

TRANSLATING A TRANSCULTURAL TEXT - PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES: ON THE SPANISH TRANSLATION OF VIKRAM CHANDRA'S 'LOVE AND LONGING IN BOMBAY'

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ABSTRACT

Indian writing in English is now recognised as a major contemporary current in English-language literature. The likes of Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh and Anita Desai have won worldwide acclaim for the quality of their writing and their imaginative use of English. However, the act of translating a text from this corpus of writing raises a number of sociolinguistic and methodological issues which require negotiation between text, translator and reader. These include: the role of English as global lingua franca; the position of English in India (a minority and ex-colonial, but also transregional language, whose mastery is a badge of educatedness); the fact that Indian writers in English, whether India-resident or expatriates, are writing not in their native language but in a second language; and the resultant 'transcultural' character of their texts.

This paper will examine the translation into Spanish of Vikram Chandra's prize-winning collection of linked stories, *Love and Longing in Bombay* (1997) (*Amor y añoranza en Bombay*, translated by Dora Sales Salvador and Esther Monzó Nebot, 2001). Starting out from the position that a work of fiction produced in English by an Indian writer has, in cultural terms, already been translated in the original writing process, the analysis will centre on the problems confronting the translator of such a text into a third language and the strategies chosen to meet the challenge, and will also consider the issue of the visibility of the translator and the concrete means (glossary, afterword) employed to highlight this crucial dimension.

I - INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to examine some of the most representative challenges and strategies relating to the translation into Spanish of Indian Writing in English, and to suggest some pointers for future work in this area. The focus will combine both theoretical and practical approaches in specific relation to one particular translation, namely that of Vikram Chandra's work of fiction *Love and Longing in Bombay*, first published in English in 1997, as rendered into Spanish in a joint translation, published by Espasa in Madrid in 2001, by Dora Sales Salvador and Esther Monzó Nebot, both of the Universidad Jaume I de Castellón in the Valencia region of Spain.

II - VIKRAM CHANDRA AND *LOVE AND LONGING IN BOMBAY*

Vikram Chandra has risen to prominence as one of the most acclaimed and critically lauded of the new generation of practitioners of Indian Writing in English (or IWE). Born in Delhi in 1961, he moved to Bombay (now officially Mumbai) in 1978, and later studied in the US, at a number of universities including Columbia and Johns Hopkins. He now alternates between Washington,

DC (where he teaches creative writing at George Washington University), and Bombay (where he spends half of the year), and has described himself as a 'frequent flyer' between those two localities.¹ In 1995 Chandra published his first book, *Red Earth and Pouring Rain*, a novel which may be called an amalgam of historical epic and magic realism. It won him the Commonwealth Writers Prize for the Best First Published Book. He followed it up in 1997 with *Love and Longing in Bombay*, which also secured him an award, this time the Commonwealth Writers Prize for the Best Book, Eurasia Region. A third book, as yet untitled, is on the way. Meanwhile, writings by Chandra had, as of 2004, been translated into eleven languages². On the Spanish-language market, not only *Love and Longing in Bombay* but also *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* before it have appeared in translation³. Important critical studies of Chandra's work have been published in various languages: indeed, his Spanish co-translator Dora Sales is a major world expert on Chandra, as the first person to be awarded a doctorate for a thesis examining his work and the author of numerous critical articles in both Spanish and English⁴.

Love and Longing in Bombay, the text under discussion, is a more realist work than its predecessor, and is best viewed not as a novel proper but as a collection of interlinked short stories which, taken together, form a coherent whole. The present paper is of course not a literary-critical discussion of Chandra's text, but a brief explanation of its structure and contents is nonetheless in order. The five stories are linked by two characters: Shiv Subramaniam, who tells the stories, and Ranjit Sharma, who relays them to the reader. The stories are entitled 'Dharma', 'Shakti', 'Kama', 'Artha' and 'Shanti', all of them after Indian philosophical concepts. The first four are told by Subramaniam, in a city bar called the Fisherman's Rest, to a group of regulars, one of them Ranjit; the last, more personal tale (of how Subramaniam met his wife) he narrates in his own house, to Ranjit alone. Two of the stories - 'Artha' virtually all through and 'Shanti' in parts - include the direct reproduction of material earlier narrated to Subramaniam by others, and in the case of 'Artha' we actually have a triple, Chinese-box narrative structure: a man named Iqbal tells the story to Subramaniam, who in turn tells it to his listeners. The imputed language - i.e. the language in which the tales 'would have been' told were the characters 'real' - of the stories narrated by Subramaniam is not an Indian language but English⁵, allowing for snatches of dialogue, phrase or song imputedly in other languages (Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi, Urdu). It is the job of the frame-narrator Ranjit, acting as stand-in for the author, to transmit the stories to the reader, again in English. As to the subject-matter of the five narratives, very briefly: 'Dharma' is a ghost story about a retired soldier; 'Shakti' concerns the rivalry between two high-society wives; 'Kama' is a detective story without a solution touching on Bombay's louche underbelly and pinpointing Hindu extremism; 'Artha' combines a similar unresolved mystery with the more contemporary themes of the IT industry and gender preference; while 'Shanti', for the most part set not in Bombay but at a provincial railway station (at Leharia, an imaginary locality somewhere in Madhya Pradesh state)⁶, recounts how Subramaniam's future wife won his heart by her own storytelling skills. In the present analysis, for the sake of convenience passages will be sourced to the individual stories, and certain specific comments will focus on particular stories, but a linear story-by-story approach will not be taken - this too in view of what is certainly the underlying coherence of Vikram Chandra's text, seen as a whole.

III - THE HISPANOPHONE CONTEXT

Before entering on a detailed discussion of the translation, it is necessary to situate the two texts - original and translation - as, respectively, an instance of Indian Writing in English and a product for a Spanish-speaking readership. The second aspect, that of the recipient culture or cultures, will be looked at first. It is worth stressing the vital need for a translation of quality, on the Hispanophone market as on any other. As a recent commentator on literary translation, the Polish scholar Piotr Kuhniewicz, has pointed out, 'in most cases readers of translations are monolingual, and will not compare the translation with the original': hence, he argues,

'translators are responsible for the quality of the texts'⁷. The challenge is thus considerable, and should be borne in mind for the comments that follow.

By now, a considerable number of recognised Indian English-medium writers, both resident and expatriate, such as Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Anita Desai, Anita Nair or Arundhati Roy, have been accepted into the Spanish-language literary market. However, it is important to stress that any notion of a homogeneous 'Spanish readership' is a false simplification. The present translation is published in Madrid and intended for a market located in the first place in Spain. Appearing under the imprint of a major Spanish publisher, it is also exportable to up to eighteen Latin American republics plus, potentially, the Hispanic communities in the US (including Puerto Rico), as well as expatriate Hispanophone communities in Europe and elsewhere. The Spanish deployed by the translators is the Spanish of Spain, but is of course fully comprehensible to Latin American and US Hispanic readers within the context of international standard Spanish. It needs to be pointed out that even if we consider Spain alone, the very concepts of 'Spain' and 'Spanish' are problematic: Spain has four official languages - Spanish, Catalan, Galician and the non-Romance Basque - and many inhabitants of some of what are called the 'nations and regions of the Spanish state' view the terms 'España' and 'el español' as politically incorrect and insist on using 'el Estado español' ('the Spanish state') and 'el castellano' (Castilian). This linguistic pluralism or particularism affects the translation market in Spain, especially in Catalonia, where the Spanish version of a foreign-language book often has to compete with the Catalan version, and it is not uncommon for both language versions to appear simultaneously. In the case of Indian Writing in English, this has happened with Rushdie and Desai, although no work by Vikram Chandra has yet appeared in Catalan. Where no Catalan translation exists of a book, Catalans who read the Spanish version could be considered as second- rather than first-language readers. Across the Atlantic, it would be false to speak of a homogeneous 'Latin American book market': Mexico is not Argentina and Argentina is not Peru, nor is there any guarantee that a given translation will reach every one of the smaller Hispanophone countries. Indigenous languages such as Quechua in Peru also, as in Spain, constitute some readers of a Spanish translation as second-language readers.

Within this heterogeneous context, the translation into Spanish of Indian Writing in English is by now an established phenomenon, unlikely to be perceived as 'strange' or 'bizarre' by publishers, critics, academics or the reading public. One of the present co-translators, Dora Sales, has also translated both of the novels - *Difficult Daughters* and *A Married Woman* - so far published by the much-acclaimed Manju Kapur⁸. What needs, though, to be stressed is that the cultural context which defines the readership of an Indian English-medium novel translated into Spanish is no less complex and discontinuous than that which produced the original: translation is never a neutral or transparent act.

IV - THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Love and Longing in Bombay is here translated into Spanish from English, but the English-language status of the original is scarcely unproblematic. English has been present in the subcontinent for some 400 years, but its systematic use may be dated to 1835 and Thomas Babington Macaulay's celebrated 'Minute on Indian Education'. This document, written in the British epoch by Macaulay in his capacity as a member of the Supreme Council of India and President of the Committee of Public Instruction, set out a blueprint for the organised teaching of English to India's native elite. The declared aim was to create 'a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect'. This formulation is famous enough, but it should be noted that Macaulay was not promoting English against Hindustani, Bengali and other vernacular languages, but, rather, against the more classical claims of Sanskrit, Persian and

Arabic. Indeed, his text goes on to suggest that the use of English will have a trickle-down modernising effect on the vernacular languages (misleadingly called 'dialects'): 'To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population.' Macaulay further, interestingly, affirms that many educated Indians already have a highly sophisticated grasp of English, extending to the technical and the literary and permitting the understanding of 'even the more delicate graces of our most idiomatic writers': 'There are (...) natives who are quite competent to discuss political or scientific questions with fluency and precision in the English language (...) Indeed it is unusual to find, even in the literary circles of the [European] continent, any foreigner who can express himself in English with so much facility and correctness as we find in many Hindoos'⁹.

Macaulay's proposal was acted on by the British authorities and led to the establishment of English-medium schools and universities in the subcontinent. The results are patent today: half a century and more after the departure of the British, India uses English not less but more than it did under the Raj - albeit voluntarily, and no longer precisely the same English. The elite continue to attend English-medium schools, university education in most subjects is typically in English, the major newspapers are in English, and India's current software and outsourcing boom has much to do with its graduates' facility in that language. At the same time, those who use English (alongside Hindi, Urdu and the many regional languages) remain a quantitatively large but proportionately small minority of the population. Estimates of the percentage of the population who use English (depending obviously on what that means, in terms of sociolinguistic context, active versus passive, spoken versus written, degree of competence, etc) vary enormously, ranging from 2-4% to 10-20%. Among current authorities, David Graddol states that 'India contains a significant proportion of the world's speakers of English as a second language, but estimating the number of L2 speakers of English there is difficult', and, while noting that 'most linguists ... seem to agree that around 4% of the Indian population speaks English as a second language', nonetheless contends that 'there is evidence ... that the number ... is higher than this', even positing a figure approaching 20% for those 'confident of speaking' the language¹⁰. Another expert, Tom McArthur, suggests that 'there may well be c. 100-200 million people using the language regularly' and that 'an expanding middle class increasingly uses it, and seeks it for their children, and for that group 10% of the population is not an unlikely base figure'¹¹. It may further be added that, while India's 1991 census listed no less than 1576 mother tongues,¹² and today 23 languages (22 'scheduled languages' plus English as 'associate official language') are recognised as official, in India as a whole no language - and that includes Hindi¹³ - is spoken as a first language by an actual majority of the population: thus, if English is a minority first language, so too are all the others! The high incidence of bilingualism and trilingualism in India is a factor that needs stressing. Meanwhile, English, the former colonial language, has over time been appropriated and adapted to specifically Indian ends of nationwide diffusion and communication, with a free admixture of terms from autochthonous languages. Its mastery has become, for better or worse, a badge of educatedness. At the same time, Indian English continues, vindicating Macaulay, to draw, to an often surprising extent, on a whole stock of British idioms (not always current in the UK), and ends up as, all in all, a brand of second-language-speaker English that frequently seems, in its resourcefulness and raciness, quite as fully developed and internationally acceptable as any native-speaker variety.

One manifestation of Indian English is the literary phenomenon known as Indian Writing in English. India is, after the US and the UK, the world's third-largest producer of English-language books, and in the literary field there is a constant stream of fiction written directly in English by both India-resident and expatriate writers. The language used tends to be a variant of International Standard English with a marked tendency to hybridity, combining native

Indianisms with eminently British, Raj-inherited idioms and, today, a rising number of Americanisms. The debate continues to rage in literary circles as to whether English is by now an 'Indian language' or not. Raja Rao, one of the pioneers of Indian Writing in English, famously argued in 1938, in the preface to his Gandhian novel *Kanthapura*, for an English adapted to Indian conditions: 'English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up - like Sanskrit or Persian was before - but not of our emotional make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We can only write as Indians (...) Our method of expression ... will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American'.¹⁴ Salman Rushdie, in an essay of 1983, went further, stressing the role of English in India as a bridging language between communities and regions, and arguing that 'the children of independent India seem not to think of English as being irredeemably tainted by its colonial provenance. They use it as an Indian language, as one of the tools they have to hand ... In South India ... the resentment of Hindi is far greater than of English ... English is an essential language in India, not only because of its technical vocabularies and the international communication which it makes possible, but also simply to permit two Indians to talk together in a tongue which neither party hates'¹⁵. Against Rushdie's position may be placed the terse remark of a character in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, an acclaimed novel of 1980 by the leading woman writer Shashi Deshpande: 'After all, it isn't our language'¹⁶. Indian English continues to occupy an ambivalent space, placed somewhere between the native and the alien. Indeed, the dilemma has been eloquently expressed by Vikram Chandra himself, in a passage in *Red Earth and Pouring Rain*: "How in English can one say roses, doomed love, chaste passion, my father my mother, their love which never spoke, pride, honour, what a man can live for and what a woman should die for, how in English can one say the cows' slow distant tinkle at sunset, the green weight of the trees after monsoon, dust of winnowing and women's songs, elegant shadow of a minar creeping across white marble, the patient goodness of people met at wayside, the enfolding trust of aunts and uncles and cousins, winter bonfires and fresh chapattis, in English all this, the true shape and contour of a nation's heart, all this is left unsaid and unspeakable and invisible"¹⁷.

V - THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The paradox, of course, is that, despite everything, Chandra in fact has said those things in English, and this applies too to *Love and Longing in Bombay*. The problems and challenges raised by the translation of such a text are multiple. The translators have applied a number of theoretical perspectives to their work - Dora Sales, specifically, is the author of various expository studies in this connection - and among these may be identified the notions of: polysystem; transculturation and the twice-translated text; and the translator's visibility. In view of the considerable amount of work published (or to be published) by Dora Sales in this field, the theoretical remarks that follow will be to a large extent sourced from her writings, which offer a particularly clear synthesis of key contemporary arguments in the field and may in many respects be seen as furnishing the conceptual articulation that underlies the present translation.

It is today considered established that when one translates, it is not just between languages but between systems. The concept of *languages as systems* is advanced in the work of Itamar Even-Zohar, who, in his essay 'Polysystem Theory' (1990), affirms 'the idea that socio-semiotic phenomena, i.e., sign-governed human patterns of communication (such as culture, language, literature), could more adequately be understood and studied if regarded as systems rather than conglomerates of disparate elements'. Even-Zohar believes that a given culture should be viewed as a 'polysystem', or system of systems, while stressing that where cultures interact we are dealing with a dialogue between (poly)systems: '[the "culture" of one community] maintain[s] systemic relations with other systems organizing the "cultures" of other communities. In history, such "units" are by no means clear-cut or forever finalized. Rather, the opposite holds true, as the

borders separating adjacent systems shift all the time, not only within systems, but between them'. By allowing for shifting boundaries between systems, this definition implicitly raises the question of the *power-relations* between systems: one system may, at a given moment in history, be stronger than another. Hence, Even-Zohar argues, 'a certain culture may be interfered with by another culture, as a result of which repertoires are transferred from one polysystem to another'.¹⁸

Even-Zohar's polysystemic model is usefully applied to translation issues, and has indeed been explicated by Dora Sales, who states the application of polysystem theory to the practice of translation thus: 'La traducción es una realidad del sistema literario y cultural. Traducir no es neutro. Desde esta asunción, nos parece importante que quienes practican la traducción sean conscientes de la necesidad de reflexionar crítica y auto-críticamente sobre este ejercicio.' ('Translation is a reality of the literary and cultural system. To translate is not a neutral act. Starting from this assumption, we believe that those who practise translation have to be aware of the need to reflect on their act in a critical and self-critical fashion'). From this 'polysystemic' perspective, translation is a *dialogue between systems*; thus, in an ethically aware practice of translation, Dora Sales argues, 'se presta atención tanto a las palabras como al sistema que se encarga de otorgarles sentido' ('one pays equal attention to the words and to the system responsible for giving them sense').¹⁹

The act of translation may, then, be viewed as a dialogue between systems. However, in the case of translating Indian Writing in English into Spanish, we are clearly not dealing with the simple interaction of two systems. An Indian text written in English is a reflection of an unequal power-relation between systems: a novel is produced for both the national and international market in view, inter alia, of its greater saleability and higher profile if written in English rather than an Indian language, thanks to the greater power and prestige of English. Furthermore, any such text will necessarily be a hybrid, the product of more than one system - the polysystem of English as both former colonial language and international lingua franca, and a native polysystem corresponding to Indian ways of thought and 'originally' expressed in one or more Indian languages but transposed into an ultimately alien language, English. At the same time, the continued presence of the Indian polysystem will be typically signified by the presence in the English text of lexical 'Indianisms' originating in Hindi, Urdu or other Indian languages, as well as Indian-English coinages reflecting the adaptation of the colonial language to national realities.

A hybrid text of this nature may be usefully approached in terms not so much of multiculturalism as of *transculturation*. This concept, invented in 1940 by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, is invoked to lay stress on the inevitable mixity and hybridity of postcolonial cultures; Ortiz writes: 'Entendemos que el vocablo *transculturación* expresa mejor las diferentes fases del proceso transitivo de una cultura a otra, porque éste no consiste solamente en adquirir una cultura, que es lo que en rigor indica la voz anglo-americana *aculturación*, sino que el proceso implica también necesariamente la pérdida o desarraigo de una cultura precedente, lo que pudiera decirse una parcial *desculturación*, y, además, significa la consiguiente creación de nuevos fenómenos culturales que pudieran denominarse *neoculturación*' ('We believe that the term *transculturación* is the best expression of the different phases of the process of transit between one culture and another, since not only does this consist of acquiring a culture, as strictly indicated by the Anglo-American term *aculturación*, but at the same time the process necessarily implies the loss or uprooting of a preceding culture, or what may be called a partial deculturation, while it further points to the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena which could be called *neoculturación*').²⁰ Dora Sales (in a text published in English) comments on Ortiz's concept as follows: 'The transcultural identity is not predicated upon the idea of the disappearance of independent cultural traditions, but rather on their continual and mutual development. Some features are lost, and some others are gained, producing new forms even as older ones continue to exist. Transculturation is a hybrid process that is constantly reshaping and

replenishing itself.²¹ The transculturation approach supersedes the centre/periphery topography of the first-world/third-world model, implying the simultaneous existence of multiple centres and a complex web of multidirectional processes. In the case of Indian Writing in English, it would point up not only the impact of English in modifying Indian thought-patterns (acculturation and deculturation), but also the rehandling and reshaping of English at the hands of its Indian users, creating new forms of hybridation (neoculturation).

The hybrid status of postcolonial texts, transcultural in nature and the product of overlapping polysystems, has led some to maintain that an instance of Indian Writing in English such as Chandra's book is a text whose original has already been translated. The act of translation into another language such as Spanish would then become a re-translation. Dora Sales here summarises this position: 'Las narrativas transculturales son ejemplos peculiares de autotraducción derivados del bilingüismo de sus autores. Son textos *originales* que en sí ya llevan la carga de la traducción, *ya* constituyen una traducción ..., motivan un replanteamiento de las nociones elementales del proceso traductor.' ('Transcultural narratives are highly particular instances of self-translation arising from their authors' bilingual status. They are *original* texts which already bear the burden of translation, *are* already a translation ..., thus giving rise to a new questioning of the basic notions of the translation process')²². Some might find this concept more a rhetorical figure than a literal reality, since the author has in fact only written one text. Nonetheless, it would seem to be partly borne out by Chandra's text itself, if we recall that the material narrated by Subramaniam through Ranjit, in English, relates to the lives of imaginary subjects operating in various other languages, and in that sense has already been translated (one might add that any work of literature written in India in any language will contain at least some imputedly translated material, given the intensely multilingual make-up of the country). The notion of a twice-translated text is certainly useful in alerting us to the linguistic and cultural complexities that underlie such an original before it is ever translated.

The concepts of polysystem, transculturation and twice-translatedness, applied as theoretical postulates to the practice of translation, all serve to denaturalise the translated text and point up its status as a cultural and historical product that is not exempt from taking sides. In this context, Vikram Chandra's translators have further applied the notion, deriving from Lawrence Venuti, of the translator's visibility. According to this postulate, the aim of a culturally aware translation is not to produce a transparent, hyper-fluent or natural-seeming translated text, but to make visible the fact that it has been translated. In the words of Dora Sales, who (here writing in English), succinctly summarises his main positions, Venuti has 'explained how in the process of translation the texts have been traditionally shaped in order to "domesticate" the other, to eliminate-disguise difference, taking into account that from a Eurocentric perspective, translation, which is a cultural political practice (...), works in search of fluency, smoothness, elimination of foreign traces, translator's invisibility'²³. Venuti himself has declared: 'Translation never communicates in an untroubled fashion because the translator negotiates the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text by reducing them and supplying another set of differences'²⁴. From this perspective, Chandra's translators have chosen to retain the lexical 'Indianisms' of the original, italicising them in the text and explaining them in a glossary (prepared with the help of Vikram Chandra himself)²⁵, and to furnish a Translators' Note at the end. As the original contains no glossary, the translators' insertion of such a facility not only heightens the translation's visibility but actually makes it *more* fully comprehensible to the average Hispanophone reader than the original is likely to be to that reader's non-Indian or non-Indophile Anglophone counterpart. The visibility principle has not yet gone so far as to make it likely that the translator's photograph will appear tomorrow on dust-jackets alongside the author's, but the present translation appears to the reader as one that quite clearly has its own visible translatedness as one of its goals.

VI - THE WORDS ON THE PAGE

The theoretical postulates behind the Spanish text having now been established, we may proceed to examine how they are deployed in the context of some of the challenges and difficulties thrown up by the actual words on the page.

To begin at the beginning, Chandra's original title has been transposed into Spanish word for word, *Love and Longing in Bombay* becoming *Amor y añoranza en Bombay*: even the alliteration of the original has its near-equivalent in an assonance. The translators have resisted the temptation (no doubt market-driven) to change the title, a fate rather frequent in the case, for instance, of French-language translations of IWE works. Bombay's official name was changed to the 'authentically Marathi' Mumbai in 1996 at the behest of a Hindu-particularist state government, but this change, perceived as particularist and anti-cosmopolitan, has failed to meet with acceptance, be it either from many ordinary Bombayites or from internationally-oriented intellectuals and writers like Vikram Chandra. The name Mumbai occurs only once, and ambivalently, in the original, at the end of the final story, 'Shanti', and therefore of the book, and the translation faithfully reflects this, itself too using Mumbai only at that once and final moment²⁶. The Bombay-Mumbai issue is further carefully explained in the Translators' Note²⁷, and in this the Spanish version faithfully reflects both the polysystemic complexities of today's India and Vikram Chandra's own perception of them.

With a similar concern for faithfulness, the five section-headings with their Sanskritic titles, 'Dharma', 'Shakti', etc, are left unchanged (and are explained in the glossary). Indeed, all Indian terms occurring in the original are retained, italicised at every occurrence (not just the first), and explained and commented in the glossary. This strategy is used, rather than glossing or paraphrasing within the text or resorting to footnotes or endnotes, thus combining translator visibility with reader-oriented concerns of aesthetic 'look' and readability. The textual elements liable to cause challenges or difficulties to the Spanish-speaking reader are manifold and diverse. We shall in the first place take the opening story, 'Dharma', so as to explicate the range of general problems involved, and will then go on to look at further examples drawn from the remaining stories.

The most obvious category of difficulty is that of lexical 'Indianisms'. To take a random example from 'Dharma', the first story, page 19 of the original contains the following such terms, all italicised: 'dhoti' (male garment), 'thali' (plate for eating, four times) and 'diya' (clay lamp, three times), and the translators' strategy, here as always, has been to retain, italicise and gloss them²⁸. Certain cultural allusions in the original, though, are not explicit but implicit: Chandra's text is clearly written, within the context of the global English polysystem, for an Indian-anglophone readership first and for an International English public second, as is evident from the recurrent 'assumed' cultural references across the stories. On the very first page, Chandra's original takes for granted a Bombay topography that will be known to the Indian reader, referring to 'the Fountain' (this is Flora Fountain, a central Bombay landmark), rather than spelling it out - a strategy followed in the Spanish text, which has 'la Fuente', thus connoting a general sense of a known cityscape²⁹. In 'Dharma', with its military setting, the allusions in that register are assumed to be understood by an Indian target reader. These include placenames such as Sylhet³⁰ (in Bangladesh, thus marking, for the subcontinental reader, a clear reference to the Bangladesh war of 1970), and Leh³¹ (in the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir state, thus indicating the ongoing Indo-Pakistani conflict over Kashmir). The exact connotations of these locations may not be picked up by a Spanish-speaking reader, but simply as subcontinental toponyms they connote a generalised 'South Asian-ness', and the translators have chosen not to explicate them further. In this story, when the main character, General Jago Antia, is introduced it is not

explicitly said that he is a Zoroastrian (or Parsi), but this will be obvious to the Indian reader through implicit reference to that religious community of Persian origin. His full first name, Jehangir, is typically Parsi; his dead brother bears the very Persian name of Sohrab. Elements with Parsi connotations coexist in the story with other 'general Indian' indicators such as the above-mentioned 'dhoti' and 'thali', and to the Hispanophone reader not all the tell-tale signs may register. The translators have, rather than intervene on the text, explained the Parsi factor via the glossary, but the negotiation of that factor in its relationship with the 'general Indian' elements is a task left to the readers, in accordance with their degree of familiarity with things subcontinental.

However, not all textual difficulties liable to confront a Spanish-speaking reader relate directly to the text's 'Indianness'. Indian English still bears the colonial imprint as much as does Indian society, and, still in the first story, some of the challenges to translator and reader actually arise from Britishisms and, therefore, the original's transcultural status. We find among Jago Antia's memories the following: 'he was the most beautiful batsman, like a dancer he turned their bouncers to the boundaries with his wrists'. This is a direct allusion to cricket, a sport whose lexicon and imagery Britons and Indians have in common and which remains a totally closed book to mainland Europeans. Even the most sporting-illiterate British person will understand such cricketing metaphors as 'keep a straight bat' or 'be on a sticky wicket', and so will an Anglophone Indian; but to the translator into a language such as Spanish, cricket poses an immediate problem of intelligibility. In the extract just quoted, 'batsman' is a basic cricketing term, while 'bouncers' is more specialised (according to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, a 'bouncer' is 'a ball rising high after pitching'). The Spanish text runs thus: 'era el bateador más extraordinario, que, como un bailarín, devolvía los rebotes a los límites con un juego de muñecas'³². Chandra's translators have, here and elsewhere, opted to translate the cricketing references fairly literally, thus no doubt giving their readers the general sense of a sport the details of which (what exactly are 'bateador' and 'rebotes'?) are not necessarily up for understanding. Here, then, the transcultural text both reveals and conceals its nature in translation.

Elsewhere in Chandra's text, the multicultural nature of Indian society emerges through evocation of the cultural and linguistic peculiarities of different ethnic and religious groups. In the story 'Kama', the police inspector Sartaj is a Punjabi-speaking Sikh, while the family he investigates are Gujaratis. Cultural heterogeneity is signified in the original through snatches of telephone dialogue in Punjabi between Sartaj and his mother, and the translators have respected this, retaining (and glossing) the Punjabi passages despite them not being immediately intelligible to an outsider³³. The Gujarati Patel listens to tapes of ghazals, a type of song sung in Urdu, and a snatch is quoted; the translation keeps both the word 'ghazal' and the Urdu quotation. It should be further noted that at moments where a character (typically, a more prestigious one) is represented as actually speaking in English, the translation has carefully retained that nuance. Thus, in 'Shakti', Ganga, a cleaning lady who works for both of the story's rival families, tells one wife, Sheila (in a dialogue imputedly held in Hindi³⁴), how the other, Dolly, 'talks in English, chutter-chutter-chutter'; and here the Spanish text, rather than elide the linguistic complexity of the Indian situation, graphically reads: 'cómo hablaba en inglés, *inglish inglish inglish*'³⁵. This reflects a deliberate decision by the translators, as explained in their Translators' Note, to convey in Spanish at the relevant moments something of the role and function of English as a language of power within the Indian language mosaic³⁶. The Indian multilingualism which the translators have striven to preserve does, then, also include English, and, indeed, other specificities of an Indian-English nature are retained. These include local toponyms such as 'VT' in 'Artha' (the Victoria Terminus railway station, now officially renamed)³⁷; this is not glossed, and nor are other acronyms, such as, in 'Kama', 'IIT' (Indian Institute of Technology)³⁸ or 'MLA' (Member of the Legislative Assembly)³⁹. One wonders, however, if it could in fact have been

useful to extend the glossary's scope to cover such cases, which, if not 'Indianisms' in the sense of deriving from Indian languages, nonetheless may be considered as such given that they reflect a specifically subcontinental use of English.

The story 'Kama', from which the next set of examples will all be taken, happens to be particularly indicative of the heterogeneity of Indian English. Here too, the text's multiple 'Indianisms' are fully respected, and this is even the case with a numerical term like 'lakh' (the standard, native-derived Indian English usage for a hundred thousand), which is not paraphrased as an information-oriented strategy might have dictated, but is, rather, retained, italicised and duly explained in the glossary⁴⁰. On the other side of the fence, the story also offers expressions which native-speaker readers will remark as distinctive and as pertaining to the Indian variety of English. The interrogative phrase 'your good name?', which appears quaint to a Briton but is standard in India, has been translated non-identically on each of two occasions, as '¿su nombre?' and '¿quién es usted?'⁴¹, so that, no doubt inevitably, a certain nuance of difference within the English polysystem disappears. Equally, certain - to an anglophone reader - evident Britishisms end up somewhat watered down in translation. To take an example from cricket once more, the term 'test match' is translated simply as 'partido internacional', which, while correct, is not specific (the Spanish phrase, 'el partido internacional que todo el mundo estaba escuchando', does not fully communicate the sense of Indian cricketing excitement of the original, 'the test match that everybody was listening to')⁴². Similarly, terms like 'sahib' and 'khaki', which have been naturalised into British English and thus imply to a British reader a certain, long-standing Anglo-Indian cultural convergence, are in the Spanish text retained, italicised and glossed, but lose - how could they not? - their transcultural patina⁴³. Americanisms, too, occasionally raise their heads in the original (Vikram Chandra does after all live half the year in the US), as in 'desk clerk' (where British English would have 'receptionist'), and 'keychain' rather than 'keyring', but if the Spanish renderings, 'repcionista' and 'llavero',⁴⁴ are of course correct, there is again little, if anything, that can be done from the translator's side to draw the Hispanophone reader's attention to the distinctive Americanness of such elements within the Indian English system.

If we now turn briefly to the specifically *Spanish* linguistic aspects of the translation, it should first of all be said that the translators' command of the Spanish language and its lexical resources is of a very high standard indeed. Chandra's text has been rendered into clear and attractive Spanish - specifically, standard international Spanish, in its European variety but expressed so as not to create gratuitous difficulties for Latin American readers. Beyond this, a specific point deserves mention, namely the conscious avoidance of anglicisms. The story 'Artha', with its IT-industry setting, contains a considerable amount of computer terminology. In view of the ever-increasing influence of anglicisms in the computer lexicon worldwide, the translators are to be congratulated on their systematic eschewing of such forms throughout this story: 'software' is translated by 'programa', 'hardware' by 'arquitectura', 'máquinas' or 'equipo', 'bug' by 'fallo' or 'error', 'debug' by 'depurar', and 'crash' by 'caída', and indeed not one single IT anglicism is to be found⁴⁵. The translators thus deploy the full generative resources of the Spanish language, rather than using the transatlantic connotations of the IT domain to reduce a specifically Indian computer environment to an undifferentiated, US-led, global soup of generality. The globalising aspects of Chandra's text are thus made more palatable to Hispanophone readers who may themselves be concerned over the less salubrious effects of globalisation.

VII - CONCLUSION

My own reaction to this translation, as an English native speaker with a long-standing knowledge of Spanish, is that its success is beyond doubt, as a carefully and sensitively executed rendering of an Indian English text, imbued with respect for the original and its cultural specificities and heterogeneities. From this vantage point, I would now like to propose possible means of building

on this success for the future. Venuti speaks of the need to build translation communities, in the following terms: 'When motivated by [an] ethical politics of difference, the translator seeks to build a community with foreign cultures, to share an understanding with and of them and to collaborate on projects founded on that understanding', and asks: 'what kinds of communities can translation possibly foster?'⁴⁶ This is a question that deserves a specific answer for the present case. The kinds of translation community of which Venuti is thinking are essentially reader communities clustered around the end-product, i.e. the translated text; however, a translation community of <producers> can also be envisaged forming around the production process, i.e. the act of translation itself.

A translation is not and cannot be a purely individual project: it by definition involves two texts, the original and the translated text, and, thus, a minimum of two participants, author and translator. In our case of Vikram Chandra in Spanish, it so happens that the translation itself is the product of two hands, and that the author himself has explicitly cooperated in the preparation of the translators' glossary. With a view to moving forward, rather than assuming the managerial or functional viewpoint associated with a *team*, one could postulate the more flexible concept of a resource-pooling, open-ended *community*. Even as I was finishing the draft of this paper, I discovered that the new French translation of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, to be published in 2004, is the collective fruit of no less than eight translators' labour⁴⁷. In our present case, I would propose that, in the light of the specific particularities of Indian English, as identified above, it would be useful for such a community to draw on multiple types of expertise. One type is, obviously, that of (second-language) Indian English speakers knowledgeable in a whole range of fields. Another, though - and given, for the present case, that Spanish is not a language widely taught in India - could be of a more special kind. I am thinking of native speakers of English (for historical reasons, preferably of British English) who could offer a suitable linguistic and cultural knowledge of both English in general and Indian English in particular, as well as an advanced mastery of the *target* language (here, Spanish). Such a combination of skills is relatively rare but not non-existent. Communication between translator and author is of course a *sine qua non*, but in most cases the author will not know the target language; while the translator, however eminently professional, who is neither a native nor a second-language speaker of the source language (here, English) will, with the best will in the world, not always or necessarily be in a position to fully or immediately contextualise such phenomena as idioms, acronyms, adapted or archaic Britishisms or hybrid usages, all this in so complex and ramifying a transcultural context as that of Indian English. Native-speaker input from within such a broadened translation community should surely help further refine and perfect the kind of ambitious and important translation project typified by that discussed in this paper. In the meantime, if Bombay is home to the Gateway of India, Vikram Chandra's *Love and Longing in Bombay* is itself a gateway to the teeming multiplicity of that great city, and Dora Sales' and Esther Monzó's translation has most excellently succeeded in opening up that gateway to a host of Spanish-speaking readers to whom it would otherwise have been closed.

**

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¹ See Chandra, 'Frequent Flyer', 81.

² The languages concerned are: Danish, Dutch, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Norwegian, Spanish, Swedish, and, in India, Malayalam and Marathi.

³ Details of the Spanish translation of *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* are as follows: *La Tierra Roja*, translated by José Luis Fernández-Villanueva Cencio, Madrid: Siruela, 1996.

⁴ Vikram Chandra's official website may be found at <www.vikramchandra.com>. It has a bibliography, including, notably, a very large amount of material by Dora Sales, in particular her excellent doctoral thesis, *Puentes sobre el mundo* (written in Spanish and awarded in 2003, and focusing on a comparative analysis of Chandra and the Peruvian writer José María Arguedas; publication is forthcoming) - as well as, for those interested in a literary-critical analysis of *Love and Longing in Bombay*, an article of 2002 entitled 'Vikram Chandra's *Love and Longing in Bombay*: The Order of Emotion'. The bibliography also includes several texts by the author of the present paper. For further details, see Works Cited.

⁵ Information kindly supplied by Vikram Chandra.

⁶ Information kindly supplied by Vikram Chandra.

⁷ Kuhlwezak, 'The Troubled Identity of Literary Translation', 116.

⁸ For a general discussion of the issues involved in translating Indian Writing in English, with reference to both Chandra and Kapur, see Sales Salvador, 'La experiencia de traducir literatura de la India'.

⁹ Macaulay, 'Minute on Indian Education', *passim*.

¹⁰ Graddol, 'The Decline of the Native Speaker', 159-160.

¹¹ McArthur, *Oxford Guide to World English*, 312.

¹² See Office of the Registrar General, India, *Census of India 1991* (cf. Works Cited).

¹³ The 1991 census states that Hindi is spoken as a mother tongue by 22% of the population, and also lists what then numbered 18 'scheduled languages' (including Hindi and Sanskrit). English is not a 'scheduled language', but has the constitutional status of 'associate official language' alongside Hindi, and is also an official language in some states. The term 'scheduled languages' refers to the languages listed in the 'Eighth Schedule' appended to the Indian Constitution. These languages originally numbered 14, and after several constitutional amendments now number 22. The most recent amendment, proposed in 2003 and passed in 2004 - as part of *The Constitution (Ninety-Second Amendment) Act* - added four new languages. See: Mallikarjun, 'An Exploration into Linguistic Majority-Minority Relations in India'; also, the Ninety-Second Amendment text at: <http://164.100.10.12/coiweb/amend/amend92.htm>.

¹⁴ Rao, Preface to *Kanthapura*, 5.

¹⁵ Rushdie, "'Commonwealth literature" does not exist', 65-66.

¹⁶ Deshpande, *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, 150.

¹⁷ Chandra, *Red Earth and Pouring Rain*, 344.

¹⁸ Even-Zohar, 'Polysystem Theory'.

¹⁹ Sales Salvador, 'La relevancia de la documentación'. The relevant authorities cited in this text by Dora Sales include: André Lefevere, José Lambert, Hendrik van Gorp, Theo Hermans, Susan Bassnett, Gideon Toury, Zohar Shavit and Shelly Yahalom.

²⁰ Ortiz, 'Del fenómeno social de la "transculturación"', 134-135.

²¹ Sales Salvador, 'Vikram Chandra's Constant Journey', 4.

²² Sales Salvador, 'Literaturas transculturales y ética de la traducción', 70 (citing as authority: Nancy Sanguinetti de Serrano, 'Translating a "transcultura"', in Gloria Álvarez Benito, Joaquín J. Fernández Domínguez and Francisco J. Tamayo Morillo, eds., *Lenguas en contacto*, Sevilla: Mergablum, 1999, 242-251).

²³ Sales Salvador, 'Translational Passages'.

²⁴ Venuti, 'Translation, Communication, Utopia', 482. An earlier version of part of this text by Venuti is available on-line under the title: 'Translation, Communication, Community. Keynote Address, Fifth International Symposium on Comparative Literature. Cairo University, 1998.', at: www.usembassy.egnet.net/library/backlog/venuti.htm.

²⁵ See Chandra, *Love and Longing in Bombay*, translation, 309n.

²⁶ Chandra, *Love and Longing in Bombay*, original, 256, translation 307.

²⁷ See Sales Salvador and Monzó Nebot, 'Nota de las traductoras' (Translators' Note), 328-329.

²⁸ Chandra, *Love and Longing in Bombay*, original 19, translation, 33-34.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1, 13.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 4, 17.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 3, 16.

³² *Ibid.*, 23, 39.

³³ *Ibid.*, 76, 99.

³⁴ Vikram Chandra has explained to the author of this paper that this dialogue would have been held in Hindi, as the lingua franca permitting communication between the Punjabi-speaking Sheila and the Marathi-speaking Ganga.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 64, 86.

³⁶ See Sales Salvador and Monzó Nebot, 'Nota de las traductoras': 'la traducción conserva reflexionadamente algunas referencias al inglés, como idioma dominante en esta situación de desequilibrio entre lenguas' ('the translation deliberately retains a number of references to English, as the dominant tongue in this situation of imbalance between languages' - 330).

³⁷ Chandra, *Love and Longing in Bombay*, original, 184, translation, 225 (this station, completed in 1888, is now officially called the Mumbai Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 103, 132.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 105, 133.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 94, 120.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 80, 104 and 128, 160.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 85, 110.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 134, 167 and 84, 109.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 127, 159 and 100, 128.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 180, 222; 159, 196; 165, 203; 179, 219; 158, 194; 168, 206; 166, 204; 202, 246.

⁴⁶ Venuti, 'Translation, Communication, Utopia', 483.

⁴⁷ See Levisalles, 'Ulysse revient'.