

Review

Translations from the margins and the role of the market

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Indian literature in English was the direct result of political act: colonization. The readers of this literature are predominantly from an urban middle class background, products of an educational system inherited from the colonizers. This background facilitated the internalizing of the Western ways of looking at their own world. So when something conformed to this discourse that they had naturalized, the readers easily accepted it. That was why, sometimes, one found texts which had the tribals as subjects/ objects depicted in a familiar way, were accorded uncritical acclaim. This paper has examined two Odia (a regional language of India) novels in English translations which are based on the lives of tribals, to show how the depiction of the “tribals” as a category has gone a long way in the regulation and reification of hierarchical orders. The market forces have determined the selection of these texts for translation because they offered an essentialist version, which was acceptable to the dominant culture.

Key words:- Margins, Market, Translation, Tribals, Hegemony, Postcolonial

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper will be to argue, with the specific examples of two Odia novels in English translations, that market forces have determined the selection of these texts from a “minor” Bhasha (Regional) literature like Odia for translation only because they offer an essentialist version of the tribals which is acceptable to the dominant culture. When only such versions are allowed to circulate in the market, they reify and sustain the stereotyped images of the marginalized. In such instances, translation, instead of being a liberating experience in a postcolonial set up, consolidates the hegemony of the dominant group. Marginality is one of the basic theoretical aspects of postcolonial studies. It takes its impetus from issues of both colonial and

postcolonial subordination and oppression on the grounds of race, gender, religion or ethnicity. It is also a strategy encompassing hegemonic cultural codes where the marginalized often remains silent in the face of exploitation and oppression.

The postcolonial writers and translators have assumed a new kind of colonialism and show the tribals as the “ethnic other” and at times “as barbarous” in relation to the dominant classes of society. Often the tribals are romanticized or perceived as “loyal” and “devoted people”, a stereotype about the tribals that is cherished by the urban elites. There is also no way to verify the authenticity of these representations of the tribals by the postcolonial writers/ translators because these cannot be

compared with tribal writings expressing the tribal experience coming from tribals themselves. Tribals are illiterate and much of the material about tribal experience is in oral form. Gopinath Mohanty (1914-1991) and Pratiba Ray (1944-) are two major novelists of Odia literature. Mohanty's *Paraja* and Ray's *Adi Bhumis* which are translated into English as *Paraja* and *The Primal Land* respectively by Bikram K. Das deal with the lives and culture of tribal people. An examination of the translator's introduction to these two novels shows that the selection of the texts for translation caters to the acceptance of the image of the source culture by the audience of the target culture. To quote Mahasweta Sengupta:

By formulating an identity that is acceptable to the dominant culture, the translator selects and rewrites only those texts that conform to the target culture's 'image' of the source culture; the rewriting often involves intense manipulation and simplification for the sake of gaining recognition in and by the metropole. For, of course, the discursive parameters of the dominant power are such that they restrict the entry of texts that do not fit into their idea of the other. (160)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

India is a country of multi-lingual and multi-ethnic identities with hundreds of languages and thousands of dialects. Translation is the only process to bring unity in diversity. Exotopic translation gained foothold during postcolonial period. Translations from one regional language to another as well as to English ramified. It is only through translation that the people of India can appreciate the diversity marking the lives of people of different territories. Indian literature in English translation has carved a niche for itself in the present day literary sphere. When a regional language text is translated into English, it always ensures a wide audience for it. To quote Diptiranjana Pattanaik (2002), an important Odia critic and writer: "In fact, to twist Benjaminian logic a little, translation into English gives oriya works 'life' as opposed to 'after life' " (83). My paper attempts to explore the representations of tribals in literature by looking at two Odia fictions in English translations. An outsider who has no knowledge of the literary scenario of a state often depends upon these English translations. And if a text translated is not a canonical text, then an outsider is bound to get a distorted image of the literary canon. Often it so happens that a text selected for translation is not a canonical text. There are many reasons for the same, "market forces" being the most glaring one. Gopinath Mohanty and Pratiba Ray are two major novelists of Odia literature. Mohanty's *Paraja* and Ray's

Adibhumi which are translated into English as *Paraja* and *The Primal Land* respectively by Bikram K. Das deal with the lives and culture of tribal people. I have examined the translator's introduction to these two novels to show how the choice of certain texts dealing with the marginalised, for translation into English, is market oriented. The market is captured by educated elite in whose discourse a particular image of the tribal fits in very well. The selection of texts for this paper is not exhaustive, but by a process of extrapolation larger conclusions can be drawn.

DISCUSSION

In the recent years, there has been a spurt in the publications of English translations from Bhasha literature and the spurt points to the existence of a market for such translations. In order to know the nature of this market, it is pertinent to understand the nature of the consumers of such products, for a market depends on consumers. The consumers/ readers of English translations of Bhasha literatures are predominantly from an urban middleclass background, brought up in an educational system inherited from the British and the growth of this class resulted in a rise in the number of readers of English texts. There was a perceptible increase in original writings in English.

Many writers found global audiences. Once this trend was established, the market looked for new products and the largely unexplored rich traditions of Bhasha literatures provided a fertile source. Translations from Bhasha literature were taken up in earnest. Some of these translations even managed to reach the rarified atmospheres of a few British and American universities. Thus, the increase in the number of translations from Bhasha literature is a result of the growth of the English educated Indian middleclass. When a particular class is the chief patron of a market, the market has to cater to the tastes of that class. Therefore, the market allows the circulation of certain products/ texts that may be readily accepted by that set of consumers. This, in turn, leads to the selection of "certain views" and "certain voices" that can be easily marketed. "What and who gets translated", for what reasons, as Anuradha Dingawaney (1996) notes, "... has to do with selection of certain voices, certain views, certain texts by the publishing industry (presumably in response to what it believes the readers will read) and by reviewers and critics..." (5).

The middle class has naturalized the Western ways of looking at their own world. Tejaswini Niranjana (1992) notes, "English education also familiarized the Indian with ways of seeing, techniques of translation, or modes of representation that came to be accepted as natural" (778). When something conforms to the colonial discourses which they have inherited and naturalized, the readers easily accept it. That is why, sometimes one

finds texts which treat the unfamiliar/ marginalized as objects of study using the methodologies learnt from West, considered for translation. These texts offer an “essentialist” version of the marginalized that is easily recognizable because such versions already exist in the discourse of the dominant culture. Unfortunately, such translations, instead of being tools of cross-cultural understanding, commit a sort of violence. Lawrence Venuti reminds in his discussion on the violence of translation, that it is always configured in hierarchies of dominance and marginality.

It is also a fact that the translations from Bhasha literature have to contest for space in a market where Indian English writings are struggling for a foothold, with the dominant metropolitan texts already firmly entrenched there. In an overcrowded market place like this, most of the publishers prefer not to gamble on relatively unknown writers, however powerful their works may be and however well known they may be in their own regions. Authors are selected for translation only when they win prestigious awards like the Gyanapith or the Sahitya Akademi, to cash in on their recently earned fame. Otherwise, only nationally well-known writers, with the marketing machines of the big publishing houses behind them, are translated. Moreover, it is not as if all Bhasha literatures get equal opportunities to enter the market. A hierarchy is evident with translations from “strong” literatures like Hindi, Bengali, Kannada, Malayalam, and Tamil far outnumbering translations of literatures from the “margins” like Assamese, Odia, and Manipuri etc.

The hegemonic influence of the colonial practices persists. The center shifted from Europe and a new center emerged. Certain areas, depending on their proximity to the center of power identified themselves with the center and the rest were consigned to the margins. These marginalized centers - Odisha is one - in turn practiced their own versions of marginalization. The English educated middle class consolidated power by defining itself as the norm and consigned to the margins those who were yet uninitiated. The worst victims of this process are the tribal people living in the hills and jungles of Odisha. Rarely does one find the tribal people as subjects in mainstream literature. Whenever a writer used tribal life as the subject, much was made of his/her sympathies for the cause of the tribals. Even the negative images of the tribals were accepted as truths about the tribals. Often the tribals have been rhetorically used by the dominant culture to make statements about their own benevolent concerns. Therefore, when translations of works on such marginalized people from the “margins” happen to appear from prestigious publishing houses it becomes clear as to what extent the “benevolent” authority of the center determines the fate of such texts.

Normally the best work of an author is selected for translation, the best here standing for literary excellence. However, sometimes, what is taken up for translation is

determined by factors other than literary excellence. As Maria Tymoczko (1999) notes, “Patrons – once wealthy aristocrats – now take the form of press and publishing houses, universities and granting agencies, which are in turn dependent on such groups as a readership, a critical establishment or government officials. Patrons determine the parameters of what is translated just as they determine what is published... literary merit, though not insignificant, is rarely the only or even the chief issue to consider....” (31). Major writers from the minor languages do not always find their best works translated. Particular texts are translated only because they fulfill certain criteria: texts that are canonical or those that cater to academic interests. Perhaps, the publishers think that there is a greater chance of acceptance by the market if they deal with “in” issues like minority politics, tribal peoples, and gender politics etc. A favorable condition for such works already exists, thanks to the proliferation of debates in various media. The academia also sustains interest in these issues by prescribing such texts for specialized courses and the print media through book reviews. Thus, market forces along with the academia are a part of the “battery of institutions” complicit in this process of selection of particular voices and particular views to be made available in the market by allowing only certain texts to be translated and published.

The translations of the two major Odia novels, Gopinath Mohanty's *Paraja* and Pratibha Ray's *Adi Bhumi*, offer interesting insights into the above fact. Mohanty's *Paraja* was first published in the year 1945, and its translation appeared with the title unchanged forty-two years later, in 1987. Ray's *Adi Bhumi*, first published in 1993, appeared in translation as *The Primal Land* in 2001, only eight years later. That it took Mohanty forty-two years to appear in English translation, which Ray could manage within eight years, is indicative of the widening market. Incidentally, the same translator Bikram K. Das did both the translations. The dominant cultural factors that conditioned Odia fictions in the early 20th century introduced the theme of marginality which was taken up by Gopinath Mohanty who wrote many novels on tribal people. This was the time in India when there was an urge to focus attention on the neglected sections of the society. Many Indian English writers along with regional writers took up the issues of the marginalized in their novels. Gopinath Mohanty, the famous Odia novelist, worked as an officer of the state administrative service. In that capacity he worked in different parts of Odisha, particularly the tribal dominated areas and acquired first-hand experience about their lives and culture. He was deeply moved by the way the simple tribals were exploited by the moneylenders. He was curious about their culture, mixed with them, and picked up their dialects. For him the tribals belonged to an ancient stage of human civilization.

Gopinath Mohanty published twenty four novels out of

which four novels (*Dadi Budha*, *Paraja*, *Amrutara Santana*, *Apahanca*) are based on the lives of different tribes. He got the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1955 for his novel *Amrutara Santana* (1949) and Gyanapith Award in 1974 for his novel *Mati Matala* (1946). Although the tribals constitute 25% of the total population of Odisha, they rarely had any literary representation by earlier novelists. Mohanty was bold enough to bring them into the arena of his novels. Hardly a couple of novels with the tribal themes like, *Bhima Bhuiyan* (1908) of Gopala Ballava Das and *Bana Gahana Tale* (1944) of Kanhu Charan Mohanty were written before him. *Dadi Budha* was Mohanty's first novel on tribal life depicting the lives of tribes like "Kondhs" and "Parajas" residing in the hills and jungles of Odisha. This novel was translated into English as *Ancestors* (1997) by Arun Kumar Mohanty. The translator in his introduction has drawn a comparison of this novel with *Things Fall Apart* of Chinua Achebe, showing how the outsider's interference brings disaster to the lives of the tribals.

Paraja was published in 1945 by Gopinath Mohanty. It was translated into English with the same title by B.K. Das. It vividly portrays the lives, customs, and rituals of the Paraja tribe living in Koraput district. It is also the sad tale of a family crushed under the oppression and exploitation of outsiders like forest guards and moneylenders. This extreme exploitation hardens and dehumanizes the protagonist Sukru Jani who beheaded the moneylender. Sukru Jani can comprehend the natural calamities and the loss thereby, but it is beyond his comprehension to understand the loss that is man-made. He compromised with the loss of his wife who was dragged away by a man-eating tiger and tried to weave his life anew with his two grown up sons and two adult daughters. But he could not comprehend, how for a meagre amount of money that he had taken as a loan from the moneylender, and later mortgaging his only piece of land, "he and his children were transformed from free men into gotis and serfs, bound to the Sahukar (moneylender) forever" (Das 1987, vii).

Prativa Ray is another important Odia novelist with twenty novels and many short stories to her credit. She received the Moorti Devi award for her novel *Jajnaseni* which portrays the character of Draupadi of Indian epic Mahabharata in a different shade. Her novel *Adi Bhumi* which was translated as *The Primal Land* by Bikram K. Das is a novelized ethnography of Bonda people, a primitive tribe living in the remote part of southern Odisha. The novelist describes in details the hills, houses, family life, ritual and customs of the Bondas who are often the victims of their own logic and belief.

To appear in English translation from a major publishing house is a faraway dream for most of the writers from Odisha. Even prolific writers like Mohanty and Ray till recently had *Paraja* and *The Primal Land* respectively as translation of their works. Both the writers

are recipients of prestigious awards. But curiously enough, the translations are not of the books for which they received the awards. Therefore, one feels tempted to ask what is so special about the two novels to merit translation.

The answer lies in the fact that not only both the novels are based on tribal people but also they are regarded as authentic accounts of tribal life. Odisha has a large tribal population. Some of these tribal people are thought to be the "most primitive." In the market, the predominant images of the tribals available are invariably stereotyped ones like "most primitive", "noble savage", "classic savage" etc. What is most surprising is the fact that even government publications subscribe to these stereotypes without any reservations. What is still more perplexing is that sometimes even literary texts collaborate to reinforce these images. Therefore, whenever a literary text represents the tribals in such terms, it is presumed that it will have a wide market. In order to serve its own interests, the market, in collusion with the media, sustains these stereotypes by allowing such texts to circulate. The descriptions of the tribals of Odisha, particularly of the Bondas, on the internet as given by the travel companies that operate "Tribal Tours" to Odisha, clearly indicates the kind of image the later wants to project. They portray the tribals as naked primitives, almost savages, fascinating, thoughtlessly violent, and mysterious, usually as less than human; their land exotic; their culture unaffected by civilization; their dresses strange. Here is a Government of India sponsored website:

The Bondas...have preserved themselves comparatively unaffected by the march of civilization. Indeed, by plainsmen and officials, the Bondas are regarded as entirely savage, almost as the classic savage type. The strange dress and appearance of their unfamiliar tounge [sic]... There is every reason to suppose that the Bondas have changed very little during their long history and in them one can have a change of studying a type of character and its material expression that may be millennia old. In Bonda community the bride is older than the groom. Ladies of the Bonda community are half naked [sic]. By nature Bondas are short temper and they get angry at the simplest thing and forget the relationship and commit murder. Murder is a simple thing for Bondas, because of this a lot of person [sic] has been life impressioned [sic] at the Koraput Jail due to this Bonda population has been reduced a lot during the last decade. Here it is important that this community should be taken care from its extint [sic]. (<http://malkangiri.nic.in/Tribes.htm>)

This one is about a photo tour:

Imagine a kaleidoscope of resplendent colors, beguiling faces and fascinating lifestyles. Now picture secluded hamlets of mysterious, seldom visited tribes... You have just imagined Orissa, a world apart from the rest of India, but just as intriguing. It is the epitome of an unspoiled land – a gem among exotic travel destinations. (<http://www.photoexplorertours.com/orissa.htm>.)

This one is a traveler's account:

They drink like crazy. We had to travel with a policeman because of the trouble the Bonda men are causing sometimes when they are drunk ... they still carry the bow and arrow Our worlds are so different. (<http://home.wanadoo.nl/rslengs/india.e.html>)

The uncanny similarities that one finds between the above descriptions and the way Mohanty and Ray represent the tribal characters in both the novels are quite significant. They essentialize the image of a prototypical tribal. These descriptions reflect and reinforce the general perceptions of the dominant culture regarding the tribal world. The market forces try to cash in on these perceptions. The translator also highlights these aspects in his introductions to both the translations. The term "tribal" has a negative connotation as it has been designated by the British. Dominant categories in Indian societies had contributed to the marginalization of the tribal cultures. The very terms like "tribe", "indigenous people", "adivasis" point towards the politics of representation. We cannot claim to be postcolonial/postmodern because, we who live amidst the lingering presence of colonial influences, are sometimes wittingly or unwittingly a party to its perpetuation. We should rather look inwards and resist the temptation to do a facile celebration of the liberating capacity of postcolonial discourse. It would seem a simple enough assumption that the end of colonialism ushers in the end of colonial mindsets. Yet the cultural residues of colonialism linger in the postcolonial world as an ideal. There is an over dependence on the Manichean allegories of the centre and the margin, oppressor and victim, only within the frame work of Europe and its colonies, forgetting that we (the dominant majority) have been practicing and still do act the same ways within our societies. Not much has changed in the way we perceive the minorities, both religious and ethnic kinds.

An analysis of the translator's introductions clearly shows the ways the translator has tried to package his products. The introduction is where the translator directly addresses his audience, justifies his selections, gives his interpretations, and outlines his strategy. He rather leads the readers into a particular reading of the text. The translator withholds certain information, thinking

perhaps, that it may be irrelevant to his readers. Incidentally, both the translations are condensed versions of the originals but the translator does not mention this in his introductions. Mohanty mentions in the "acknowledgements" of the translated version of *Paraja* that, "Working on my own original translation, and at the instance of the late Oliver Stallybrass, Dr. Das prepared a condensed version...." (Das 1987). Ray's *Adi Bhumii* is 845 pages long whereas Das compresses it into 298 pages. Das, in his version, also completely omits an eighteen-page long introduction by Ray that was in the original, without any explanation. She mentions in the introduction that the topic of her post-doctoral research project was, "The effects of education on the criminal tendencies of the Bondas." In Das's (2001) preface it becomes: "the cultural pattern of the Bondas and its effects on the women" (vi). This twist to the title of the project comes about because Das wants to present Ray as a writer concerned with the role of women, keeping in view the tendencies of the market to valorize such writers.

The introductions to these two novels provide ample evidence of the redeployment of colonial images/discourses in order to cater to a primarily Western audience. Representations never occur in an ideological vacuum. They are meant to relay a message. Sometimes representations serve as tools of ideological dominations as evidenced in colonial representations of the colonized. This question gathers more immediacy if they happen to be of the marginalized/ tribal. Such representations are easily appropriated by the dominant culture, declared to be authentic, and kept in circulation; and a battery of institutions like the market, the academia, the press, and the state sponsored libraries along with translations are involved in this process. Moreover, there is always a chance, because such representations are few, of these becoming the benchmarks for any writing on the marginalized.

In the Anglo-Indian novels about tribals in India like Verrier Elwin's *Phulmat of the Hills* (1937), *A Cloud That's Dragonist*, and John Master's *The Coral Strand* (1962), one finds the novelists showing the tribals as the "ethnic other", at times "barbarous" in relation to the dominant classes of society. It was also assumed that the Britishers were their saviours. A similar feel comes when Bikram K. Das (1987), the translator states, "I believe that any translation into English should read like an authentic English text and that the syntax and idiom should be acceptable to the native speaker of English" (*Paraja* vii). He clearly identifies his target audience and gives his introduction the necessary slant. He tries his best to make the translation "acceptable" to the native speaker of English (whatever it may mean) by not only writing "authentic" English which also is an indicator of class privileges, but also taking pains to establish the authenticity of the 'tribal experience' of the authors. He

evokes a world, which is situated far away, inhabited by strange people with stranger customs. Their story is both "poignant and lyrical" (*Paraja V*) set in a world possessing "immense charm" (*Paraja V*). The tribal life that "is rich in elements of folk-lore, mythology and magic..." (*The Primal Land vi*) is at the same time "a primordial and elemental way of life" (*Paraja VI*). The tribal existence has "a blissful innocence" (*Paraja VII*). He also hints at the sexually deviant nature of the tribals in mentioning the "wild abandon of the orgiastic harvest festival" (*Paraja VII*). He is condescending enough to say that such orgies have the author's approval, but simultaneously he tries to place the author in a different mould from "The disapproving eyes of a modern society..." that "were a million miles away" (*Paraja VII*). The tribals possess a "primeval consciousness" (*Paraja VII*) and "do not have the advantage of a complicated system of metaphysics" (*Paraja VII*). Even their gods and goddesses are much too simple.

There are about one hundred and twenty lines in the translator's preface to *The Primal Land*. Sixty lines are about "some ethnic and cultural traits of the Bondas" that "have exercised a special fascination for anthropologists". And one of these is, "Pre-marital sex is condoned if not encouraged; the young women share communal dormitories known as Selani Dingos, which are visited by males from neighboring villages..." (*The Primal Land vi*). It sounds like these Bonda males visit the Selani Dingos as if it is a brothel. The fact is that communal dormitories are not peculiar to the Bondas only, and are quite common to many other tribes. But the impression one gets here is that it is only the Bonda who have this "fascinating" institution. The "wild ways" and "encouraged to meet for night-time fun and frolics" of the advertisement finds a strong echo in the translator's version. It becomes clear why the translator wants to highlight these "fascinating" details as one reads on. They are fascinating: "Some ethnic and cultural traits of the Bondas have exercised a special fascination for anthropologists" (*The Primal Land vi*). The translator goes on to list a few of these cultural traits, the most remarkable being "the Bonda system of marriage, in which the wife is always eight to ten years older than her husband" (*The Primal Land vi*). He goes on to add few more pieces of information like the Bonda's fearsome reputation for aggression, violence, and criminality. These nuggets of "truths" add up to complete the description of the Bondas as the most primitive and the Parajas as essentially simple and innocent. The translator reduces the Bondas and Parajas to an essential idea of what it means to be a tribal, thus simplifying the process of acceptance by the readers. This conflation of violence with innocence harks back to the Orientalist images generated during the colonial times.

In the Anglo-Indian novels about the tribals, one finds

the novelist's penchant to romanticise the tribals by describing their physical features, particularly of the tribal women. This exoticism fulfils the Westerner's love for the antique. In the novel *Phulmat of the Hills*, the novelist Verrier Elwin celebrates the beauty of the tribal woman Phulmat. The Indian English writers like Gita Mehta, Kamala Markandaya, Arun Joshi, etc. in their portrayal of the tribals have also romanticized them because these stereotyped images of the marginalized are always cherished by the dominant elites. The pervasive influence of Orientalism manifests in the kind of "Tribalism" practiced in the modern times. The authenticity and the sympathy of the writers are alluded to, reminiscent of the Orientalist discourses. The translator is unaware of the "violence" inherent in such translatorial practices. The translator privileges certain aspects of the texts keeping in mind the interests of the dominant- culture readers in whose discourse the stereotyped images of the tribals as "primitive", "uncivilized" and "simple" pre-exist.

The tribals have been the "others" of the civilized Aryans. That the relation between the Aryans and the tribals has always been an unequal one favoring the former needs no elaboration. The Sanskrit speaking Aryans considered the tribal people as inferior because of their difference, both cultural and physical. In fact, Romila Thapar (2000) finds a manifestation of such an attitude in the prototypical Nishada figure of the ancient texts: Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, 59; Vishnu Purana, 1-13; and the Matsya Purana, X.4-10, where "the dark, short, ugly Nishada became the prototype of all forest dwelling people" (127). These people were variously described as "asuras", "dasas", "paras", and "mlechhas". Such descriptions are devoted to assigning specific cultures or cultural traits to their proper category, such as Aryan vs. tribals, civilised vs. primitive or modern vs. traditional. Relative cultural differences are turned into absolute natural oppositions. This explains why there was never any attempt to assimilate them – they were too inferior. So the tribal people remained as the civilizational "other" of the Aryans and the subsequent generations internalised this fact through the ancient texts which were important part of the lives of the civilised populace.

In the translator's preface to the novel *The Primal Land*, the translator makes certain claims on behalf of the text. He labels it as "anthropological fiction or rather fictionalised anthropology" (vii). This claim rests on the author's actual experience of the people through several years of the research. The translator further qualifies it by saying that, "the project involved extended period of stay in the Bonda country and close interaction with members of the tribe, who are traditionally hostile to *Khangars* (outsiders)" (vii). What is given to understand in the above description is that the text rests on a platform of empirical signs because it is anthropological. Anthropology is a systematic and hence scientific study of people and their cultures that involves close

participation and observation. In other words certain claims to truth are made on behalf of the text. Moreover, how the search for truth is always fraught with danger is evoked in the mention of the traditional hostility of the Bondas. One can easily sense that the author's experience is being privileged here and the truth value of the text is foregrounded. In other words what the text is supposed to do is that in the absence of any true knowledge of the Bonda life, it supplements that epistemological lack. The problem in such a claim is that it asks the textual representation to be read as truth. To quote Said (2001) on the problematic of representations:

I believe it needs to be made clear about cultural discourse and exchange within a culture that what is commonly circulated by it is not "truth" but representations. It hardly needs to be demonstrated again that language itself is a highly organised and encoded system, which employs many devices to express, indicate, exchange messages and information, represent, and so on and so forth. In any instance of at least written language, there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a *represence*, or a representation.... And these representations rely upon institutions, traditions, conventions, agreed upon course of understanding for their effects. (21-22)

Here we have textual representations that claim a truth value be assigned to it by virtue of its being real and authentic. That authenticity relies upon the institutionalised tradition of anthropology as a method of study of people and their cultures. The most important textual strategy adopted by the two writers to achieve realism in the narrative is the explicit rendering of ethnographic details. The narrative is sought to be authenticated by the sheer density of documentation – in the use of the songs, rituals, customs, myths, folklores, and the languages. The translator uncritically valorizes such documentation because he fails to see them as textual strategies. The translator seems to be unaware that these details are textual representations and he wants the textual effects produced by such to be presumed by the readers from the dominant culture as authentic representations of the tribal world. Edward Said, in his analysis of textual representations of the Orient in *Orientalism*, emphasizes the fact that representations can never be exactly realistic.

Anthropology as a discipline and method in India is a gift of the colonial system. Tejaswini Niranjana (1992) in her discussions of the role of translation and anthropology says: "Social anthropologists and ethnographers, since the beginning of their discipline in the nineteenth century, have also seen their tasks as epitomizing humanism in its desire to provide their

(Western) audience with a body of knowledge about unknown people..." (47). Human beings have been always curious about different people and their cultures. It is a well established fact now that anthropological studies of the natives have a history of facilitating colonial control. Ray's post-doctoral project was "The effect of education on the criminal tendencies of the Bondas", and the novel *The Primal Land* is a happy outcome of the project. She undertook a study of the changes in the Bondas-- all of whom are assumed to be pathological criminals as the title suggests-- after coming into contact with civilising forces like education. An interesting parallel exists in Verrier Elwin's description of the Bonda people. The translator draws on the authority of Verrier Elwin as a writer of an established genre of anthropological fiction in India. Ray is supposed to be a continuation, writing in that genre.

Verrier Elwin (1950), the professional preacher turned anthropologist has this to say about the Bondas: "Notorious for their violent and inhospitable ways, they have preserved themselves comparatively unaffected by the march of civilisation. Indeed by Plainsmen and officials, the Bondas are regarded as entirely savage, almost as the classic savage type-- the strange dress and appearance of the women, the passionate and homicidal temper of the men, their unfamiliar tongues...." (181). Elwin uses words like "enchanting", "beautiful", "romantic" to describe the Bonda land, but he adds that the place was inhospitable. His conclusion was based not on the hostility of the people but their refusal to carry his luggage. Like any Sahib he expected the Bondas to do his bidding. He mentions that, "The Bondos, infact, are remarkably unwilling to oblige"(182). Another observation of Elwin is that, "They were not only very lovable but unusually exciting. This was mainly due to their bad tempers, which meant that you never know what is going to happen next" (187). Elwin was a colonial traveler quite well known for his anti-colonial views and sympathies for the tribals. But what is interesting to note here is that even he cannot help using the quizzical, amused, and patronizing tone so familiar in the colonial writings about the natives and tribals. The translator Bikrma K. Das almost echoes Elwin in his preface. The translator also uncritically valorizes the documentation done by the writers to authenticate the narrative. The translator fails to see them as textual strategies. The translator wants the textual effects produced by such to be presumed by the readers from the dominant culture as authentic representation of the tribal world. The aim is that the translated work will not only capture the market but also the imagination of the readers.

Diptiranjan Pattanaik (2002) offers an interesting insight into the translation of *Paraja* saying how it creates a new type of colonisation. The Parajas have no access to the text that the novelist has written depicting their speech, idioms and world view because they are not literate. "But

thanks to the English translation - ... an elite international readership has easy access to the texts. This sanitization or 'homogenization' as Tejaswini Niranjana describes, 'to simplify a text in a predictable direction, towards English as the Judeo-Christian tradition and away from the multiplicity of indigenous languages and religions, which had to be homogenised before they can be translated' (1992, 180), misrepresent the traditional culture and constitutes a new type of colonialism, one now practiced by dominant groups in Orissa in the same way that the British represented Hindu-India through translation"(84). Pattanaik is also of the view that such misrepresentation can only be challenged when tribal people are literate and have access to "both original and translated texts" (84).

CONCLUSION

Indian literature in English is the direct result of a political act: colonization. The readers of this literature are predominantly from an urban middleclass background, products of an educational system inherited from the colonizers. Most often the writers and the critics share the same educational background. This background facilitates the internalizing of the Western ways of looking at their own world. So when something conforms to the discourse that they have naturalized, the readers easily accept it. The stability and coherence found in the depiction of the tribals as a category go a long way in the regulation and reification of hierarchical orders. The ways the authors construct the image – tribal- comes to create a reality and that reality is appropriated by the dominant culture through various agencies at its disposal, translation being the most effective one. As the margins are used for their curiosity values, such translations grab the market. But "nonetheless, despite the misrepresentation of a culture, exotropic translation, ironically, heightens the value of a literature by putting it on the world scene" (Pattanaik, 2002,84).

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