

**A KALEIDOSCOPIC VIEW OF THE GLOCAL THROUGH TRANSLATION: THE  
CASE OF CARMEN ESCOBEDO'S *EL DÍA QUE FUIMOS A COGER FRESAS EN  
SCARBOROUGH***SERGIO DÍAZ MENÉNDEZ  
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Carmen Escobedo de Tapia is one of the most reputed scholars who specializes in Indian Studies in Spain. As a full-time lecturer at the University of Oviedo, she has taught a wide variety of courses, ranging from *Postcolonial Literatures* and *Literatures of India in English* to *Learning Application of Anglophone Literatures*. Professor Escobedo was one of the pioneers within the field of literary anthropology as a technique employed to comment on texts. Following the steps of her late mentor, Professor José Luis Caramés Lage, she applied this to postcolonial contexts such as India, Africa or the Caribbean.

During one of her professional stays in India, Escobedo met and befriended Ranu Uniyal, professor at the University of Lucknow. Both were prominent researchers in their respective fields of knowledge and, similar to Carmen Escobedo, they taught undergraduate courses on contemporary and postcolonial literature and Indian literature. Uniyal has published several poem collections in Hindi and English, among which the most relevant regarding the latter are *Across the Divide* (2006) *December Poems* (2012) and *The Day We Went Strawberry-Picking in Scarborough* (2018), as well as essays on feminism, women's writing, and the heritage of Mahatma Gandhi in twenty-first century India.

In 2020, Professor Escobedo undertook the translation of Ranu Uniyal's latest collection of poems, *The Day We Went Strawberry-Picking in Scarborough*, into Spanish. This process was undergone during the first lockdown decreed by the Spanish government during the COVID world pandemic. This period was premonitory for Uniyal: her first poem collection to be translated into Spanish by her colleague and friend Escobedo. Uniyal's original poems and Escobedo's translation revealed to be a tool for mitigating the effects of isolation and loneliness

under the subsequent lockdowns. Uniyal wrote about the importance of poetry so as to alleviate, if not to heal, mental health issues fuelled by the pandemic and our modern rhythm of life, our obsession with consumerism which seemed to be weakening those bonds among relatives, neighbours, and colleagues. Carmen Escobedo's translation of Uniyal's original work, entitled *El día que fuimos a coger fresas en Scarborough*, saw the light in 2020, prologued by Professor Antonio Ballesteros.

In her poems, Uniyal addresses four thematic points: education and family, spirituality, the question of gender and nature. All these themes feed into her single-most concern, that of locating identity through local experiences which resonate with global concerns.

As regards education and family, the figure of the mother is a leitmotif throughout the collection of her poems. Her generosity and her understanding of her daughter's need to attain self-realization are highly acknowledged. Nevertheless, the poetic voice is not eager to follow her mother's example of sacrificing her own welfare and self-realisation. The allusions to her father, although scarce, also contribute to her daughter's love for the earth and the respect for the environment, which are continually shown in all the poems.

As for spirituality, nature and reality are identified with a kind of divinity, made up with elements from all religions. This reflects a Gandhian philosophy on conviviality among different creeds. If Uniyal resorts to Greek and Roman mythology, she also shows to her reading public the local legends of India and Hindu myths, which are explained by Carmen Escobedo in her exhaustive footnotes. Uniyal also involves the Western reader through her use of biblical myths such as that of Adam of Eve, although she concludes that fanatic interpretations of every religion exist. In fact, they tend to alienate women and try to ignore women's rights, under the pretext of local traditions like *sati*, considering that the discrimination and humiliation of widows have existed in numerous cultures on Earth.

The question of gender is also dealt with, not only in the case of widows but considering women as a unified category. Women, in what have traditionally been referred to as postcolonial territories, have been subjected to double discrimination, as women and as postcolonial subjects, in that they are treated as subaltern beings due to the patriarchalism that already existed in India and that of British colonial culture. Both used language and distorted views on history and religion to make women internalise segregation. A commendable aspect of this translation

is the way in which it portrays the sisterhood or sorority that Uniyal wanted to show as a sort of mutual help among women from the same community.

Nature is a key element in most of the poems, and one that poses a difficulty for the translator. Praising local nature is one of the techniques by which Uniyal wants to show her attachment to her environment and its conservationist purposes. This can, sometimes, be a challenge when it comes to translating due to the fact that the Hindi lexicon that refers to natural elements is much larger than that of European languages. This shortcoming is solved by a code-switching technique employed by Uniyal, which means leaving those terms untranslated, and the translator's responsibility to explain them via footnotes. This is a symptom of the *glocal* in Uniyal's poetry: through local experiences, local expressions and local concerns she gets to address general problematics that affect women globally.

The study of Uniyal's poem collection also paves the way to analyse newer ones, which are being translated at the moment. This also opens the door to the critical analysis of more translations which are yet to come. Carrying out some research on how Postcolonial Studies scholars translate genuine corpuses to Spanish, analyzing the semantic, morphological and syntactic choices they make when it comes to translation, aiming at keeping the emotional function that authors want to convey untouched, are research lines that are becoming more and more popular among PhD candidates and supervisors.

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