, if the task of semiotic analysis is that of identifying different phenomena in the apparently uncontrollable flux of interpretive acts" (2001:129-30).

[4] And, as I write this, I cannot help but wonder at the complex of personal and ideological factors that led this British citizen, in his brief pause for thought at the beginning of this chapter, to light upon a line from the Bard himself.

and that every translation has a performative dimension to it, in the linguistic sense of an utterance that brings about the condition it describes. It is for this reason that we should be wary of the distinction proposed by some scholars between 'text-based' translation and situational interpretation. For instance, Cynthia B. Roy (1993/2002:246-47) is surely correct to write that "interpreting has relied on the theoretical framework supplied by the domain of translation, which draws most of its theoretical force from its application to written texts", and that "as interpretation becomes increasingly differentiated due to the nature of its face-to-face interaction, both practitioners and researchers are considering a theoretical base for interpretation which may not rest on translation theory but rather may construct its own theory". However, to take the 'face-to-face' encounter as the basis for a theory of interpretation risks reinforcing the perception of translation as a purely textual, disembodied, activity. Douglas Robinson demonstrates the limitations of this attitude straightforwardly enough when he writes: "Our sense of how to use language in real-world contexts (both speech and writing) is marked somatically. We *feel* that this word or construction or usage is better than that, more appropriate than that, more accurate than that, more equivalent to its counterpart in an original text than that" (2003:77).

Intercultural theatre, 'Asia' and translation

It is surely because theatre operates at this charged and complex confluence of embodiment, sociality, language, meaning, experience and aesthetics that some of the most important and innovative performances of the past century developed out of attempts by practitioners to move across and between cultural contexts. The continuing influence of so-called intercultural theatre – which, broadly put, stages the encounter between different cultural forms and worldviews – on approaches to performer training, devising and directing, funding and programming, and critical analysis cannot be over-stated. As such, intercultural theatre is uniquely well-placed to realize the creative and conceptual potential that lies in bringing performance and translation into a more dynamic relationship. Yet thus far the best-known approaches both to the practice and theory of intercultural theatre have been characterized by a perplexing mix of insight and limitation, and nowhere more so than when some version of 'Asia' has been in play.

Indeed, when set alongside an enquiry into 'Translation in Asia', numerous particularities, peculiarities and contradictions of intercultural theatre are thrown into sharp relief, and reveal the complexities of the relationship between translation and embodiment in performance. Although the term 'intercultural' does not, in itself, designate or privilege any particular culture or cultures, and although, at a mundane level, we might say that intercultural encounters of one sort or another are the norm for the majority of the world's population, the term 'intercultural theatre' is most commonly associated with a small group of mainly Euro-American auteurs, whose work has been substantially influenced by selected theatre forms from South, East and Southeast Asia. Moreover, as numerous critics have pointed out (most notably Bharucha 1993:13-90), despite the suggestion of cultural parity in the term 'intercultural', many aspects of the processes behind these works have been far from equitable. Economic disparities and the complex legacy

of colonialism have often resulted in contemporary Euro-American artists exploiting the expertise and intellectual property of Asian practitioners of traditional art forms. The result is a hybrid aesthetic that both misinterprets and misrepresents its informing cultural reference points, even as it serves to generate cultural capital for the directors and their funders.

Thus, in outline, the postcolonial critique of intercultural theatre as it is commonly understood. And whether or not one entirely subscribes to it, the potential for imbalances and blindspots in the intercultural encounter that it identifies is one that has a particular resonance when one considers the place and function of language within the genre.

One of the underlying reasons for the misidentification and misinterpretation of source materials in intercultural theatre is the extent to which the turn to Asian forms was motivated first and foremost by a *rejection* of Western theatrical convention.[5] In particular, what Euro-American artists from Antonin Artaud, through Jerzy Grotowski and Peter Brook, to Robert Wilson and Ariane Mnouchkine have sought to undermine is the central and authoritative position of the playtext, and indeed the playwright. As a result, speech and language have tended to be de-emphasized in intercultural theatre in favour of the visual, the gestural and non-narrative structuring principles. Where speech *has* been factored in, it has either been in the context of a dramaturgy that subsumes it within a more pluralistic, multi-modal approach, or foregrounded for its affective qualities, as sound, rather than meaning. Sometimes, this happens in the context of a multiplicity of languages, where the fact of the 'babble' is more important than the content of individual phrases, and where differences are flattened out by their translation into a single language – often English – for the purposes of subtitling.

Where translation is used in intercultural theatre, then, it tends to be deployed functionally, rather than being integrated reflexively into the work or, rarer still, being treated as a subject *of* the work. And yet, the de-privileging of speech and the invisibility of translation (to adapt Lawrence Venuti's critical reference to 'the translator's invisibility', 1995/2008) do not mean that language and 'the text' have been definitively banished from the intercultural stage. If anything, the anti-textual impetus has produced a compensatory textualization of otherwise non-textual components.

For example, a defining characteristic of intercultural theatre is gestural transfer as a vehicle for interpersonal interaction. It is in significant part the transformative potential of gesture that Bertolt Brecht and Antonin Artaud responded to in Chinese and Balinese theatre respectively (albeit with very different outcomes), and it is arguably language *as* gesture that Peter Brook was pursuing in early intercultural experiments such as *The Ik* (1977, which was performed in a made-up language).[6] But such transfers imply either

[5] By this token, intercultural theatre reproduces a long-standing Western tendency to define itself against its Eastern others which, in consequence, are negatively defined as 'not Europe'. Naoki Sakai, for instance, does not mince his words when he writes: "Only as the negative of the West can one possibly address oneself as an Asian. Therefore, to talk about Asia is invariably to talk about the West" (2000:215). That I will myself continue to make generalized reference to 'Asia' in the following analysis should therefore be taken as having been duly problematized, if not satisfactorily resolved.

[6] Bertolt Brecht's essay 'Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting', written after watching a salon demonstration in Moscow by Mei Lanfang in 1935, was instrumental in the development of his

an assumption of equivalence between gestures in different cultures, or the capacity to isolate and transpose gestures from one cultural context into another.

As such, gesture has tended to be treated like a language, and it is little surprise that the implicitly translational terms of such exchanges have informed the development of intercultural performance theory in the Euro-American academy. During the nineties in particular, a number of key theatre theoreticians proposed models of intercultural performance production that were influenced by semiotics, and based to a more or less explicit degree on the idea of a 'source' and 'target' culture.[7] Moreover, even when these models were critiqued for their lack of attention to political context, or to the nuances of embodiment, the critiques themselves tended to betray their own roots in language-based critical theory.[8] As a result, intercultural theatre was yet further embedded through discourse in that which its proponents had striven so energetically to renounce in practice: the text.

Despite the centrality to intercultural experimentation of the performance practices of the Asian region, then, Asian languages have not fared particularly well in intercultural theatre. Paradoxically, it is precisely this that has enabled a translational model of intercultural exchange to predominate, since textualist, semiotic assumptions have gone untroubled by the exigencies of meaningful multilingual encounter. The unidirectionality of the source-target model, along with the binaristic designation of discrete cultures, point to an implicitly monolingual approach to interculturalism, which frames the practice as first and foremost the manifestation of one presumptively homogenous culture in another.

Stated baldly, we can say that very little self-described intercultural theatre, and almost no intercultural performance theories are, strictly speaking, intercultural, in part because one of the most challenging sites of intercultural encounter – where languages meet – is passed over in silence. This, in turn raises the question: can the intercultural speak? If so, what does it sound like, and *where* does it sound? In what follows, I shall heed the specificity of response that these questions demand, by focusing on one particular instance where context and creativity were set dynamically in play in a multilingual setting.

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concept of Epic Theatre. Similarly, Antonin Artaud wrote 'On the Balinese Theatre' after watching a *janger* performance at a colonial exhibition in Paris in 1931. It was the first essay to be written in the series that would become *The Theatre and Its Double* (1938), where he formulated his idea of a Theatre of Cruelty. Between them, Brecht and Artaud revolutionized approaches to theatre-making in Europe, America and elsewhere over the course of the twentieth century.

[7] See, for instance, Erika Fischer-Lichte's semiotic approach (1990), Patrice Pavis' 'hourglass model' (1992, 1996), Marvin Carlson's use of the 'source-target' model (1996), and Christopher Balme's binaristic approach to 'indigenous intercultural theatre' (1999:17).

[8] Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert, for example, take Patrice Pavis to task for the fact that "[t]he hourglass model is premised on aesthetics rather than politics" (2002:43), but their proposal to introduce feminist and postcolonial perspectives into interculturalism results in a rapid proliferation of textualist metaphors to describe the 'praxis'. Hence, the body becomes by turn a 'sign system' and a 'signifier' that can be 'read' and 'reread', 'inscribed' and 're-inscribed', 'marked' and self-marked', 'encoded' and 'spoken through' (*ibid.*:47).

National Language Class: Theatre and the contact zone

In 1959 – the year Singapore gained limited self-government from the British – the social realist painter Chua Mia Tee painted a group of nine young Chinese intellectuals learning Malay. When I first saw a picture of *National Language Class* in 2005, I was taken aback that the students were learning Malay; and then I was taken aback that I was taken aback. How could the past be so at odds with the present? And how did this past continue nevertheless to bear upon the present? These questions provided the starting point for a performance, also called *National Language Class*, which I directed and devised in collaboration with actors Noor Effendy Ibrahim (a Singaporean) and Yeo Yann Yann (a Malaysian who, like me, is a Singapore Permanent Resident).

From a historical point of view, the answer to the question of how the past could be so at odds with the present is quite straightforward: the painting represented a vision of a future that never happened. The decision to make Malay the national language of Singapore was a result of the complex politics of anti-colonialism and decolonization that predominated from the end of World War Two until Singapore finally became independent in 1965, and whose legacy persists to this day. Throughout this prolonged period of instability, the British struggled both to fight back a communist insurgency (the so-called 'Emergency'), and to work out advantageous terms on which to disengage from Malaya. As the historian Tim Harper reports, part of this strategy involved an attempt at promoting English as the *lingua franca* of a future decolonized Malaya. However, "the quest for an Anglicised vision of the 'Malayan'" was "defeated by an upsurge of explorations in ethnic and religious identity that emanated from networks within the vibrant popular cultures in the towns" (Harper 1999:275). For a variety of sometimes contrasting ideological and identitarian reasons, many ethnic Chinese joined with the Malay population in envisioning Malay as the national language of a unified Malaysian federation, which would include Singapore. Harper (*ibid.*) goes on:

> In a situation where Malaysian political leaders inherited political power rather than won it by force, it was in … debates on national culture that some of the most intense struggles for independence occurred. They questioned the capacity of the English language to weld polyglot communities into a multi-racial whole, they questioned the nature of 'multi-racialism' itself. Of the alternative constructions of national identity – through education, art, performance, literature – the most important was the reformulation of the Malay language as an agent of national mobilization.

In 1959, the Singapore government began vigourously to promote Malay as the national language. Numerous primers and other language learning aids were made available. In his foreword to *Simple Malay Conversations* (1961), then Minister for Culture S. Rajaratnam noted that although Malay was not new to many people living in Singapore, its elevation to the national language meant "we must now learn it more systematically and intensively", and that the book would "help us realise our urgent aim of a common language on which to found a Malayan nation" (1961:1). The book accompanied a series

of radio programmes, *Learn Malay with Radio Singapore*, and reproduced the dialogues and key words and phrases in Malay, Chinese, Tamil and English (in that order).

By the time Singapore broke with Malaysia in August 1965 (it had joined in September 1963), however, such documents were already approaching obsolescence. While Malay would remain the national language of Singapore, English soon became the *lingua franca*. Today, very few non-Malay members of the so-called 'post-65' generation (Singaporeans born after independence) speak Malay. The main language of instruction in the vast majority of schools is English, with students learning their 'Mother Tongue' (normally Mandarin, Malay or Tamil) as a second language.[9]

It happens that this demographic also makes up the bulk of the theatre-going audience (at least, for the kinds of performances made by the company of which I am co-Artistic Director, spell#7). And so it was that *National Language Class* was performed on several occasions between 2006 and 2008 to audiences that were highly differentiated in terms of linguistic and cultural competence, and understanding of the historical context to which the performance made reference.

The performance itself was structured quite straightforwardly. The basic concept was that of a bilingual language lesson in Malay and Mandarin, which began by teaching the audience the words they needed to know in order to understand what would happen later on; prior knowledge of neither language was required. With a few exceptions, each scene presented a different take on the scenario depicted in Chua Mia Tee's painting: first by reproducing the lesson shown, then by teaching the audience the words of the figures and objects featured in the painting, then through a series of contested and contradictory attempts by the two performers to describe and act out the scenario in Malay and Mandarin to their mutual satisfaction. In a bid to break the impasse, they resorted to an English language scene that expanded the referential scope of the play, but ultimately revealed its own limitations and created another impasse to mutual understanding. The performance culminated in an act of violence that emerged out of a silent version of the scenario, followed by a final dialogue that the performers had audience members translate into English on their behalf. The closing image was of each performer marking out the shape of a table in the air: one drew a round table, the other a square table.

Broadly speaking, I understood the play to be about the relationship between language, ethnicity and national identity, and the questions that animated us as we developed the performance were: what does it mean to de-link your language from your ethnicity in favour of a supervening concept of 'nation' (especially when you are in the minority)? And, on the other hand, what does it mean to be part of an ethnic majority that relinquishes its 'mother tongue' in order to take someone else's language on?

Already, it should be clear that *National Language Class* is not easily described in terms of a source-target model. Indeed, the precise translational dynamics of the performance are almost impossible to identify comprehensively. One of the reasons for this was the above-mentioned diversity of linguistic competencies among the audience,

[9] This is in contrast to Malaysia, where the schools system is largely segregated along ethnic/racial/linguistic lines. In Singapore, a small number of so-called 'Special Assistance Plan' schools offer a bilingual curriculum to students who excel in both English and Mandarin, while the languages of instruction in the six Islamic Madrasahs are Malay and Arabic.

which ranged from complete ignorance of both Mandarin and Malay, to a multilingualism that encompassed both languages, as well as English.[10] A second reason is the variety of translational and interpretive activities that took place over the course of the seventy-minute performance. These ranged from individual audience members interpreting for their neighbours and/or for the rest of the audience, to collective language learning, to silent translation between multiple languages in response to visual and verbal stimuli, to the 'implicit' translations of the performers whose understanding of the performance as a whole outstripped the limited linguistic repertoire of their characters. A third reason is the sheer multi-modal complexity of the theatrical event. In 1959, the linguist Roman Jacobson famously made a distinction between the intralinguistic, interlinguistic, and intersemiotic aspects of translation, the latter aspect (which refers to the relationship between linguistic and non-linguistic significations) also being referred to as 'transmutation'. In his *Experiences in Translation* (2001), Umberto Eco sought to refine Jacobson's concept for the discussion of performance with reference to 'adaptation' and 'intrasemiotic translation' (*ibid.*:104), which referred to the relationship between multiple signifying systems. However, as I have already suggested above, to treat the embodied, interactive, collective event of performance as first and foremost a semiotic system and a process of semiotic exchange and substitution, is to overlook many of the defining features of theatrical performance, or, at least, to fail to appreciate the ways in which diverse signifying, non-signifying and affective factors are inextricably interwoven at the moment of the encounter with performance.

In the case of *National Language Class*, a more appropriate description may be as a variation on Mary Louise Pratt's concept of the contact zone, which she describes as "places where cultures that have been on historically separate trajectories intersect or come into contact with each other and establish a society, often in contexts of colonialism" (1996:1). For Pratt, the contact zone was primarily developed between colonizer and colonized, invariably "within relations of radical inequality enforced by violence" (*ibid.*:6). While power relations were certainly a concern of *National Language Class*, the historical context of the shared anti-colonial struggle means that violence and inequality were less of a focus in the performance than the creation of a dynamic linguistic environment, somewhat akin to Pratt's description of bilingualism (1987:62) as "less an attribute of a speaker than as a zone for working out social meanings and enacting social differences". In other words, *National Language Class* did not represent a system of translation, so much as a multilingual crucible that combined signifying systems, affective encounters, audience-performer interactions and disjunctive historical moments. It sought to represent the complex and contradictory situation out of which young Singaporeans have developed; individuals whose linguistic competencies and cultural identities are informed as much by historical lacunae as by the exigencies of the present day.

[10] In a discussion of translation in Southeast Asian performance, Jennifer Lindsay (2006:17) describes situations "where performers and audience may not share the same make-up of mono- and bi-lingual individuals" as "shared group multilingualism (or 'shared polyglossia')". The very fact that her categories encompass both performer and audience competence is already quite a significant departure from the performer-to-performer models referenced in footnote 7, where the question of intercultural reception is much less directly addressed.

Moreover, as the term 'contact zone' indicates, when the neat pseudo-abstractions of the 'source-target' model fall away, what comes to the fore is physicality: the co-presence of individuals, and their embodied interactions. It is this factor that I now wish to examine in further detail.

Material speech

It is easy to forget, until we encounter it directly, what a distinctive experience learning a foreign language can be. At once mundane and existential, tiresome chore and profound revivification of our environment, the process activates some of our most basic cognitive functions (such as repetition), while challenging us to reformulate our capacity for abstract thought, and the conceptual parameters by which we understand, and locate ourselves in, the world.

To the extent that *National Language Class* took the form of a language lesson, it reproduced these characteristics. As a theatrical performance, certain aspects were heightened, including the relational and embodied dimensions of the encounter. The interactive sequences at the beginning of the performance caused palpable anxiety among some audience members; a small number chose the ultimate 'embodied response' by removing themselves from the theatre altogether! Watching the audience, I was reminded how insistent is the physiology of anxiety, especially when exacerbated by the potential for public embarrassment, which so often arises from some sort of bodily 'betrayal' of one's perceived sense of self and decorum.

In the case of *National Language Class*, the potential for embarrassment was twofold, and turned on the profound relationship between world, body, and the cognitive ability to 'grasp' meaning (a tellingly active term). The first challenge came in the address from performer to audience member, when key words and phrases were taught. Audience members were required to mediate between the unfamiliar sounds expressed by the performers, and their prior knowledge of social contexts and relations. They then needed to establish the appropriate response, and articulate it both *in* and *with* an unfamiliar tongue. I say 'with', because, in my view, for all the historical and socio-political scope of the performance, the crux of the experience lay in this: to bend and flex the tongue in unfamiliar ways, and to place it in novel alignment with teeth, lips and palette.

The result, I suggest, was a kind of gestural transfer irreducible to semiosis; a sensual attempt to reproduce in one's own mouth the shapes and sounds seen in, and heard emanating from, that of another. Then, it was a matter of firming up one's sense of the sound and its relation to meaning. Each repetition enacted an incorporation of the phenomenal world: a suturing of environment and experience.

Thus was the cross-cultural encounter of *National Language Class* materialized in the mouth. In struggling to mimic and form unfamiliar shapes with their teeth, tongues and lips, audience members mispronounced their way towards understanding and interpreting the performance. However, by contrast with a conventional language lesson, which aims for a fluent and unimpeded transfer of sound and meaning, *National Language Class* made a virtue of what might be called 'stutterance'. In part, this derived from the largely bilingual focus and trilingual context of the performance, and no doubt the specific

and quite substantial differences between Malay and Mandarin sounds contributed to the particular difficulties that audience members encountered in moving between the languages. But it also became clear to us as the performance progressed that the moments of greatest phonological difference or difficulty were also those that crystallized the thematic dynamics of the play.

Some of these moments were planned in advance, and, to the extent that we were able, we used them to mark transitional moments in the audience's interpretive trajectory through the work. When the Teacher entered, the first thing he taught them was the Arabic greeting, 'As-Salamu Alaykum'. Said as one continuous phrase, it is easy for the learner not to register all the syllables. In particular, 'mu' required particular highlighting, since the sound is followed by another beginning with a vowel, and the two are easily elided. This initial 'trip up' by many audience members drew their attention to the care with which they would need to listen to words that they would already have some passing familiarity with: it marked a site of difference – since, for non-Arabs and non-Muslims, it is more commonly heard than uttered – as well as giving audience members an early opportunity to overcome such difficulties.[11]

This, in turn, made a later elision in the play all the more charged: when describing the scene in Mandarin, the Student chose not to 'read out' the questions written in Malay on the board, but rather gloss them with a rhythmic, muffled series of 'mmm-hmm' sounds. The violence of erasure triggered an audible gasp in some audience members, and set in motion a series of confrontations between the two characters that culminated in the Teacher inviting the audience to help him learn Mandarin. With the Student offstage, the Teacher quietly practiced the words for some of the objects in his classroom – chair, blackboard, student – as if the very stuff of his world had suddenly become strange and foreign to him. It was a quiet, intense and poignant moment, calibrated to place the audience in a dilemma: when asked by the Teacher to correct his pronunciation and tonality, should they do so (at the risk of complicity in the erasure of Malay, and of exerting power over the character) or should they disobey the Teacher by refusing to accede to his request? The scattered and half-hearted responses from many audience members suggested that they appreciated the difficulty of the situation they had been placed in, but were uncertain how it could be resolved.

A final example shows that although we had established a context where such dilemmas could emerge, this did not mean the performers were entirely in control of the situation. As a means of introducing some key terms and the context of the play, the performance began with the Student 'practising' her Malay with Malay-speaking members of the audience, and having them translate those phrases into English for the

[11] I would add that it also marked an early moment of historical disjunction. We were aware that such a greeting would have been less common amongst Singapore Malays in the late fifties; similarly, we knew that, today, some Muslims believe the greeting should not be offered to non-Muslims, and also that non-Muslims in the audience might think twice about responding to what could be perceived as a religious greeting. By opening the performance with a term that was at once a genuine expression of goodwill ('Peace be upon you'), and freighted with interpretive and situational ambiguity, we aimed to predispose the audience to the combination of good faith and careful questioning that the work to follow ideally required of them.

rest. The phrases were taken from Lesson One of *Simple Malay Conversations*, and one performance involved a lengthy exchange with two Malay-speaking audience members, that included the following:

STUDENT	Apa khabar?	[How are you?]
AUDIENCE MEMBER 1	Khabar baik	[I'm fine]
STUDENT	Terima kasih!	[Thank you!]
AUDIENCE MEMBER 1	Same same.	[You're welcome]
STUDENT	Kita bangsa Malaya.	[We are Malayan]
AUDIENCE MEMBERS 1+2	Mela*yu*	[Ma*lay*]
	…	
STUDENT	Kita bangsa Malaya	
AUDIENCE MEMBER 1	We are…	
AUDIENCE MEMBER 2	…the Malays	
AUDIENCE MEMBER 1	the Malays. (*Audience laughter*). 'Melayu' is Malay, not 'Malaya'.	
STUDENT	Malaya!	
AUDIENCE MEMBER 3	Merlion! (*Audience laughter*)[12]	
STUDENT	Ma-la-yan…Kita bangsa Malaya.	
AUDIENCE MEMBER 1	We are…Malayan. -AN. *Malayan*.	

Fifty years after featuring in the first lesson of a national language textbook, the phrase 'kita bangsa Malaya' ('we are Malayans') had become at the very least counter-intuitive, and quite possibly unhearable to the Student's Malay-Singaporean interlocuteurs. It appears that for them, Malaya – the anticipated but ultimately ill-fated postcolonial union of Singapore and Malaysia – was an alien concept, while 'bangsa' is today so commonly run together with 'Melayu' (to mean 'Malay race' or 'people'), that its other meaning, 'nation', has become obscured.

The tone of the exchange was good-natured, but coming so early in the performance, it highlighted potential faultlines amongst audience and performers, not only between ethnic groups, but also between different levels of historical awareness (or, at least, different degrees of readiness to translate counter-intuitively). In the distinction between an 'a' and a 'u' lay the question of whether it was possible to de-link language from race/ethnicity ('bangsa Melayu') in favour of a 'people' that was first and foremost a political entity ('bangsa Malaya'). As such, the exchange rehearsed in miniature (at the level of the vowel, as it were) the themes and debates that would motivate the performance in its entirety.[13]

[12] The Merlion is an ostensibly mythical creature that is half-lion and half-fish, and was invented by the Singapore tourist board in the early 1960s. Several Merlion statues exist in Singapore, and they are used as part of the republic's promotional branding. When the word is pronounced in Singapore English, the stress is sometimes put on the second syllable, which is why the audience member was joking that the English for 'Ma*la*ya' might be 'Mer*lion*'.

[13] For a more detailed discussion of this distinction, and of its bearing on debates regarding nationality and citizenship in the run-up to decolonization, see Harper (1999:306).

And what of 'kita' ('we')? Benedict Anderson's description of the nation as 'imagined community' is so frequently cited in scholarly work as to constitute a veritable imagined community of imagined communities. But, set against the present context, it is a notably dematerialized concept, and one that, in its valorization of the imaginary, leaves little room for the kinds of errors born of stammering, stuttering, mispronunciation. To my mind, *National Language Class* underscored the role of elisions, erasures and errors that underwrite every 'coherent' national identity.

Conclusion

In his short 1972 essay 'The Grain of the Voice', Roland Barthes sought to describe the signifying and non-signifying properties of performance — mainly, though not exclusively, in song. The 'pheno-song' names "all the features which belong to the structure of the language being sung", and concerns "everything in the performance which is in the service of communication, representation, expression" (1972/1977:182). Where the pheno-song predominates, performances are reduced to clear meanings, translatable emotions and authoritative interpretation. By contrast, the 'geno-song' is "the *diction* of the language" (*ibid.*:182-83). Specific to each individual, it is material rather than subjective or subject-forming, an often pleasurable quality Barthes calls the 'grain': "The 'grain' is the body in the voice as it sings, the hand as it writes, the limb as it performs" (*ibid.*:188).

As so often with Barthes, the distinction is at once illuminating, and overly-schematic. In *National Language Class*, the subject was structure, meaning and translation, but it was inextricably bound up with playfulness, laughter, the engaging figures of the performers, their energized dialogues with audience members, and disputes over diction. As the ethnically diverse Singapore audience struggled in the early stages of the play even to agree on what its national language *was*, the bland perfection of the pheno-text was the last thing to be expected. Meanwhile, if there was a grain at work at all, far from lying, as Barthes has it, in "the materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue" (*ibid.*:182), it fell collectively and dialogically between the numerous languages in circulation during the performance, and the bodies which were their medium.

In a contemporary era of generalized affect and commodified experience, Barthes' faith in performance as a site of heightened and pleasurable embodied encounter is a heartening one to recall. Almost forty years on, however, we need to be sensitive to how changed contexts of time and place impact the relationship between body, language, meaning and identity as presented and invented on stage. In listening to song, Barthes thrilled to hear "the tongue, the glottis, the teeth, the mucous membranes, the nose" (*ibid.*:183). *National Language Class* explored the fate and function of that same anatomy in a situation neither harmonious nor virtuosic. In Barthes' essay, the fact of a national identity and its inviolable relation to a mother tongue is largely taken for granted. In contrast, *National Language Class* made reference to the fraught language politics of decolonization; but I think the globalized backdrop against which it was developed and performed is far from unique to postcolonial societies.

Translation, embodiment and performance exist in a dynamic relationship. At times,

this can result in blockages and blindspots, a reductive modelling of the performance event, and a disembodied account of translational processes. However, the theatre can also provide a privileged site for the reinvigoration of translation as a situated, relational practice, which emerges out of an embodied encounter with the world and with other people; and for a range of historical and cultural reasons, the Asian region is a particularly significant area in which to explore such possibilities.

As Marvin Carlson demonstrates in his *Speaking in Tongues: Languages at Play in the Theatre* (2006:19), this is a fact that theatre scholarship is only slowly coming round to. He writes:

> The tradition of a theatre closely tied to a particular nation and a particular language may still dominate a generally held idea of how theatre operates, but the new theatre that is most oriented toward the contemporary world no longer is restricted to this model, and one of the most important challenges it faces is the presentation of a newly interdependent world that speaks with many different voices. The heteroglossic stage, for centuries an interesting but marginal part of the dramatic tradition, became in the late twentieth century a truly important international phenomenon.

Within some parts of the Asian region, what Carlson characterizes as a recent development has been integral and unexceptional. This, for instance, is the underlying message behind Jennifer Lindsay's edited volume *Between Tongues: Translation and/of/in Performance in Asia*, which was published in the same year as Carlson's book. In her introduction, Lindsay surveys the diverse linguistic scenarios and communities of interpretation that are reflected, sustained and sometimes challenged in performance, stating: "The language of the stage in Southeast Asia has commonly reflected and presented the multilingualism of individuals and the polyglossia of societies" (2006:17). Moreover, where Carlson implicitly ties monolingualism and multilingualism to nationalism and internationalism, respectively, as an example such as *National Language Class* demonstrates, even within the framework of the nation state, the politics and practicalities of language may be more complex than first assumed.

To designate an exchange 'a translation' is to nominalize, narrativize and, to a certain extent, resolve it. A 'translational theatre' plunges performers and audience alike into the process of encountering and accounting for the world anew, differently and perhaps even wrongly. It holds open and extends the charged and ambiguous condition that exists when translation is in the offing, but not yet realized; when a collective bends to understanding, without need of consensus. The performances that explore this reflexively remain, for now, quite rare. But for many people in the world the situation they depict is not so much novel, as a revivification of daily life, and a reminder of all the sedimentations, forgettings, elisions and erasures that make it livable.

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On Castes, Malayalams and Translations

S. SANJEEV

Abstract: *Various layers of colonialism, nationalism, and communism are important factors in the formation of Kerala's intriguing past. Kerala also has one of the most vibrant print cultures in the Indian subcontinent. Translation, in all its manifestations, has always been ubiquitous in Kerala/Malayalam and it could be said to have played a crucial role in imagining, shaping and sustaining a homogenous category of 'Malayali'. This chapter reflects on a few significant moments of translation in Kerala/Malayalam, especially with regard to caste, and then moves on to the predicaments of the author as a translator of the celebrated and controversial book* Why I Am Not a Hindu*, written by the renowned Dalitbahujan thinker from Andhra Pradesh, Kancha Illaiah. With the emergence of radical movements based on identity politics in the last two decades major shifts have ensued in writing, translation and publication. Since translation theories also come as translations to 'regions' and 'vernaculars' such as Kerala/Malayalam, analyzing these shifts becomes more complex.*

Introduction

A brief account of 'Translations in the Malayalam language' published by the Kerala State Language Institute about four decades ago proudly states that "translation is a very mature and widespread movement in the Malayalam language" (Govy 1973 44). As substantiation, perhaps, a list with figures of literary translations published in Malayalam for the past two centuries, from 1772 onwards, has also been provided; it contains around two thousand literary works from the Indian subcontinent, Asia and Europe. Although the region has had a long and rich mercantile history involving an assortment of foreign tongues – Arab trade dates back to the fourth century CE – on first thought this would seem a pretty good average for a language that cannot boast an extensive and glorious literary past. The origin and age of Malayalam have always been a contentious topic. Popular consensus is that it evolved around the tenth century CE. It must have become a language of standing with a literature of its own much later, since the life time of Thunjath Ramanujan Ezhuthachan, regarded as the father of Malayalam language, was circa the sixteenth century CE. Of the other major Dravidian languages, Tamil goes back to the second century BCE, Kannada to the fourth century CE, and Telugu to the seventh century CE.

But we must bear in mind the significance of the period in the statistics. The times are intricately layered with various colonialisms,[1] nationalisms, reform movements, print

[1] This brutal business, of course, begins with the Portuguese ship that had come to anchor near Kappad coast on 20th May 1498. Vasco Da Gama and the empires that followed him inaugurated entirely new chaos in the land located in the southern most tip of Indian subcontinent. The expedition under Da Gama set sail from Lisbon in 1497, five years after his predecessor Christopher Columbus settled for America instead of India. Next to arrive were the Dutch, French and British.

cultures and communisms; the era during which the region 'Keralam', the language 'Malayalam' and the people 'Malayali' as we know them now have been imagined and realized. Obviously translation, in all its manifestations, has played a major role in defining these categories. This chapter tries to explore how caste has been crucial in this process and will conclude by examining a significant instance from the Malayalam translation of the celebrated and controversial book *Why I Am Not a Hindu* written by the renowned Dalitbahujan thinker from Andhra Pradesh, Kancha Illaiah.[2]

Uniting land and language

Kerala State, the present territorial unit which is part of the Indian Union, came into being in 1956 by merging three regions: Malabar in the north which had been part of the Madras Presidency under direct British rule, and two princely states in the south, Travancore and Kochi. Pressure had started mounting for a single state of Kerala from the 1920s onwards. In 1949 Travancore and Kochi were unified and on 1 November 1956, Kerala State was formed uniting Malabar with them. Common language and culture were hailed as the bonding agents. But the non-availability of such a homogenous language[3] and culture was a tricky hurdle before the *Aikya Keralam* ('United Kerala') movement that gained momentum in the 1940s. The life-worlds were far too diverse to offer a common ground and when such an exercise – fashioning 'one' Kerala – was undertaken it privileged upper caste pasts and cultural norms (Devika 2007). For instance, the sanctioned legend regarding the origin of Kerala is that it is the land cleared from the sea by Parashuraman, an avatar of Lord Vishnu, and that he donated it to brahmins. Onam, the official national festival of Kerala celebrated every year derives from another brahmanical legend related to the same lord but another avatar.

Robert D. King points out that the drive for linguistic states or provinces in India at the time was grounded not so much in language as in caste and communal rivalries grappling for privilege, and caste figured in every single demand for a linguistic state. He notes that B. R. Ambedkar, regarded as the father of the Indian constitution, had the deepest forebodings regarding the creation of linguistic states. "In a linguistic state what would remain for the smaller communities to look to?" the great Dalit thinker had asked (King 1997:170-71). But for others in the driving seat language appeared to be the best available modern-secular gloss for the making of a postcolonial nation that had been carved out of a 'communal partition'.

In the context of language and the historical formation of identities in India, Sudipta Kaviraj notes that language not only unites people but also effectively divides them, and socially it is not merely a means of communication but also of deliberate incommunication:

[2] The legendary leader Dr. B. R. Ambedkar started using the Marathi word *Dalit* – 'broken people' – to refer to the 'untouchable castes' in Hindu hierarchy and it became popular with the emergence of a Dalit Panthers movement in the 1970s. Its root word is *dal*, meaning 'to break open, split, crush, grind'. It has become part of every major language in India now. *Bahujan* means 'majority', and the term *Dalitbahujan* is supposed to encompass all 'lower' castes.

[3] It is interesting to note in this context that the first English text on the language's grammar that came out in 1799 is all about 'Malabar Language' and never mentioned 'Malayalam'! (see Drummond 2002).

"often the most indestructible barriers among people are 'walls of words' ... people 'having' the same language do not have it in the same way" (Kaviraj 2010:127-28). Every effort to fashion a standard Malayalam since the late nineteenth century, especially with the advent of print culture, has celebrated some specific registers as *the* Malayalam: projects that cannot but collide with the hierarchy of caste. A linguistic analysis carried out in the 1970s on the hybridity of the Malayalam language observes the following:

> Walluvanad, for several historical reasons had a concentration of rich highest caste nambudiri brahmins who were powerful in several ways. They were reputed for their knowledge of Sanskrit. Under social constraint against imitation of higher caste practices the *spoken language of the castes below them* remained little influenced by Sanskrit. This might be a major reason for the reputation of Walluvanad as pure Malayalam.[4]

Spoken language of which castes? This supposedly pure Malayalam definitely does not belong to *all* castes below brahmins, speaking less- or non-sanskritized tongues. Besides, if lesser sanskritization was the major determinant of purity, it would prove to be a thorny question as to why the Malayalam spoken by Muslims of the region couldn't fit the bill. It has always been considered as the 'mappila slang'.[5] Since the very idea of a pure language is touchy, this could be a significant pointer towards the triumphant project of fashioning a Malayalam/Kerala based on the conflicts and negotiations between *some* castes in the upper echelon; to be specific, nambudiris and nairs. Being brahmins, nambudiris had enjoyed exclusive authority of religion and ritual practice, political protection from ruling lineages, immense landholdings and expedient relations – direct and indirect – with lower castes. Nambudiris and nairs had a strange affiliation. Among nambudiris only the eldest son could marry while the younger males entered into alliances with nair women. In the late nineteenth century reform movements regarding marriage, inheritance and property rights amongst nairs started turning things upside down (Dilip Menon 2006:41).

A significant norm setting through which the nambudiri-nair dialects would be transmogrified into the written standard for Malayalam had been that quintessence of modernity, the novel. The first Malayalam novel is *Kundhalata*, written by T. M. Appu Nedungadi and published in 1887, but it was *Indulekha* (1889) that set in motion the process we have been discussing. No wonder *Indulekha* was anointed the first Malayalam novel that has the proper traits of the genre. This celebration was not simply 'literary' but had other stakes – larger, so to say – as we shall soon see.

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[4] Kala (1973:273; emphasis mine). Robert King (1997:15) notes that Malayalam had come under strong brahmanical influence in the seventeenth century and had been heavily infused with words borrowed from Sanskrit.

[5] Mappilas, the Malabar Muslims, are considered as the descendants of Arab traders and converts to Islam from among the native population of Malabar. Islam had become a significant presence in Malabar by the ninth century. The Mappila rebellions spanning almost a century (1836-1921) against the upper caste Hindu landlords and the British colonial state have been fateful in the history of the subcontinent (Ansari 2002). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to go into the details of various 'other' tongues such as the obsolete dalit registers or the vanishing languages of indigenous people – the only ethnic minority in Kerala and the most marginalized.

Two novels and a hundred years

Indulekha – an instant hit – is authored by O. Chandumenon, who belonged to the nair caste and held the position of judge in the colonial administration. The somewhat tortuous journey that led to the writing of *Indulekha* has been described by the author in the preface to the first edition. Chandumenon's leisure hours were completely captivated by English fiction, much to the annoyance of his intimate companion(s). In their brilliant re-reading of Chandumenon's preface Anitha Devasia and Susie Tharu point out that "the ambiguity of number made possible by the respectful plural in Malayalam [*priyapétta ālukal*] allows Chandumenon to draw a playful veil of decorum, over the 'romance' here" and that the "conventions of pronominal reference in English obscure the power and allure of nair woman at the centre" that would be apparent only to the reader of the Malayalam text (Devasia and Tharu 1997:57-58). This indeed sets the stage for Chandumenon's protest against the violence of colonial translation that would destroy the nair community. Chandumenon was one of the six members of The Malabar Marriage Commission that was set up in 1890 to inquire whether legislative intervention was needed to correct the sexual practices of nairs. In a dissent note he had expressed strong disapproval regarding reforms arguing that any form of marriage customarily prevalent in a community should be accepted as constituting legitimate practice (Arunima 1997:277).

Coming back to *Indulekha,* in order to pacify his beloved better half Lakshmikutty amma, Chandumenon started providing plot summaries of the novels he read, but to no avail. One day an extempore translation of *Henrietta Temple* hit the bull's eye and all of a sudden Lakshmikutty amma's passion for this novel narrative form assumed dangerous proportions. She would not only demand the translation of everything he read but also prod him for something more than mere oral rendition, a novel she could read for herself. Though Chandumenon started translating the accidental nemesis *Henrietta Temple,* he aborted the project halfway. He realized that "in a translation one understands only what is written on the printed page, one misses out on the nuances, details and different moods created by different enunciation of words" and decided to write a Malayalam novel along the lines of an 'English novel book' (Dilip Menon 2006:114; Chandumenon 1993:9).

Anitha Devasia and Susie Tharu (1997:66) raise a pertinent question: why is translation the chosen metaphor of his project? They suggest that the promise he made to his wife could have been to his community also, "spurred on as much by his quarrel with initiatives that were being taken around that time to regulate and 'normalize' nair marriage, sexuality and their matrilineal inheritance laws" (*ibid.*:61). This obviously demands the translation of the reader-subject of Malayalam literature. The schema of this process as charted by Devasia and Tharu could be summarized as follows: transforming the reader shaped by Sanskrit literature, discarding the Sanskrit-Malayalam of existing literary artefacts, setting up a new written standard for Malayalam in which the nair-nambudiri dialect will become normative, refiguring the intra-regional relationship between nairs and nambudiris, and producing a modern nair-reader subject who

could aspire to a place in the emerging nation's middle class.[6] They pointedly note that Chandumenon is proposing new connections between Nairs and the 'official' Indians: "There is a confident program here of subject-formation, class consolidation, region and nation building; *A confidence that a dalit or feminist today should find chilling and challenging*" (*ibid.*:71; emphasis mine).

Significantly, subaltern novels in Malayalam at the time had entirely different concerns. While *Indulekha* is immersed in the pains and pleasures of a new nair subjectivity and its rendezvous with the modern and the incipient nation, subaltern novels of this period speak of "a place elsewhere" that is "beyond the imagined geography of the nation" and their "characters are on the move: from geographies of hierarchy to spaces of freedom; from religions which sanction subordination to ones premised on equality" (Dilip Menon 2006:88). It is worth noting here that although *Indulekha* claims to be a representation of real life and language in Malabar, mappilas are totally absent and lower castes more or less absent from its pages (Devasia and Tharu 1997:77).

Now let us move on to a major novel from the closing decade of the twentieth century in which a woman and a dalit confront the 'chilling' Malayali Modern head-on. Interestingly this renowned English narrative with Kerala at its centre, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, is yet to have an afterlife in Malayalam. Published in 1997, it has been translated into more than twenty-five languages. We shall bear in mind that Kerala boasts being one of the most vibrant book publishing industries in the subcontinent. Translated works constitute about thirty-five percent of the annual output of the largest publishing house in Malayalam.[7] Literary fiction from around the world finds its way to Malayalam as soon as the English version hits the world market. Almost all the works of global heartthrobs – Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Orhan Pamuk, Paulo Coelho, Mario Vargas Llosa, Elfriede Jelinek – are available in Malayalam translation.

In this context the known stumbling block for *God of Small Things'* voyage to Malayalam, the lack of an apt translation, is significant in that it could be bringing to the fore an uncomfortable, untranslatable aspect of the novel: caste in Kerala. Aggression and brutality of caste permeates through the narrative of *God of Small Things*. It teases open the façade of the liberal-secular-modern that has emerged dominant and normative over the years and reveals spectres that were supposedly exorcised a long time ago. Tharu and Niranjana (1997:236) convincingly argue that

> the shaping of the normative human-Indian subject involved, on the one hand, a dialectical relationship of inequality and opposition with the classical subject of Western liberalism and, on the other, its structuring as upper-caste, middle class, Hindu and male. The structuring was effected by processes of othering/differentiation such as, for example, the definition of upper caste/class female

[6] See Anitha Devasia and Susie Tharu (1997:70); it is interesting to note in this context that in an essay on Malayalam literature published in a British academic journal at the turn of the twentieth century another nair writer from Malabar argues that "nair is the common appellation of the middle class Hindu of Malabar" and that "earlier nambudiris held a practical monopoly over learning and created all sorts of obstacles in the way of education of the commonality" (Krishna Menon 1900:765).

[7] Personal communication with the Publication Manager of DC Books, 9 February 2009.

> respectability in counterpoint to lower caste licentiousness or Hindu tolerance towards Muslim fanaticism and by a gradual and sustained transformation of the institutions that govern everyday life. Elaborated and consolidated through a series of conflicts, this structuring became invisible, as this citizen-self was designated as modern, secular and democratic.

Since Kerala has always been celebrated as *exceptionally* modern compared to other parts of the Indian nation-state,[8] no wonder representing the violence of caste in its heartland in a Malayalam shaped by that very modernity becomes extremely problematic. A cursory glance at two different readings of the book would lay bare the point. The first one is of the grand Malayali patriarch and theoretician of the left, the late E. M. S. Nambudhiripad, and the second of Gail Omvedt, renowned activist-historian of the Dalit movement in India based in Maharashtra. Nambudhiripad (1997:28-29) writes:

> One of the main characters in the novel is Ammu. Obviously this character is modelled upon the author's mother Mary Roy. And the story is about the latter's sexual-anarchic relationship with a labourer, as a consequence of which this labourer is beaten to death by the police.

Gail Omvedt's reading (1998) is strikingly different:

> Arundhati Roy's prize-winning novel, *The God of Small Things*, focuses on the most socially explosive of all relationships in India, a love affair between a dalit man and a high-caste woman. It ends with the brutal murder of the man by the police, "history's henchmen," and the woman's banishment – punishments for breaking the caste-based "love laws" that have become so notorious in India today. The events would not be surprising if they were shown as taking place in backward Bihar. But the novel is set in Kerala, the single Indian state that has gained the greatest reputation for progressiveness.

Omvedt's observation that "the events would not be surprising if they were shown as taking place in backward Bihar, but the novel is set in Kerala" exposes a significant predicament of contemporary Kerala/Malayalam: caste can only be treated as something to be translated – since caste is elsewhere. (Obviously it would become an unbearable and 'impossible' project if sited within Kerala.) Before moving on to the final section of this chapter where I will discuss at length the problem of translating caste *from elsewhere*,

[8] In a major biography of print culture in India, its renowned author categorically declares that "Malayalis – the people of Kerala – had been the most literate and politically involved people in India for more than a century" (Jeffrey 2000:154). Flattery of this kind could always be substantiated by wonderful statistics for which Kerala had been famous until recently. The paradox popularly known as the 'Kerala Model' refers to the high quality of life – literacy, life expectancy, sex ratio etc. – and a measly per capita GNP. By the mid-1990s painful social realities and painstaking academic work had brought to the fore the disparities and exclusions on which the universally celebrated model has been thriving. A large number of people have been left out of its acclaimed domain because of their community, caste, gender, location and occupation.

let's take a detour and look at the left movement in Kerala since it is deeply implicated in the whole process.

The left turn

It cannot have been a mere twist of fate that the first biography of Karl Marx in an Indian language appeared in Malayalam, in 1912. In about two decades communists would emerge as a force to reckon with. Translations of texts and documents from the Soviet Union had started appearing from the latter half of the 1930s. By the mid-1950s – the state of Kerala came into being as part of Union of India in 1956 and the communist party was voted to power in the first general elections held in 1957 – Malayalam had become the battleground of friends and foes of a socialist realism rooted in a mechanistic class theory. The 'Progressive Literature Association', established in 1944, was a key player. One of the major clauses in the organization's constitution was to "produce and translate literature of a progressive nature" (Chandrasekaran 1999:149). In the statistics of translated literary works provided by the language institute note mentioned at the beginning of this chapter one can see that Russian only comes second to English in the foreign languages category. Our statistician emphatically informs us that "as far as Russian literature is concerned no other Indian Language would be so rich":

> We have had a lot of translations from Russian language. The major works of Pushkin, Gogol, Tolstoy, Turganev, Dostoevsky, Gorky, Chekhov and works of modern soviet writers such as Sholakov, Pasternak and Solzhenitsyn have been translated. A substantial number of non-literary works such as the oeuvre of Lenin have also appeared in Malayalam. (Govy 1973:46)

The list also has a number of translations from the erstwhile 'Soviet bloc' – Polish, Serbo-Croatian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Tajik, Czechoslovakian, Latvian – and also Chinese. During my childhood years in the late seventies and early eighties children's books from the Soviet Union – well translated and richly illustrated Russian folk tales – were very popular among children. In addition, periodicals such as *Soviet Land* and *Soviet Women* were available in both English and Malayalam at subsidized rates. Printed on art paper at presses in the Soviet Union these big, glossy magazines were also dear to us youngsters; not necessarily as reading material but as silky multicolour covering for our school books! Although these publishing ventures must have had a large pool of Malayalam translators in Kerala, Delhi and Moscow, not a single memoir or (auto)biography has come out to date and the history of this translation phase remains unexplored.[9]

[9] Incidentally another interesting translation domain of this era that needs exploration is cinema. Hundreds of film societies that sprouted along the length and breadth of Kerala during this time inaugurated another significant mode of translation – screen subtitles. Since the subtitles were in English, printed summaries in Malayalam were distributed religiously during the early phase. Screenings of art house movies from around the world were a regular affair even in small towns. Along with this emerged an avant-garde cinema movement in Malayalam which called itself 'art cinema'. The 'translation' and 'original' were dangerously close, so much so that Bergman's Swedish classic *Seventh Seal* reincarnated in Malayalam, lock, stock and barrel!

The establishment of the left in Kerala involved other and perhaps more complex, translations. The historical engagement of early generations in Malabar and Travancore with Marxism has been read as an instance of how individuals make meaning through 'translation' of ideas in terms of their own concerns rather than becoming 'transmitters' of a system that has coherence independently of individual understanding. Dileep Menon (2006) points out that in a society like Kerala riven by caste inequality the egalitarianism found in communism had resonances which allowed its absorption into the local idiom; here one could have socialist aims without knowing anything about socialism. This must have been facilitated by the party structure that maintained strict division between the leaders and cadre mass. Obviously over the years this arrangement has undergone drastic changes, especially with the emergence of new radical movements based on caste and gender identities from the late 1980s. In the book *Why I Am Not a Hindu*, whose Malayalam translation will be discussed in the next section, Kancha Illaiah (1996:60-61) makes this scathing observation:

> The communists have been propagating the theory that the masses are like the sea and the political movements that arise in society are like its waves and the leaders that emerge in the movement are like the foam … but in reality Dalit-bahujan masses and communist leadership remained distinctly different … the communist leadership came from the 'upper' caste – mainly from Brahmins … the masses came from Dalitbahujan castes and these castes never found an equal place in leadership structures … in Kerala the brahmins who always remained brutal towards the masses became the leaders while the cadre base of the party was from Dalitbahujan castes.

E. M. S. Nambudhiripad's take on Arundhati Roy's novel as *autobiographical* and his attempt to render caste and its structural violence invisible by deploying class and bourgeois sexual anarchy is telling in this context. The seasoned political thinker knew well enough that caste has become a decisive analytical category in contemporary discourse that could subvert his insular theoretical world (see Sreekumar 2005:18). We will now move on to these troubled times.

New subjects, new translations

In his book on print culture in India Robin Jeffrey points out an interesting phenomenon, the existence of 'different' Malayalam(s) and its takers:

> M. T. Vasudevan Nair, writer and editor of the 'serious' and faltering Malayalam *Mathrubhumi* weekly observed that "readers of serious publications have dwindled … the younger generation is not reading Malayalam." The evidence however suggested that younger people *were* reading Malayalam, but not Vasudevan Nair's preferred Malayalam. In 1993 the two popular Malayalam weeklies, *Manorama* and *Mangalam* sold 1.3 million and 830,000 copies a week respectively (2.13 million copies combined) in a state with a population of about 30 million people

> … in 1998 despite the spread of television the two popular weeklies combined still sold 1.9 million weeklies a week.[10]

Categories such as 'popular' and 'pulp', as is well known, carry with them different tastes, pleasures, aspirations and selves. In the case of Kerala (and elsewhere in the subcontinent) caste extensively figures in such taxonomy. By the 1990s many such sensibilities started to acquire new meanings with the emergence of radical groups advocating identity politics based on gender, caste and community. This change, undoubtedly, has a lot to do with two crucial moments that shaped the times: the decision to implement the Mandal Commission report by the Federal Government in 1990 and the demolition of the Babri Masjid by Hindu political forces in 1992. The announcement made by the then Indian Prime Minister V. P. Singh on 7 August 1990 that the Mandal Commission recommendations for reserving Government service and public sector jobs for backward castes will be implemented sparked off violent protests in many parts of India. This also led to fundamental transformations in perspectives regarding caste in the public sphere, especially in academia, literature and cinema. As Vivek Dhareshwar (1993:115) points out, "until V. P. Singh decided to implement the Mandal Commission report caste had no place in the narrative milieu of the secular self. It was not that caste was ignored, but a certain opacity was nevertheless always attached to it"; he also points out that "its use was always surrounded by embarrassment, uneasiness, ambivalence and sometimes even guilt".

The most apparent developments were the publication of Dalit literary works and emergence of Dalit Studies in the academic domain. A considerable number of autobiographies by Dalit writers came out in different Indian languages such as Marathi, Tamil, Gujarati and Hindi during this period. And by the end of the millennium English and French translations of many of these works had also hit the stands. Of course this activity has brought with it a wide range of questions too. The editor of an anthology that specifically addresses these questions cautions that "instead of jumping with joy that Dalit literature is also being commodified, published, read and is even becoming part of the teaching machine (while the situation of most Dalits remains unchanged or gets worse) we need to look at how and why it is being read and thought" (Anand 2003:4).

Obviously in Kerala/Malayalam, with its progressive façade and universal pretensions,[11] the scene has been different. For instance the only Malayalam work that made

[10] Jeffrey (2000:101, emphasis in original); incidentally M. T. Vasudevan Nair is one of the major writers who have bolstered the 'Walluvanad' register in post-1950s Malayalam literature and cinema. While discussing Chandumenon's project to "meticulously fashion the Malayalam that he ordinarily speaks at home to signify itself", Anitha Devasia and Susie Tharu (1997:70) observe: "contrast this Malayalam to the language that his contemporary, the missionary lexicographer Herman Gundert, attempted to codify in his dictionary and grammar – A Malayalam of the street corner or the field".

[11] Speaking of the all India situation Robin Jeffrey (2000:160) points out: "although Dalits numbered close to 150 million people in the 1990s almost none worked on daily newspapers as reporters or sub-editors. There were no Dalit editors or Dalit run dailies. Dalit periodicals where they existed were fringe publications often with a literary experience and with limited influence beyond the circle that produced them". One could easily think that such qualifications would not pertain to the situation in Kerala with its universal left-modern airs that pretend that caste and caste discrimination do not exist.

into the list of translated Dalit works mentioned above was a subaltern novel published in 1893, Potheri Kunhambu's *Saraswativijayam*. The twentieth century has produced some excellent subaltern writers in Malayalam; Pandit Karuppan, T. K. C. Vaduthala and Paul Chirakarode from the earlier generations and contemporary writers such as C. Ayyappan are some of the remarkable authors who would immediately come to mind. But the dominance of the universal schools of thought that had been ruling the roost for decades must have been a massive obstacle before these writers in asserting their difference.[12] In the postscript of his recently published story collection C. Ayyappan says he must have first heard of the word 'Dalit' in the mid eighties: "Someone had sent a pamphlet about Dalit literature to my father-in-law T. K. C. Vaduthala. Its title was 'What is Dalit literature?' He read it and said, "I have been writing Dalit literature for the past thirty years and they say there is no Dalit literature here" (Ayyappan 2008:184).

This is the larger context in which the translation and publication of Kancha Ilaiah's book *Why I am Not a Hindu* in Malayalam materialized, at the beginning of the new millennium. By then the book had been recognized as one of the most original and provocative works of the decade. It is an autobiography of the Dalitbahujan self and a razor-sharp critical biography of the Hindu caste structure rolled into one. Engaging with the book itself should pose great challenges to an 'upper' caste 'hindu' like me, a nair to be specific. Need one spell out the predicaments of translating it?[13] It demanded a translation of my-self and the normative Malayalam I was familiar and comfortable with.

Let us go through one significant instance which reveals the complexity involved. The core of Ilaiah's charge is that Hindus are dissociated from every kind of productive activity. He argues that they are parasites who produce nothing, but consume everything produced by the Dalitbahujan, and that they legitimize this oppressive structure with divine sanctions. For instance, he notes with pointed sarcasm the excessive and exploitative food habits of Hindus:

> There is *palahaaram*, *paayasam* (sweet rice), a dozen curries, *dadoojanam* (curd rice fried in oil), *pulihoora* (dal and tamarind mixture), *rasam* (vegetable liquid), with *perugaanam* (curd rice) to end the eating process … it is God's duty to digest all these and look after the health of the eaters. God must save them from overeating and from the diseases caused by the fatty food. It is for this reason that all cooking activity starts with prayer and all eating activity begins with prayer. The relationship between God and priest here becomes a friendly relationship between God and glutton. (Ilaiah 1996:26)

Ironically, after referring to a source that states Dalits do not even have a publishing house in Kerala Jeffrey laments: "and this was Kerala where lower castes usually had slightly better chances of escaping prejudice and discrimination" (*ibid.*:163).

[12] 'Writing gender' in Malayalam has a similar tale to tell. The question of Dalit women writing – or the invisibility of it – is beyond the scope of this chapter.

[13] Anushiya Sivanarayanan (2004:56) recounts her unease while translating Dalit poetry in Tamil: "One of the initial reasons I felt uneasy about even trying to translate Tamil dalit poetry was my uncomfortable awareness that I was attempting to take on the task of interpreting and illuminating voices of a culture that had for centuries been silenced by those belonging to my caste groups and class".

While translating this I had to face a dilemma. The two common words in Malayalam that denote 'glutton' are *thēta pandāram* and *thēta mādan*. The qualifying word *thēta* stands for 'food'. But both *pandāram* and *mādan* have explicit caste connotations. *Pandāram* is a lower caste in the Hindu hierarchy and *mādan* is a well-known Dalit god. A reasoning of *pandāram* could be that in olden times the word, an impure version of the Sanskrit original *bhandāram*, used to signify the royal treasury or repository. But just like the institutions it signified the word has also become obsolete. *Bhandāram* is still in use, signifying the offering box in temples literally and figuratively, as in 'repository of knowledge'. *Pandāram*'s most widespread meaning is 'beggar'. We may bear in mind that 'traditionally' people belonging to the *pandāram* caste roam around with a sacred bull seeking alms from households.

A popular Malayalam-English dictionary (1999:862) gives the following meanings for *mādan*: "A demon-like deity; a brutish or stout fellow". An important aspect that we must note here is that there is another Malayalam word for 'glutton': *sāpatu rāman*. Again the qualifying *sāpatu* stands for 'food/eating'. But *Rāman* is a major Hindu God and significantly this word, unlike the other two, does not have an offensive tone. It's playful and light-hearted.

There is also another word, *vayaran* – literally meaning 'large bellied'. Although this does not have any caste connotations as such (though it does contain a vicious reference to 'abnormal' physicality), I decided to mistranslate the word 'glutton' since I confronted the caste of language and the caste of production/consumption Ilaiah has been trying to elucidate. What is the point of translating unless it confronts and opens up such linguistic and epistemic violence? Therefore, I mistranslated 'glutton' as *thēta pandam*, literally 'edible thing' (*pandam* means 'goods' or 'bowels'). The reader might stumble over this word thinking it is a typographical error – it should have been *pandāram* not *pandam*. And maybe on second thoughts he or she might realize that it is a calculated slip, deployed to address the caste of language.[14]

What if the source language had also been a 'vernacular' such as Malayalam? It is interesting to note that Kancha Ilaiah preferred to write the book in English and not in his mother tongue, Telugu.[15] Ilaiah says he did not write in Telugu because that would have confined the book to the region of Andhra Pradesh: "In my view writing in English gives a different theoretical framework. If I were to write that book in Telugu it could have been simply ignored".[16] And the predicament does not stop here since the dominant, standardized Telugu is extremely brahmanical. Recounting his school days he states that

[14] Illiah (2001:24). Editors of the excellent bi-volume *Women Writing in India* say they have "tried in the translations, not always successfully to strain against the reductive and often stereotypical homogenization involved in the process. We preferred translations that did not domesticate the work either into a pan-Indian or into a universalist mode, but demanded of the reader a translation of herself" (quoted in Kothari 2006:55).

[15] *Why I am Not A Hindu* was translated and published in Telugu years later, in 1998.

[16] Personal communication, 12 February 2009. Speaking of the traditional Indian society Sudipta Kaviraj points to the fact that "while elite discourse [in Sanskrit] could range across the entire subcontinent, the discourse of the subordinate groups necessarily remained trapped in the close boundaries of their vernacular dialects. Thus while conservatism and reaction could be subcontinental in spread, dissent was condemned to be mostly local" (Kaviraj 2010:134).

"the language of textbooks was not the one that our communities spoke. Even the basic words were different. Textbook Telugu was brahmin Telugu, whereas we were used to a production based communicative Telugu … it is not merely a difference of dialect; there is a difference in the very language itself" (Ilaiah 1996:13).

Ilaiah's project to place caste as a major discursive category in the everyday life of the nation-state and its institutions *demands* English. It is to articulate caste in those institutions' mother tongue, English, so that it would not be confined to the vernacular and 'simply ignored'. Vivek Dhareshwar (1993:16) has argued that in the public sphere the elite has deployed English, and as a semiotic system signifying modernity English imposes secular categories onto the social world. To speak about caste or to theorize about it in English distances caste practice as something alien to one's subject position. It is as though in English one only engages in a second-order discourse about caste and this drives caste into the private domain where very often the vernacular is used.[17] We could say that by writing an (auto)biography of caste in English Ilaiah seems to be turning this safe haven of India's secular modern upside down. He categorically illustrates that the secular modern is always-already marked by caste and as a result English finds itself participating in the first-order discourse of caste here.

Conclusion

Over the last decade the scene in Malayalam/Kerala has changed radically. Translations of subaltern literature, memoirs and autobiographies from other Indian languages and Malayalam originals have started appearing frequently, brought out by major publishers. A number of writers have come to the forefront asserting, and celebrating, difference along parameters such as caste and sexuality. Ironically, the eternally opposed – the class fundamentalists and classical fundamentalists – have joined hands against such attempts to defile those holy cows called 'literature, culture and society'. As I have tried to illustrate here, all writing – original or translation – is caught up in an intricate grid of languages, castes and their histories.

Sudipta Kaviraj (2010:129) has observed that "the complexity of the story of language and identities cannot be tackled without a sufficiently complex conception of the gradations of competence in language and its political effect". In the 'acknowledgement' section of his new book, *Post-Hindu India*, Kancha Ilaiah poignantly thanks God "for assigning me the job of teaching, reading and writing – that too in English" (Ilaiah 2009). The 'translation' of English as undertaken by Ilaiah and many other determined writers like him in contemporary India and its subsequent voyage to vernaculars would, I hope, help us work against the grain of conventional translation theories regarding the hierarchical relationship between superior donor languages and inferior receptor languages. As Sherry Simon (quoted in Bose 2002:262) points out, "whether affirmed or

[17] M. S. S. Pandian (2002:1737, 1739) observes that "the intimacy between modernity and the desire to keep caste out of the public sphere had its own particular career in post colonial India … it is not words of dialogue in the public but moments of despair in the private that the Indian modern offers the lower castes. It demands and enforces that caste can live only secret lives outside in the public sphere".

denounced the femininity of translation is a persistent historical trope … the hierarchical authority of the original over the reproduction is linked with imagery of masculine and feminine". Speaking of theories, working with a 'vernacular' such as Malayalam in a 'region' such as Kerala poses another major problem. Theories also come to these languages and regions from 'outside', *as translations*. Theories may travel lighter and faster, but as we all know, languages and translations cannot.

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