3. Publishers' Perspective

See patient Wilkins to the World unfold

What'ver discovered Sanskrit relics hold

But he performed a yet more noble part

He gave to Asia typographic art

The preceding chapter has shown how a 'literary' product like a text of Indian literature in English translation is neither confined to, nor exclusively dependent on literary factors alone. In addition to political considerations of the kind described in the first chapter or the socio-cultural trends described in the second chapter, there are also other institutions involved in the canonisation of literary and cultural productions. The publishing industry is one such. It plays a crucial role in the production and consumption of literature. The publishing world is situated at a point of intersection between society and commerce. In an age of print capitalism, books are products of negotiations between publishing agencies and socio-cultural trends. The decision of what to publish stems from both cultural and market-driven forces. When it comes to literature, we do not, on the whole, think of market forces as decisive in the generation, availability and reading of books. This chapter attempts to establish that the proliferation of texts in translation over the last two decades and the energy of the Indian publishing scene are closely interconnected. I have tried to explore this relationship using a variety of methods.
The increase of translations in the last ten to fifteen years has occurred in tandem with some new developments in Indian publishing. Before we make any connection between the two, it is crucial to have a historical overview of the publishing enterprise in general with special emphasis upon the publication of texts in translation. This chapter has three sections. The first section, a general discussion of the history and development of English-language publishing in India with a special emphasis upon the changes in the industry in the last 10-15 years, is based on material available on the history and development of the publishing industry. Section II relates specifically to the publishing contexts of translation and historicises the publishers' current interest in translation. Sections III and IV focus upon specific publishing houses and their decisions and choices regarding translation with a view to showing how not only the increase but, to some extent, also the nature of this activity is determined by publishers.

I

Printing and publishing began systematically with the British presence in India. Before that in the 1550s the Jesuit missionaries had made sporadic efforts at printing, or more precisely, at spreading the Gospel through print. Printing as we know it today began when in 1706 Bartholomew Ziegenbalg, the well-known Protestant missionary, started working with a printing press in Tranquebar. A little later the East India Company installed a press at Vepory, a suburb of Madras. Sir Eyre Cooke printed his own work A Malabar and English Dictionary in 1779. These early attempts at printing were
occasional and without the typography unique to each language. However, they still laid an important foundation for the all-pervasive development of printing that took place by the middle of the nineteenth century.

Sisir Kumar Das notes that the establishment of the Serampore Mission Press stabilised scattered exercises in printing and publishing. Started by Joshua Marshman, William Ward and William Carey in 1800, the Serampore Mission Press may be considered as a watershed in the movement from the scribal to the printed word. The Serampore Mission Press initially published translations of the Bible into different Indian languages. Gradually the press began regular production of dictionaries and English translations of religious and literary masterpieces in Sanskrit and Persian. It published the works of English officials who had come to Serampore College and Fort William College for training. In the meanwhile the British, with the help of local experts had begun to invent language types for many eastern languages. These types first appear in Halhed's *A Grammar of the Bengal Language* in 1778. Charles Wilkins' contribution in this regard has been very remarkable. Wilkins was mentioned as a translator in the first chapter, but it is his contribution to typography that is recorded most in the annals of history. On the whole then, printing had made inroads into most Indian languages by the end of the nineteenth century. The course was slow, and steady and as the table below indicates, far from uniform in all languages.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Printing</th>
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<tr>
<td>Assamiya</td>
<td>1838</td>
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<td>Bangla</td>
<td>1800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gujarati</td>
<td>1800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>1800 in Bengal, 1836-8 elsewhere</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kannada</td>
<td>1566 in Goa, but used after 1774</td>
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<td>Kashmiri</td>
<td>1819</td>
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<td>Malayalam</td>
<td>1713</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marathi</td>
<td>1775</td>
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<td>Oriya</td>
<td>1775</td>
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<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>1834</td>
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<td>Sindhi</td>
<td>1844</td>
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<td>Tamil</td>
<td>1710</td>
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<td>Telugu</td>
<td>1796</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>1875</td>
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(Data compiled on the basis of *Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature*, 5 vols. (Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1989)

We have so far been talking about printing in the Indian languages; it is time now to turn to printing and publishing specifically in English. While regional presses owned and run by Indians had a vigorous life in British India, publication activity in English was, by and large, in the hands of the British. There are a few exceptions to this, one of the earliest being Rajpal & Sons in 1891, the parent company of Hind Pocket Books. Some others appeared, especially in the 'nationalist' phase of India's history. The nationalist intelligentsia, rooted in an Indian language as well as English, used English quite
extensively for cross-cultural communication. Publishing houses located in specific
towns and active in the dissemination of individual nationalist views need to be
mentioned. M.N. Roy started Renaissance Publications to further his cultural-political
views. At the beginning of the twentieth century Gandhi addressed the Gujarati audience
and the nation at large through the bilingual publications of the Navjivan Press in
Ahmedabad. An organization like the Brahmo Samaj had its own means, however
rudimentary for publishing. Since the readership for socio-political tracts was focussed,
and since publication of such books was not a commercial activity, English language
publications by Indians remained small in scale. At the same time indigenous firms
engaged in English-language publications such as Popular Prakashan, which started as a
bookstore and expanded its activities by publishing English books after 1928, were
overshadowed by the large operations of British firms.

With the spread of English education and a concurrent demand for textbook and
educational materials in the early twentieth century, there was a great increase in
publishing activities. Among the first publishers to meet this demand were British-
owned firms, such as Macmillan in 1903, Longman in 1906, and Oxford University Press
in 1912. The educational system designed by the British paved the way for British
publishing houses which had earlier either simply imported textbooks from Britain, or
altered them a little for Indian subjects. Ritu Menon, co-founder of Kali for Women,
notes that with the use of English books for English examinations, the established
educational publishers of Great Britain reaped the benefits. Until 1947, India's entire
English language book trade, and most of its publishing industry comprised titles
imported from the UK. Indians involved with the dissemination of English-language
books confined themselves to subsidiary activities like distributing and importing books and reprinting them. There were some exceptions. Some specialised publishing houses like Motilal Banarsidas and Munshiram Manoharlal, both committed to publishing Indological books, and established in 1901 and 1870 respectively, have continued their work quietly and uninterruptedly.

After independence some private publishers began to produce educational books (this includes textbooks, literacy and ancillary materials like 'guides' and self-help books). A steady rise in the numbers of schools, colleges and universities in independent India created a huge market for educational books. The market for published academic research and books of general interest (popular fiction, current events, politics, travelogues etc.) remained limited till the early sixties. Uncertainty about the position of English in India for the first two decades after independence did not on the whole foster an encouraging environment for English-language publications. In the meanwhile, in the newly formed nation-state the different functions of the private and the public sectors were being defined. The public sector which had the responsibility of nation-building and of making knowledge available to all sections of society initiated the Sahitya Akademi in 1954, and the National Book Trust in 1957, both of which are government bodies. The Sahitya Akademi aimed at forging national integration by publishing original writing and translations in Indian languages as well as in English. The NBT functions in the world of books in a variety of ways -- subsidising books either by direct publication or by paying private publishers, and sponsoring fairs, exhibitions and book clubs. Thus, starting with the 1950s publishing came to be shared between the public and the private sector.
Among private publishers, an important name from the fifties onwards is that of the Asia Publishing House. According to Phillip Altbach, Asia was the house involved in 'pure' publishing, as opposed to merely reprinting, importing and distributing. Asia was the first Indian publisher to attempt to meet international editorial and production standards and to develop professional specialization and expertise in publishing.\(^4\) Established in 1943, Asia grew very big in no time and produced titles in scholarly subjects, current affairs, politics and science and some novels. Asia had to cut down its operations because it ran into problems of distribution and funding. In the mid-fifties "one of the most original publishers in the world," P. Lal started the Writers Workshop, a small publishing house that has for the last forty years tirelessly published untried creative authors in a limited number of hand-operated letterpress creations.\(^5\) The period of the 50s is thus very important for two developments: the inception of state-owned agencies, and the growth of privately owned firms.

In the 1960s, the government of India, in its pursuit of a socialistic society, decided to nationalise textbook publishing. Textbooks published by private publishers were not always affordable and reinforced the divide between the elite and the masses. With the aim of providing textbooks at subsidised prices to all students, the government undertook the publication of textbooks. The decision to monopolise publication of school textbooks was a severe blow to private publishing companies. Textbook publishing is the bread and butter of the publishing industry since it ensures mass production, steady sales and straightforward channels of distribution. It has been noted that "there was a widespread
feeling that the publishing industry in the private sector has been deprived of a sound financial base as a result of being denied the right to produce school textbooks. School textbooks produced at the central and state levels at subsidised costs were easily accessible, but a price was paid in terms of selection of content and editorial skill. Private publishers since then have partly succeeded in circumventing this problem by producing 'guides' and textbooks for colleges and universities. Any discussion of educational publishing entails entering into the private vs. public sector argument and the argument about the effect of the government's decision to publish school textbooks on private publishing companies.

An important, albeit brief, trend of publishing books of general interest appeared in the late 1960s. Two publishing houses, Vikas and Jaico, published titles in poetry and fiction by Indian authors. This was the first very brief spurt in trade publishing (the publishing of books of general interest as opposed, for example, to educational publishing) of Indian authors. The trend did not continue for long because the size of the English-reading market was very small. After the seventies, scientific and professional book imports were allowed relatively freely in contrast with earlier periods when importing of books was in the hands of only those who had licenses. In 1977, under the Open General License Act, independent Indian marketers could import books directly. Cheap books and remainders (books that lie as dead stock for various reasons) flooded the Indian market. Remaindered titles, mostly in academic fields, have flourished since the eighties and compete with books indigenously produced. Publishers often complain about the absence of anti-dumping laws to prevent a free, uninterrupted import of books.
The publishing scene after the mid-eighties has been altogether bigger and better and many changes have taken place in the last ten to fifteen years -- some dramatic, some not so dramatic. A broad overview of the situation will bring these to light. The industry may still be viewed in terms of the private and public sectors. However, the private-sector publishing has undergone a major restructuring and private publishers have also shown interest in subjects that were earlier seen as the responsibility of the public sector. This overlapping of roles has created competition at one level. At another level, tie-ups and collaborations between Indian publishing houses and large-scale foreign publishing firms have also created competition. Mini Krishnan, Editor at Macmillan India, notes the following developments today: "A lot of foreign publishers have come seeking the world's largest English knowing and reading (if not actually buying) audience. They have found that it's a very price sensitive market and they can hope to only make up in volume what they cannot achieve through high prices. This has often meant using local printers so that business has boomed. Apart from this business/commerce growth has resulted in more glamorous image building and that in turn has led to any number of DTP (DeskTop Publishing) operators and graphic designers, people who may be said to be on the publishing periphery. Also many enterprising people are going into various niche markets." The growth of the English-reading market, especially after the official entrenchment of English in Indian society through the language policy of 1967, is visible today. Various segments of society read books in English and this has created a demand for English books of many kinds. This demand had perhaps remained latent and unattended to came to be met by Indian publishers, with the devaluation of the Indian
rupee. The devaluation of the rupee made the prices of imported and foreign books seem exorbitant. As a result, notes Urvashi Butalia, a small but significant space was created for English books published in India. Secondly, the growing size of the market also allowed the inclusion of trade books -- books on cookery, computers, housekeeping, literature and translations among many other subjects. The opening of India's economy after the eighties caught the attention of multinational publishers. The sociological and psychological factors attendant on this matter, that is, shifts in readerships, and the acceptance of literary and cultural productions have been discussed elsewhere. At the present time publishing comprises:

Educational publishing: As said earlier, state agencies provide textbooks at the school level. Private publishers have tried to circumvent this problem of government monopoly of textbooks in different ways. Private elitist schools not dependent on government grants and therefore free to determine their own syllabi, provide one market for private educational publishing. While state-aided schools are bound to use government textbooks, private English-medium schools affiliated to other Boards (e.g. The ICSE and CBSE) use textbooks published by private publishers because of their excellent quality from the point of view of both production and content. Private publishers have also dealt with government monopolisation by offering 'guides' to prescribed textbooks. Some publishers provide reference books or textbooks for higher education. There appears to be a direct connection between academic institutions and the publishing industry: publishers rely heavily on library funds for selling educational books, and about 80% of publishing in India is educational in nature.
The major names in educational publishing are the old-time publishing houses like Orient Longman, Macmillan and Oxford University Press. It may be noted that the market for educational publishing is very large. Over 45% of the population is under age 25 and, of these, 300 million are in primary and secondary schools. This means that there is a vast student body that needs books at all levels. Concurrent with a rise in literacy, there has been a rise specifically of English education in private English medium schools. The market for those publishing educational titles promises to be huge, provided of course, library funds are available.

**Academic and professional publishing** : In scholarly/academic publishing, American publishing companies dominate in the sciences and engineering, most notably Prentice-Hall, McGraw-Hill, John Wiley. While Indian families hold majority-interests in these firms, and publish locally, they are closely linked to the parent companies with respect to imports and reprints. Oxford University Press publishes over a hundred titles in academic books, especially in the areas of history and sociology. Publishing firms such as Sterling, Papyrus, Prestige, Pencraft and Sage have in the last few years tapped the market for academic studies by Indians. The last decade has also seen the inception of another niche market, that is, gender studies. Kali for Women and Stree bring special editorial focus and expertise to this market. On the whole, professional and academic publishing is getting stronger in India. According to a recent study, the academic market in India is growing by 3% in numbers and 2% in terms of dollar value. Pricing these books is a major problem. Publishers usually have a small print-run and price the books high to meet the costs.
Trade books. Change is most visible in the area of trade books. According to Butalia the individual buyer, hitherto "inconsequential" in Indian publishing which has focussed on educational books, has now become important. The small but significant shift from educational to trade books has brought about this change. Popular fiction, children's books, women's writing, cookery books -- many kinds of trade books have seen development in kind and quality. The most dramatic rise has been that of the Indian English novel. The social and political reasons behind this have been dealt with in the previous chapter. At this point we need to take note of the major contenders in the market. Penguin was the first to make a systematic and cohesive effort to publish trade books in 1985 and the establishment of Penguin India that year was a significant catalyst for the production of Indian writing in English. Specialised firms such as Katha (devoted to publishing translations) and Kali for Women (the first feminist press in India) established in 1991 and 1989, respectively have come to play a very important role in niche markets. Rupa-Harpercollins, Ravi Dayal, IndiaInk, Manas ---- all phenomena of the nineties --- now specialize in high quality, meticulously edited titles. Older firms like Oxford University Press, Macmillan and Orient Longman, which had discontinued abortive attempts to publish trade titles, have once again re-entered the trade publishing market. On the whole, there is a new energy and professionalism about the English-language publishing industry and the most marked change is visible in the area of trade books.

In the meanwhile, government-funded bodies like the Sahitya Akademi and the NBT have continued with programmes in general, academic and educational books. One of the objectives in forming the Sahitya Akademi and the NBT was to publish books that would
not interest profit-driven publishers. With this aim, these two organisations have consistently published many informative books in an attempt to raise national consciousness. While on the whole there is a clear line of demarcation between the areas of commercial publishers and those of the Sahitya Akademi, in recent times there has been some overlapping. Private publishers have begun to take an interest in publishing Indian books written by Indian authors and to tap Indian talent and scholarship. What seemed ideologically desirable but commercially unattractive, and therefore the prerogative of the Akademi, has now begun to claim the attention of private publishers.

At this point let us recapitulate some factors leading to the new optimism in the English-language publishing industry.

Many factors have contributed to the optimistic mood in the Indian publishing industry today. To begin with, a consistent devaluation of the rupee against the dollar has made imported books prohibitively expensive. The cheapest of imported books are virtually unaffordable for the Indian buyer. After the eighties this left a small vacuum which Indian publishers have been trying to fill with books produced in India. This economic development has coincided with the increase in trade publishing -- which means publishing geared towards an individual reader and focussing upon popular fiction, literature in translation and books of general interest. Traditionally, 90% of Indian publishing has been educational; it has always addressed institutional buyers -- all sales have been library sales. Now there is a significant shift from institutional to individual buyers, which in turn means that the individual reader needs to be continuously informed about books available in the market. Almost all the leading newspapers in the country carry a page on new 'literary titles'. Reviewing books has become a regular, on-going
activity with the appearance of journals such as The Book Review, The Indian Review of Books and Biblio devoted almost exclusively to reviews. Television plays its part by telecasting interviews with new authors. Promotion and publicity, integral features of trade books, have made books very visible today. This visibility may not always translate into immediate sales; in fact, it costs money to draw the individual reader's attention. The hype and publicity, asserts Renuka Chatterjee (Editor, Rupa -Harpercollins), pose its own set of problems. According to her, "It's important to publicise to sell well, but till you sell well you don't have funds to publicise. It's a catch-22 situation." 10 In most cases the book-selling business in still not a very lucrative business. However, notes Narendra Kumar, "for the first time, the industry is being professionalised to an extent that the nineties opened new vistas which could lead to the full flowering of Indian scholarship in the best sense of the term. 11 The professionalisation of the industry has resulted in better editorial standards and focussed marketing, and this has contributed, to a certain extent, to turning books into consumer products. "What is happening is that books are being made into desirable objects," says Butalia.

Another encouraging factor is the increase in buying power of the middle class numbering anywhere from 100 to 300 million. With the expansion of private English education, the segment of the Indian educated elite reading English books has commensurately expanded. It is now estimated at 250 million. With the opening up of the Indian economy in the 1980s the country's large English-speaking population has become one of the major attractions to potential investors from abroad. "India now has a literate middle class equal to the entire population of the USA, over 250 million, with a firmly established reading culture." 12 In addition, rapid development in bookmaking technology
has facilitated rapid and speedy production. The market will in all probability get bigger and better. "We are poised at an interesting point. There is a ferment; when it subsides, we’ll have to take stock of what’s left.” says David Davidar of Penguin India.13

The last fifteen years have witnessed a happy combination of circumstances which seem to be beneficial for the Indian publishers in English. However, the path Indian publishing has traversed has been far from smooth. The enterprise of publishing relies heavily upon certain material considerations such as the cost of labour, paper, transportation and sales. At the same time, the social conditions obtaining in a society — its levels of literacy and education, strong library movements, government policies — form a backdrop against which publishers have to work. The publishing industry still has to contend with restriction of exports, lack of consistently good quality paper, constantly depleting library funds, small print-runs and poor systems of distribution. The market for books in English promises to expand in the future, but as of now it is only 2% of the nation's population. "The English-knowing reader, the backbone of the market, is still scattered over a very wide area and difficult to reach, in the absence of good bookshops in all but the larger cities," observes Ravi Dayal.14 Competition from other kinds of media such as television, computers, CD-ROMs are also disturbingly real, as is the competition from foreign investors. Foreign publishing firms are setting up their imprints in India. Scholastic India, one of the biggest publishers of children’s books, has completed a year in India. The year 1999 has also seen the launch of Picador India and the Routledge Liaison Office. An inquiry into the implications of new multinational publishing firms in India is relevant, although premature at the moment. At this juncture, it can only be said that as the millennium draws to a close, the Indian publishing scene looks very vibrant.
As a consequence of the developments identified above, the Indian market has opened up to many areas of trade publishing. The most palpable outcome of this phenomenon is Indian Writing in English. Indian fiction in English has inundated the market. Bookshops in all metropolitan cities have rows of books -- packaged impressively, written by Indian authors, published by Indian publishers, and meant, of course, primarily for an Indian market. At the same time the Indian author is also a part of the international community. Academic and general titles from India have found a place in some very prestigious parts of the West. The phenomenal success of a Rushdie or a Roy makes one wary about the manner in which market forces affect 'literary' values but there can be little doubt that the bonds that hampered Indian writing and Indian publishing have been loosened. Along with Indian Writing in English, Indian Literature in English Translation has also grown, albeit less dramatically. Meenakshi Mukherjee draws attention to this by saying: "While everybody knows and has been discussing a very great upsurge of English novels emerging from India, one aspect that has been less often talked about and not talked about at all, today, is another phenomenon that is also acquiring a boom-status within the country and that is translation of Indian fiction in English". Along with Indian writing in English, regional literature in English translation has received an unexpected fillip in the last fifteen years. The socio-cultural contexts of both kinds of literary productions
(IWE and ILET) have been discussed in the previous chapter. In this section, I wish to examine the publishing contexts of Indian Literature in English Translation.

It was mentioned earlier that in pre-independence India, there was no formal institutionalisation or patronage of translation. After the mid-fifties, the National Book Trust and the Sahitya Akademi undertook to translate works from all recognised languages into all recognised languages in a formal and organised manner. The National Book Trust has since then published intra-lingual translations (from one Indian language into another) under its scheme of Aadan-Pradan. The Sahitya Akademi also publishes in all languages and considers translation a very important tool in creating a national consciousness and common links across cultures. Both the National Book Trust and the Sahitya Akademi publish translations into English, though the emphasis upon English is much more pronounced in the case of the Sahitya Akademi. Mapping the history of English translation in print, Ritu Menon considers the subsidised activity of the Akademi the first phase of translation. She notes, "From a publishing perspective, the setting up of the Sahitya Akademis with the objective of 'linking literatures' may be considered the first phase of translation activity in Indian, in which non-commercial considerations were primary." Though the usefulness of the Sahitya Akademi and the NBT is ungainsayable, their commitment to quality and their modes of distribution have been far from satisfactory. Private publishing houses could have afforded editorially sound translations along with efficient systems of distribution. However, the small size of the English reading public acted as a deterrent to private publishers, and hence for a very
long time, publishing translation came to be seen as an uneconomical activity that is primarily 'good for the nation'.

Outside the framework of the institutions just mentioned, first Jaico and Hind Pocket Books and later Sangam Books (Orient Longman), Vikas, Arnold Heinemann, Oxford University Press and Bell Books brought out Indian authors writing in English and translated into English. According to Menon, this marked the second phase of translation and was characterised by "an improvement in distribution and marketing and much greater attention to the quality of translation" compared with the earlier state-subsidised activity. Some of the best known works were translated in this period, although translation did not have a huge readership. Jaico brought out the translation of Premchand's *Godan*. Vikas alone published over thirty titles which include Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* (as *Kites will Fly*) and Kiran Nagarkar's *Seven Sixes are FortyThree*. Bell Books published Krishna Sobti's *Blossoms in the Darkness*, Indira Parthasarthy's *River of Blood* and some others. Oxford University Press, in addition to some titles in Indian English literature, also brought out influential works in translation. The series of Indian Drama in English introduced Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar, Mohan Rakesh and Badal Sircar and paved the way for a 'National Theatre.' A fairly substantial body of translations from Tamil, Kannada, Marathi, Bengali and Hindi was created, but on the whole, translation did not make much sense in commercial terms.

The apathy of publishers and the want of a market may be explained in the following broad terms: First of all, translation has always been perceived as a secondary activity, a
shadow of the original. Hence the activity has heretofore never had the kind of importance it has today. Secondly, English renderings of literature written in Indian languages left most readers dissatisfied about the use of English which always seemed either too stiff or too Indianised. Thirdly, there were no academic and institutionalised activities such as workshops, seminars, and awards surrounding the act of translation. However, the Writers' Workshop needs special mention here. It has been mentioned in the previous section for its commendable work in bringing out new, untried Indian authors. The Writers' Workshop has had a very consistent and exhaustive list of titles in translation. Since the publisher/academic/poet P.Lal has never believed in large-scale operations, Writers' Workshop publications find circulation only among a few academics and have never had a widespread impact. Secondly, P.Lal's philosophy of transcreating literature (a creative rendering rather than a strictly faithful translation) has worked against a full acceptance of Writers' Workshop translations.

"Both quantitatively and qualitatively there has been a sea-change," announces Ritu Menon about the third and current phase of translation. The proliferation of the activity is manifest in many ways. Texts in translation are constantly being produced, advertised, reviewed and discussed. The amount of time and money spent in publishing editorially focussed scrupulously worked-out translations and presenting them attractively has made translated products very visible. After the mid-eighties, some old and some new publishing houses have had selective lists of translations and new marketing strategies. Penguin India made a foray into the Indian market primarily through Indian English literature. Though the raison d'être of Penguin India has been Indian Writing in English, translations from ancient oriental languages and contemporary
translations also form a substantial body of the Penguin list. After the establishment of Penguin India, Kali for Women emerged on the publishing scene with a very clear political agenda. Kali is a feminist press geared towards publishing less-known or unknown texts written by women. A significant part of Kali's list is constituted by titles in fiction by women, and in almost all cases, these are regional women writers in English translation. Soon after Kali, the first, non-governmental publishing house devoted completely and exclusively to translation appeared on the scene. This was Katha. East-West Affiliated Press has been mentioned before in the context of academic publishing. Manas, an imprint of East-West, started in 1994 and publishes translations from the four South Indian Languages. Rupa has been publishing translations since the late 1980s and, after a tie-up with Harpercollins, has continued a regular output of translations under its new Indus imprint. The prominent educational publishers Oxford University Press, Orient Longman and Macmillan India have published titles in translation in the past. In the wake of the recent spurt in trade publishing and increasing importance of translation, these publishers have also participated in the translation trade with attractive programmes and efficient marketing. Oxford University Press publishes a few select translations provided they meet very high standards. Translations figure regularly but not prominently in OUP's list. Orient Longman, the oldest educational publisher in India had the Sangam series for translations, but this was discontinued after the seventies. Orient Longman has since resumed its translations through its new imprint, Disha, which focuses upon Indian writing in English and regional literature in translation. Macmillan had occasional titles in translation. Its first translation appeared in 1978. Today Macmillan's programme alone consists of about twenty translations annually.
An increasing interest in translations evident in new titles makes today's juncture an important one. Meenakshi Mukherjee sums up the publishers' involvement very aptly: "What we now witness is the emergence of a systematic and promotional production by institutions and established publishing houses who carefully select the text to be translated; control the quality and texture of the translation; provide a suitable context for each book, introductions, translator's prefaces and notes." 19

It is useful to inquire into the perceptions of translation activity that lead publishers to invest time and money in this activity; and the criteria and philosophy governing the choice of texts. Has publication of texts in translation become economically viable now? Does it also mean that there are better and more competent translators in the country than before? Is the publishing industry responding to a latent market that always existed, or is it by, making resources available, creating a market? There are no clear-cut answers to these questions. However, through interviews with publishers or editors directly involved in this activity, I have explored some of these areas. These questions and answers have been arrived at in three ways: firstly, by looking at the profile of each publishing house committed towards producing translations; secondly, through interviews with representatives from each publishing house, and finally, through a comparison of translations produced by all publishers. My selection of publishing houses is representative, but not comprehensive. The next section is concerned with issues emerging from my interviews with publishing personnel. The actual interviews and some factual details are provided in the Appendix.
Publishing houses involved in the activity of translation may be considered broadly under public and private sector undertakings. The Sahitya Akademi is the solitary example of a semi-government body involved in publishing translations. Within the private sector there are further ramifications. Among the publishing houses considered here, Penguin India and Rupa-Harpercollins are large-sized commercial houses. Katha and Kali for Women are specialised publishing firms, each with its own distinct aims. Oxford University Press, Orient Longman and Macmillan India are educational publishers who publish titles of general interest for commercial reasons. Their emphasis, however, is on textbooks and academic studies. A brief account of translation activity as undertaken by each publishing house seems to be called for before we come to the treatment of specific issues involved in translation.

The state-sponsored Sahitya Akademi has done the pioneering work in English translation. The Akademi is concerned with all — theoretical, cultural and practical — aspects of the translation activity. It has created a pool of translators and their names appear in its Translators' Directory. Since 1986 the Akademi has been organising workshops on literary translation at the national and regional levels. Selected texts are identified and translated into some regional languages and English. The aim is to bring
together translators from different parts of the country, and give them grounding in the theoretical and practical aspects of translation. The Akademi’s translations include anthologies of fiction and poetry as well as novels by well-known authors from more than twenty languages. Its journal Indian Literature carries translations in every issue. The Sahitya Akademi through translations has made a vast body of knowledge available in English and other languages. At the same time, the Akademi translations have remained confined to a limited number of institutions and libraries and not found a general readership. This is largely because the Akademi has not made concerted efforts to distribute its works or make them widely known through the media.

Another publishing firm equally involved in the production of translated texts and the institutionalisation of translation as theory and practice is Katha. Katha has become a movement in translation. Its translation programme, Kathavilasam, branches out in many directions, all culminating in a better and wider activity of translation. Under the rubric of Kathavilasam, Katha builds up a repository of translations and literary magazines and writings on translation. It conducts workshops and seminars on translations. Through one of its activities called VAK, Katha (like the Sahitya Akademi) organises workshops and encourages direct translation between one Indian Language and (so far only Bangla, Kannada and Tamil) and from the regional Indian languages into English. In order to formalise translation skills, Katha has aimed at developing a style sheet for translation. Translations have never been accepted as mainstream literature. They have formed one of the layers of para-literature (among other things such as popular fiction, children's stories, comics etc.). Through advocacy groups Katha has tried to enhance the status of
translators and translations and worked at many levels towards forming a discipline of translation. It starts by making primary texts in translation available to general readers; then goes on to evolving critical apparatus for reading and appreciation in a classroom situation. Recently, Katha by instituting the A.K.Ramanujan award for translation has gone a step further in affirming its commitment to translations of quality.

The high-profile activity of Kathavilasam has been its All India Translation Contest. Literary experts and well-read readers are asked to nominate a "good" story that has not been translated. Such stories are then short-listed and in a nation-wide open contest, translators are invited to translate a story from some of the languages recognised by the Constitution. (So far these include Assamese, Gujarati, Kannada, Hindi, Bengali, Konkani, Malayalam, Punjabi, Oriya, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu and Rajasthani.) A panel of distinguished writers and critics judges the competition in each regional language. Prize-winning stories are then published as the Katha Prize Stories, and the translators are awarded with citations and cash prizes. So far seven such anthologies of stories from several languages have been published and the first six prize-winning stories have gone into reprints. Katha prize-winning stories 5 went into a reprint in a record 45 days. There is a large domestic market for Katha books and one of its collections of short fiction has also been prescribed in an academic course. In addition to the Prize Stories, Katha also has a series of Katha classics. Well-established literary figures from each language (so far only Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam) are identified and a collection of their stories and excerpts is brought out in a single volume. If the short stories are mainly contemporary, Katha classics restores that balance by focussing upon lifetime achievements of
established authors. A critical and objective assessment of Katha requires cutting through the publicity and hype that surrounds it. The translation contest, its advertisement, its announcement and finally the reviews of Prize Stories have become annual literary events. Response to Katha has been, on the whole, very positive.

Kali for Women, like Katha, is a niche publishing house. The fiction list at Kali is almost entirely from regional writings translated into English and forms a substantial chunk of the total output of texts in translation. At the same time, Kali is not directly concerned with translations. Kali has resorted to English translation as one of the means by which less-known and marginalised women's voices may be brought to the foreground. The co-founder Ritu Menon states "It is undeniable that women have been translated far less than men have, even though powerfully, albeit against formidable odds." She also says that Kali's purpose in publishing the work of less-known women writers from the regional languages is statedly political. It is part of its overall objective of presenting the totality of women's contribution to knowledge and scholarship. Translations undertaken by Kali are targeted towards those interested or specialising in gender studies. Since the discipline of gender studies and interest in women's issues is widespread in the West, Kali publications do very well overseas.

We now turn to the three prominent educational publishers -- Macmillan India, Orient Longman and Oxford University Press. Macmillan's focus, like that of all educational publishers, has been on textbooks. In Mini Krishnan's words, "that's where our bread and butter lies." Macmillan has had a few general titles and among them very few
translations. The first translation published by Macmillan in 1978 was a Malayalam novel by Parapurath called *A Time to Die* in its English translation. Till the early nineties translations formed a very small part of the Macmillan list. Of the fifty or so books published by Macmillan only 5-6 were texts in translation. In 1996, Macmillan's announcement to bring out 50-60 Indian novels in translation startled general readers and academics alike. After Katha, this ambitious project seemed the most tangible indication of a market for translations. Macmillan brought out the first eleven novels in 1996 and seven more appeared six months later in 1997. The new, attractive body of translations impressively packaged caught one's attention. The translations were advertised through write-ups in leading magazines and book-reviewing journals. The response to this series of Modern Novels in translation has been quite mixed. There is, from some quarters, a laudatory acknowledgment of Macmillan's service to the country by making a 'rich wealth accessible' to people. On the other hand some others have strongly criticised the textbook appearance, the academic introduction to each book and the glossary of Indian words.

Unlike Macmillan, OUP has long made a concerted effort towards translation. After its first translation in 1950, OUP produced its first title in translation, *Three Plays* by Rabindranath Tagore. Its next translation was published in the seventies -- Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq*. In the late sixties and seventies, OUP brought out some translations of drama and fiction that have shaped the map of literature in translation in a significant way. Ananthamurthy's *Samskara* translated by A.K. Ramanujan was one such text. Then OUP's series *Modern Indian Drama* introduced Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar and
Badal Sircar. These have been widely used in academic courses and research. Apart from the Calcutta-based Seagull publications, which started producing drama in translation after the eighties, private publishers have rarely ever been interested in drama. Hence these texts became available to the English-reading public for the first time. OUP's translation of Gopinath Mohanty's Paraja translated by Bikram Das also became a widely accepted translation. Despite producing, on the whole, a small number of translations OUP's name has come to be linked with texts in translation primarily as a result of 'happy accidents.'

We now turn our attention to Orient Longman, another very reputed and old publishing house involved in educational publishing. Translations became a part of Orient Longman's publishing programme only in the 70s with the Sangam series. The interview with V. Abdulla bears out the fact that the Sangam series, OL's first foray into trade publishing in the seventies, was "far from viable." At the same time, the editorial commitment to translation ensured that the programme did not die out. V. Abdulla, Sujit Mukherjee and Priya Adarkar (themselves translators) continued with translation activity. The Sangam series has reappeared now in a new avatar as Disha in India. It includes 'original' English writing as well translations from Indian languages into English. OL draws from a wide source of languages and texts.*

* Despite a sustained effort, it has not been possible to contact the present personnel at Orient Longman involved in the current activity of translation. Hence references to OL in the final section which is a discussion of current policies regarding translation in each publishing house are sketchy and tentative.
Penguin India’s stated aim has been to develop Indian writing for an Indian readership and also an overseas market for Indian writers. If translated into numbers this means that Penguin publishes at least 15 titles in translation annually. Sunil Gangopadhyay’s *Arjun* was the first work in translation produced by Penguin. Translations from the ancient Sanskrit, Tamil, Urdu and Persian texts have now become part of the Penguin Black Classics lists worldwide. Penguin India has not only continued with that tradition fairly successfully, but it also engages in publishing translations from modern Indian languages. So far Penguin has published from Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Marathi and Bengali. We owe to Penguin the well-known translations of *Raag Darbari* and *Folktales from India*.

As a purely commercial publisher that has to decide at the end of the day whether a given activity brings money or not, Rupa-Harpercollins has had few but significant translations. Rupa has given us anthologies like the *Inner Courtyard* which included stories written in and translated into English. This anthology made a significant difference to the gender-ratio on the literary map. Yet Rupa has hardly ever gone beyond publishing five or six translations a year.

IV

The previous sections have delineated the publishing contexts giving rise to English translation activity followed by profiles of individual publishing houses. The purpose in those sections was to forge a link between the startling rise in translation and the structural changes in the publishing scene in India. Many more connections still need to
be made. The body of Indian Literature in English Translation has acquired not just its size, but also its nature from publishing concerns. The philosophy of translation differs from one publishing house to another, differences that are reflected in decisions regarding selection of Source texts, Source Languages, genres, and finally the targeting of the market. These decisions usually stem from the set of explicit or implicit aims and priorities of each publishing house. The implementation of the translation programme as undertaken by each publishing house is in keeping with the way the activity of translation is perceived by a publisher and the role it has vis-à-vis other publishing activities. This is not to say that goals do not get modified or that those publishing programmes are always congruent with the stated goals. The following discussion gives an overview of various combinations of publishing priorities and finished products to explain the interconnectedness between the two.

To start with, the Sahitya Akademi has always perceived translation as a "unifying" tool between linguistic communities. Its express aim of providing 'uniform representation' to each language may be seen in its preference for 'representative' and canonised texts for translation. The Akademi forms Advisory Boards from each language which recommend texts in order to ensure that equal representation takes place. The Akademi is not always able to fulfil this task because of several reasons. In the words of the present Secretary K. Satchidanandan, "The distribution of representation is almost equal. I say almost equal because the wealth of literature and language has to be taken into account. Some languages appear richer (such as Bengali or Marathi) in terms of a more advanced sensibility. The literary histories in some languages are products of long courses of
At the same time, the Akademi is bound by considerations of uniformity and representation, a limitation not known to private publishers. Private publishers choose works in translation depending upon whether the given Source language enjoys prestige in literary and popular circles and whether the work in translation is marketable. If this implies that private publishers have greater autonomy in taking decisions about texts, they are not "free from the logic of the market." On the other hand, as a literary and cultural organisation, the Akademi can and does, to an extent, publish works that may not have a market value, but do have a 'literary' value. All these publishing interventions in literary matters add an interesting dimension to the case of translation. Translations then cease to be "retellings" and renderings to be seen merely in terms of linguistic and cultural signification. English translations from Indian languages today are shaped by the dynamism of the English-language publishing industry in India.

Coming back to the choice of text and language, the Akademi represents one paradigm that of democratic representation through translation. The Akademi acts as the only official forum for the literary enhancement of languages such as Dogri, Khasi and Garo. Large-scale commercial publishers like Penguin India and Rupa Harpercollins are driven by considerations of profit. Penguin India publishes translations from the ancient classical languages and has in this way carried on with the legacy of Penguin classics which originated with Penguin U K. At the same time, it also publishes titles from contemporary Indian works, especially those with a high degree of marketability. In an evaluation of texts in translation published by Penguin India, Zamir Ansari (Marketing Manager) notes
that only translations with a "universal appeal," such as its own publication of Satyajit Ray's *Feluda Stories* do well in the market. Rupa-Harpercollins has published well-known translations such as the *Appu Trilogy* of Satyajit Ray. However, Rupa-Harpercollins, does not have a regular programme of translation because on the whole it does not find translations viable. Compared with both a state-subsidized concern like the Akademi and profit-making publishing concerns like Penguin India and Rupa-Harpercollins, Katha has a much broader aim. Geetha Dharmarajan (the founder of Katha) states, "The basic difference between Katha and other publishers, state or otherwise, may be that we are interested in reading, in readers, in making reading a sustainable activity." This gives Katha the impetus to try out new authors and new languages. Katha makes no claim about inclusion of languages and tries to "steer clear of the politics of language and translation," and yet in a recent advertisement, Katha invited stories from languages such as Bhojpuri and Kutchi. Macmillan India entered into the arena of translation with its series of Modern Novels in Translation, its aim being to "show as authentic a picture as possible of the different strata of Indian society." This articulated aim has governed its decisions to select well-known novels of social realism in the major languages. At this point it needs to be mentioned that very often the selection of genres is also a publishing decision. Katha has focussed almost entirely on short stories, a commitment born of the founder's belief that "at the beginning of everything is the story." For those at Katha, 'story' represents the most organic and primal relationship between human beings and literature. The Akademi, on the other hand, ventures into genres such as autobiography, travelogue, poetry and literary treatise that do not interest private publishers. Drama in English translation has remained the most neglected area.
since it poses specific difficulties of translation and it is not as popular a form as fiction. Seagull publications have begun to play a very important role in this regard.

Coming back to policies of translation and their effects upon production of texts, Oxford University Press has had a history of successful translations that are prescribed in academic courses in India and abroad. However, OUP does not have a regular programme or policy regarding translation and in the words of the editor-in-charge, Rukun Advani, "it's a hit or miss thing." Translations are identified on the basis of editorial recommendations and very high quality as "independent English renderings." On the whole, being an educational publisher, OUP is obliged to lay emphasis upon academic and scholarly books. Kali for Women has also published a fair number of translations, but its aim is political feminism and translation is an important and unavoidable tool to achieve that end. Kali publishes Indian women's texts in English translation. Thus each publishing house has its own philosophy, and views its translation activity differently, and this inevitably determines its production.

I now wish to turn to the selection of source languages made by publishing houses. Most publishing houses have a history of publishing translations from the 'major' languages of the Union. Thus languages like Bengali, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada figure in commercial efforts but 'minor' languages such as Manipuri and Kashmiri hardly ever do. The Akademi's list of 'recognised' languages is more inclusive than that of the Eighth Schedule, and it publishes from dialects and 'minor' languages also. The marketing representative at Penguin, Zamir Ansari, says that decisions to publish from certain
languages are also dependent upon the availability of in-house editors. Editors in publishing houses select or commission a work of translation. In a cost-effective scenario, reviews of translations by outside reviewers increases costs and, therefore, editors are obliged to select from among languages that they know. Similarly, Renuka Chatterjee (Rupa-Harpercollins) states that their publishing house also publishes texts recommended by in-house editors. In the case of Katha, recommendations are sought through nominators who recommend a story for translation and publication. In brief, the preference given to some languages as source languages does not always depend upon 'literary' factors. The politics of translation are explored in the next chapter. At this point we need to look at some other factors governing translations today.

In broad terms, all private publishers share a common concern for commercial benefit. Each publisher sets about achieving this primary goal differently. The enterprise of publishing translation, as mentioned earlier, has not been very lucrative. Although the market today is more hospitable to this activity than before and publishers and translators are more competent at handling it, publishing translation is still an expensive business. Compared to other kinds of texts that can be priced high or sold in large volume, translations have small print-runs and are relatively low priced. Each publishing house needs to invent its own methods and niche to make translation a self-sustaining activity.

Mini Krishnan, general editor at Macmillan, states the case in no uncertain terms:

"The most important item of survival is money. I don’t believe that translations are lucrative unless you get one or two titles into university board prescriptions every year. Translations rarely pay for themselves. Hence our translations are targeted towards home
audience, students and foreign readers. My concern was how best to make it possible for theses translations to be both enjoyable reading material and textbook design. " According to Sujit Mukherjee, Macmillan's project of Modern Novels in Translation is a unique combination of "private vision and commercial effort."25 The nexus between academic institutions that help by absorbing texts for students and publishing houses that publish texts is a very crucial one. Rukun Advani asserts that "shifts in academic institutions are very necessary, publishers then follow suit." Once texts are prescribed for syllabi in universities and colleges, they continue to remain on the list. However, not all publishers rely upon educational institutions for their clientele. If Macmillan targets the market for educational books, Katha aims at the common reader and the neo-literate; Kali concerns itself with the market for feminist texts. Penguin and Harpercollins, on the other hand, aim at a general Indian readership and confine themselves to titles of general interest. Oxford University Press has no regular programs in translation but is willing to "take a risk" whenever there are well-known authors/texts and competent translators. On the whole OUP, Penguin and Rupa-Harpercollins find the market for translation very small and the returns rather low. However, the fact that they still continue to have new titles indicates that a market exists at present and possibilities may improve in the near future. It was mentioned earlier that almost all Katha volumes have gone into reprints. If Katha has created ripples in the domestic market, translations (among other books) by Kali for Women have a market overseas. Within India, Katha has popularised translations by instituting awards and holding competitions. Kali for women, on the other hand, has defined its niche, that of gender-specific texts, and hence its titles (which happen to be in translation) are absorbed in new disciplinary formations. One of the ways in which
translations can become an on-going commercial activity is by getting absorbed in new canons and pedagogic formations. Some of these developments have been discussed in the previous chapter. Looking at the publishing scenario today, one feels that this is perhaps a good time to be publishing translations. The field is likely to grow more exciting and competitive. Picador India, mentioned earlier, plans to tap the Indian potential not just in terms of writing in English, but translations as well. From the publisher's point of view, it now means "recognizing the importance of quality translations and paying for them; and, simultaneously, developing the market for writing in translation, and translation itself as a desirable skill." 26
Notes


2 Das History 1991: 32


5 Sally Taylor, "The India Publishing Scene in English" Publishers Weekly (1996) www.bookwire.com\pw\asia\india\publishing.html


7 Mini Krishnan, personal interview, her comments in this chapter are drawn from an interview taken on 26 January 1998. For a full transcript see Appendix 2.

8 Urvashi Butalia, personal interview, her comments appearing in the course of this chapter are drawn from an interview taken on 26 December 1997. See Appendix 2.

9 Sally Taylor, "India's Trade in Imported Books" Publishers Weekly

10 Renuka Chatterjee, personal interview, 30 December 1997. See Appendix 2.


12 Sally Taylor "Publishing in India" Publishers Weekly
13 David Davidar quoted in Makarand Paranjpe “Everyone seems to have a novel ready for publication” The Economic Times, (1992) 29 December.


15 Meenakshi Mukherjee, "Interface : A Dialogue" The Book Review

16 Ritu Menon, Foreword River of Fire (Aag Ka Dariya) trans. Qurratulain Hyder, (New Delhi: Katha, 1998)

17 Menon, Foreword, River of Fire


19 Mukherjee, "Interface : A Dialogue"

20 Menon, Foreword


22 Zamir Ansari, personal interview, 29 December 1997

23 Geeta Dharmarajan, personal interview, 11 April 1998.

24 Rukun Advani, personal interview, 29 December 1997

25 Sujit Mukherjee, "Transcreating Translation" Indian Literature 180 (1997) July-August, 158-167

26 Menon "A Publisher's Viewpoint."