

Gramgeeta: Translation and Comparative Cultural Interpretation

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Two books, (1) *Gramgeeta-Tukadoji* (Complete translation into English from Marathi, 8 Quintets, 41 Cantos, 4674 ovi/couplets, and 9348 lines), (2) *Contextualising Tukadoji's Gramgeeta: Trajectories of Tradition and Reality* (Comparative Cultural Criticism), penned by Dr Ratnakar D Bhelkar, poet, short story writer, critic, translator and editor, are published by Atlantic Publishers and Distributors (P) Ltd., New Delhi, which deal with translation Studies (Translation and Interpretation), Cultural Studies, Religious Studies, Comparative Studies.

It is the outcome of his 20 years of post-doctoral research for D.Litt. (English), in the terrain, Translation Studies (Translation and Interpretation). The second honour in English after 40 years, awarded to Dr Ratnakar D. Bhelkar in Feb. 2020 by Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University, Nagpur for submitting the treatise on *Gramgeeta*.

In his Introduction to *Gramgeeta*, complete translation into English, the author has discussed translation theories, the translation process and the issues such as untranslability, loss and gain, encountered relating to Source Language Text (SLT) and Target Language Text (TLT). Footnotes are given after the translation text of each canto to explain culture-specific words. Translation is a cultural act. The facets of form (semiotic), content (semantic) and beauty (aesthetic) are taken into cognizance to create new originals.

The translated text of *Gramgeeta* into English prepares the base for comparative cultural criticism which analyses and interprets the text focusing on tradition and reality with a comparative perspective. On one side, *Gramgeeta* has nuances with the tradition of Indian

devotional poetry and on the other, relates to social, political, economic, philosophical, scientific, and ethical, realities. It has approaches to religion, science, and spirituality and explores cosmic vision, in a comparative vein. It is a utopia and has pragmatic applications. It has displaced peripheral, oppressed, wretched marginal to the centre. It has subaltern voices to speak. *Gramgeeta* is multi-disciplinary and polyphonic. It is the discourse of freedom, equality love, unity, collective and coordinative approach, post-colonial values, and the counter-discourse of superstition, slavery, exploitation, and inequality. Coordination and conjecture are the pivotal parameters in *Gramgeeta*, which conjunct fragments that post-modernism celebrates.

Translation is indeed an act of freedom from linguistic and cultural hegemony. In the post-colonial time, the projection of cultural voice in translation does not aim to subjugate it or to distinguish and empower others to dominate. A translator has to translate a text in historical and cultural contexts, and as such, a translated text prepares the ground for comparative cultural criticism.

The critique, *Contextualising Gramgeeta* and mapping out the trajectories of tradition and reality explores the post-colonial discourse in historical and cultural contexts with new comparative assertions. The comparative cultural analysis and interpretation purport to investigate the nature of the problems such as how post-colonial discourse deconstructs the text/s, how cultural hegemony operates and how *Gramgeeta* counter-discourses. The corollary questions are whether the post-colonial discourse in the text offers paradigms to fill the void and fissures in multi-variant realities, which post-modernism celebrates, and if we listen to the subaltern voices in historical-cultural frameworks.

It will be worth exploring critical approaches to *Gramgeeta: Translation and Interpretation*, on the blurbs of these books, unravelling the multidimensional and polyphonic appeals. Anand B. Patil, novelist, translator comparative culturalist, former professor and Head, of

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the Department of English, Goa University, deciphers that he (translator and interpreter)" has audaciously used original terms and concepts, and practised what Salman Rushdie calls chantification and picking of English. He has explained the problems of translation of culturally specific terms. In this sense, new cultural linguistics is very useful for such studies ".

Another eminent scholar, Usha Bande, translator and critic, Principal, H.P. Education Service, and Ex-fellow, IAS, Shimla, alleges, "The treatise focuses on the theory of translation, central issues in translation, problems of untranslability of culture specific words and images. He admits to having used the original word/s from the source language to target language, he has used footnotes to clarify the meaning".

Envisaging tradition and literary theories, Sachin Ketkar, poet, translator and professor of English at the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, Gujrat, exemplifies, " He has put earnest, well-intentioned efforts and hard work in his attempt to translate Tukadoji's seminal text, *Gramgeeta*, and situate the text in the larger spiritual, devotional and spiritual traditions like bhakti in Marathi, India and in the world", and "He has discussed the text in the larger spiritual and devotional traditions like the bhakti in Marathi, India and the world at length. He has also brought in various post-colonial theorists and literary theorists to understand the text. His discussion on the notion of Utopia and its significance in understanding *Gamgeeta* is commendable".

Delineating Tukadoji's vision and research methodology, Sunil Sawant, translator and critic, Kisan

Veer Mahavidyalaya, Wai, Shivaji University, Kolhapur, Maharashtra, aptly evaluates, "The translator has made a sincere attempt to recreate Tukadoji's experimental, progressive, valuable pragmatic vision into English", and, "He has made use of the proper form of documentation and presented, interpreted his data systematically, substantiating using appropriate illustrations. It is the original contribution to the advancement of learning"

Reflecting on these perspectives, I argue and contend that the translation of *Gramgeeta* into English and its comparative cultural interpretation explore and evolve the discipline of Translation Studies in post-colonial space, in historical contexts and cultural matrices, which open doors to multidiscipline and global dimensions.

- 1) Title: *Gramgeeta-Tukadoji-Translation* (complete)
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Author: Dr Ratnakar D. Bhelkar
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Ltd. New Delhi
pp. 437, Price: Rs.1495.00
- 2) *Contextualising Tukadoji's Gramgeeta: Trajectories of Tradition and Reality*
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