Conclusion/s

"Reading a translation as a translation means reflecting on its conclusions, the domestic dialects and discourses in which it is written and the domestic cultural situation in which it is read." 1

It is difficult to come to a single conclusion at the end of any study because a nuanced understanding of any issue involves examination from many points of view I have proceeded from certain premises in the writing of this dissertation, some of which were modified in the process, some new ones were also formed. It has not been possible to test and examine all postulates, compulsions of time and space do not allow a just treatment of all aspects of a study. In this final section of the thesis which I call conclusion/s rather than simply conclusion, I shall first recapitulate the areas studied, and therefore point to others not covered by this thesis. In a limited way that translation ground which has been prepared by others writing on this subject before me, receives yet another turn. I trust that this turning of the soil fertilizes the ground and opens up further areas of research. The four chapters leading to this one have established the following.

a) A historiography of translation devised on the basis of 'select' translations by British as well as Indian translators, had a twofold purpose. first, it delineated various ideological contexts of Indian literature in English and second, it showed how the current phase in translation marks a departure at the same time that it extends the tradition, in other words, there is both contrast and continuity.

b) Certain kinds of literary forms and genres, such as ILET in this case, occupy centre stage at specific points in history. The factors responsible for this prominence are not confined to literary departments alone but derive from various contexts. The increased output of cultural products such as literary texts is a fall-out of almost invisible interactions of 'demand' and 'supply.' Shifts within translation theory and literary studies at large, socio-cultural changes in readerships and the globalising
tendencies all over world created an atmosphere conducive to the growth of ILET. There is at the same time, the development of a market.

c) The growth of English translation activity in India is not just concurrent with, but to a certain extent, a fall-out of the vigorous changes in the English-language publishing industry in India. The publishing industry and the economic context it represents underlie not just the proliferation of texts but also some of the choices and selections of texts.

d) English translation activity in a multilingual country like India has many local ramifications that differ from one linguistic community to another, these play a crucial role in the 'representation' and 'politics' of translation activity. The case of Gujarati provides a model by which translation activity can be viewed through an individual language and literature.

The areas outlined are the ones with which this study has been concerned. One is only too aware that the historiography attempted in Chapter 1 on the basis of specific texts could have included significant figures like Bankimchandra and Sri Aurobindo, but a paucity of discursive material inhibited a detailed discussion of these writers. The links between translation activity and parallel developments in related print and visual media in chapter 2 have not taken account of the productive exchange between translated texts and television productions of these, or of the fact that regional channels air 'outside' texts through subtitles or dubbing. Technological advances in software also make it possible to render Japanese or Tamil texts in the original through the Internet. What are the long-term implications of this for English language translations? These interesting issues fall outside the scope of this thesis. It is too early to make any inferences regarding the impact of the latest technological advances, but without doubt they constitute a fertile area of investigation. Publishing houses were dealt with in chapter 3 within the constraints of responses received and interviews granted. It may be noted that the entry of foreign publishers interested in publishing Indian texts in English translation may reconfigure editorial priorities as far as Indian publishers are concerned.
It remains to take account of certain problematic issues that pursue English translation activity in India. The most important of these has to do with the ideological implications of English translations. Some crucial questions are

a. Do translations in English affect or obliterate interregional activity?
b. Does translation into English perpetuate the dominance of English over the bhashas?
c. What kind of representation of 'Indian reality' is made through English translation?

These questions may be considered under the rubric of asymmetrical power relations. We first turn to the question of interregional translation, that is, the effect of English translation upon translations from one bhasha into another. Both the Sahitya Akademi and more especially the NBT through its Aadan-Pradan are concerned with translations from one Indian language into another. Despite the government backing provided to these two institutions, not much seems to have been done in the field of inter-regional translation. Indra Nath Chaudhury remarks, "Through an assessment made of translations done in India from 1875 to 1990, it has been discovered that only a few translations are made from one Indian language to another of good literature." Chaudhury maintains that there are three reasons behind this. First, there is general apathy among writers in accepting translation as a major literary activity, and second, there are not many people who know languages other than their own and third, there is a problem of marketing regional language books per se, let alone translated books. One may conclude from Chaudhury's observations that the paucity of translations from one language into another is not an outcome of translations into English. However, it is ungainsayable that the networks of
distribution and prominence available to English-language activity are not available to 
regional language publishing

Literary exchanges do not take place in an innocuous space and time. On the contrary, 
they occur within clear hierarchical structures. It was mentioned elsewhere in this thesis 
that when, in the nineteenth century, translations were undertaken from English literature 
into Indian languages, they clearly established the superiority of the 'donor' or the source 
language. Similarly translations from the Vulgate Bible into European vernaculars did 
enrich the vernaculars, but the hierarchy was clearly in favour of Latin. Also, translations 
from Sanskrit into the bhashas performed the same task of 'enriching' and elevating the 
status of the bhashas. What donor-receptor relationship is being forged through Indian 
Literature in English translation? The case of ILET is unique. English is a metropolitan 
language of the elite, but it is also a receptor. For this reason Harish Trivedi notes that the 
phenomenon of donor language as superior, as outlined above, does not hold true in this 
case. He remarks that earlier literary interactions meant translations from an elite 
language into all the bhashas, now all bhasha texts aim at contact with one English 
language. The assumption here, according to Trivedi, is that English can take anything, 
that everything will fit into that idiom, that historical mode and will sell.

Translation into English is part of a world-wide circuit of cultural exchange. The impact 
of ILET and the representational claims it makes are to be viewed not in the context of an 
Indian market alone, but also the context of world-market. Translation wields enormous 
power in constructing representations of foreign culture. It has very often changed, for

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better or worse, the perception of the source culture, and helped sustain stereotypes (as it in the case of Gitanjali) or even, in some cases, erode them. Various kinds of texts have been translated - social realism (e.g. Paraja and Samskara) with a strong emphasis upon the caste-system, women's texts (the works of Ismat Chugtai and Mahasweta Devi), radical verse of the vacana kind (Says Tuka and the Songs of Mira). Providing a socio-linguistic perspective, R S. Gupta notes how “certain writers, certain thematic concerns and certain formal innovations or experiments are often projected and promoted (or popularised) through translations.”

Is the story of 'orientalist' translations being repeated in a neo-colonial world? Trivedi warns against such positioning when he says:

"The ultimate question before us in India is where to situate ourselves and our literary culture vis-à-vis the new post-colonial global cultural configuration. Are we going to align ourselves, sooner rather than later, with the great Anglo-American axis, as a nation and a people who read and write only in English? Or do we have the strength of our local earthy smells to hold out against this linguistic and cultural totalization, this increasing monolingual literary authoritarianism? In this case shall we wait to be translated into English or any other language on our own terms, as do China, Japan, East Europe and Latin America?"

It seems to me that it is necessary to attend to Trivedi's note of caution and the cultural implications of English translation have to be kept in mind. At the same time, Trivedi overstates the case of 'cultural totalization.' The dynamic nature of this industry which has grown not simply to slake the West's thirst for an exotic India, but also as a profound response to the sociological truth of our own lives, is an important factor.

Finally, as teachers and academics, we also need to consider how translation courses need to be framed and taught. Does the availability of Indian texts require more indigenous theoretical models? This is not the forum to discuss Indian and Western ways of judging translation, but surely the long and fluid tradition of translation and adaptation in India.
runs counter to the Western paranoia about faithfulness. Another question that has acquired some force in recent debates is whether ILET texts are to be juxtaposed with IWE texts or whether they should be framed as separate courses. In other words is there a link between texts about India written originally in English and texts translated from regional languages into English, based on some assumption that both reflect an 'Indian reality' provided by Indian writers and both fall, somewhat uncomfortably, within the broad category of literature in English? These questions are relevant in the framing of courses and pose before us another area of examination.

One may conclude by saying that the entire field is rich with interest for Indian academics teaching in English departments across the country. This thesis has attempted to uncover some of the soil within this fertile ground.
NOTES


3 Harish Trivedi, personal interview, 15 February 1998

4 David Bellos, "Our own and other tongue" *New Writing 6* eds A S Byatt and Peter Porter (Vintage in assoc with The British Council, 1997) 339

5 R S Gupta, "Translation A Socio-linguistic Perspective" *Translation and Multilingualism Post-Colonial Contexts* ed Shantha Ramakrishna (Pencraft International, 1997) 183-191